



## EXPLORING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ENGLISH SONGS AS A MEDIUM FOR DEVELOPING LISTENING COMPREHENSION IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates tenth-grade senior high school students' perceptions of the use of English songs as a pedagogical medium for enhancing listening comprehension in an EFL context. It specifically examines learners' attitudes, learning experiences, and perceived advantages and constraints associated with integrating English songs into listening activities. Adopting a descriptive qualitative research design, the study collected data through a closed-ended questionnaire administered via Google Forms and follow-up semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire comprised 14 Likert-scale statements, while the interviews consisted of five open-ended questions. The participants were 35 tenth-grade students from a public senior high school in Indonesia. The findings indicate that students perceive English songs as an enjoyable, motivating, and effective learning medium that facilitates listening comprehension. The use of songs was reported to enhance pronunciation awareness, vocabulary acquisition, and learners' confidence, while simultaneously alleviating listening-related anxiety. Although students identified challenges such as rapid song tempo and the presence of unfamiliar slang in lyrics, they generally agreed that English songs foster an engaging and supportive listening learning environment. Consequently, this study offers practical implications for English language teaching, particularly for EFL listening instruction at the secondary school level. The results provide valuable insights for English teachers, curriculum developers, and educators aiming to implement learner-centered and engaging media to support the development of students' listening skills.

**Keywords:** *English songs, listening comprehension, students' perceptions, EFL learning, senior high school, listening instruction*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Listening comprehension constitutes a fundamental skill in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, as it enables learners to process spoken input and underpins the development of other language skills, including speaking, reading, and writing. Through sustained exposure to listening activities, learners encounter accurate pronunciation, lexical usage, and syntactic patterns that are essential for effective communication in English (Ardiyansah & Auliya, 2023; Prabowo & Saptiany, 2024; Darmaliana et al., 2020). Nevertheless, a considerable number of EFL

learners continue to experience difficulties in comprehending spoken English, particularly within formal classroom contexts.

At the senior high school level, listening instruction frequently relies on conventional instructional resources such as textbooks and pre-recorded audio materials. These resources are often repetitive, lack variety, and may fail to represent authentic language use. As a result, students may experience reduced attention, boredom, and challenges in processing spoken English delivered at natural speech rates. Common listening difficulties include limited

**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

vocabulary knowledge, unfamiliar pronunciation, rapid speech tempo, and problems identifying main ideas in spoken texts (Ramadhiyanti & Somba, 2022; Lo et al., 2025). Such challenges can negatively affect learners' motivation and heighten listening-related anxiety, ultimately hindering their listening development (Meisani & Purnawarman, 2019; Nuray & Ceylan, 2021; Abdelrahman, 2020).

In response to these challenges, educators are encouraged to integrate instructional materials that enhance engagement and meaningful learning. English songs represent a promising alternative, as they are familiar, accessible, and appealing to learners. Songs provide authentic linguistic input and facilitate repeated exposure to language patterns and contextualized vocabulary through lyrics and melody, thereby supporting listening practice in an enjoyable manner (Clarke, 2022; Adika & Budiarsana, 2023; Vinh, 2025). Moreover, the use of songs can foster a relaxed learning atmosphere that reduces anxiety and increases learners' willingness to participate in listening activities (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019).

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to examine students' perceptions of using English songs in listening instruction. Learners' perceptions play a crucial role in shaping motivation, engagement, and learning effectiveness. Accordingly, this study aims to explore how tenth-grade senior high school students perceive the use of English songs as a medium for developing listening comprehension in an EFL context.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

Many people recognize listening comprehension as an important part of learning English as a second language. This is because it gives learners access to spoken language, which is necessary for language

development (Becerra-Posada et al., 2022). Studies have demonstrated that listening improves pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammatical structure, thereby enhancing overall language proficiency (Goh & Vandergrift, 2021). Despite its importance, listening remains one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners, especially when exposure to authentic English is limited (Hamada, 2019; Sari & Octaviani, 2022; Leon et al., 2024).

Several studies have identified common difficulties EFL learners face in listening comprehension, such as fast speech rates, unfamiliar accents, limited vocabulary, and difficulty identifying key information from spoken texts (Putri Sari & Fithriyana, 2019). These challenges are often exacerbated by traditional listening materials that lack authenticity and fail to engage learners effectively (Ramadhiyanti & Somba, 2022). Consequently, students may become demotivated and anxious during listening activities, which can negatively impact their learning outcomes (Davids & Rinqest, 2024).

To address these challenges, many researchers have explored using alternative, engaging media for listening instruction. One such medium is English songs. English songs provide learners with authentic language input and natural pronunciation. Through lyrics and melody, they offer repeated exposure to vocabulary and sentence patterns (Jaya et al., 2025; Fadilah et al., 2023; Veto Mortini et al., 2023). They also allow learners to practice listening in a meaningful and enjoyable context, which can support comprehension and retention (Millington, 2019).

Empirical studies have reported the positive effects of using English songs in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Song-based activities improved students' listening comprehension and increased their motivation to participate in

**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

listening tasks. Similarly, Fitria (2024) reported that English songs enhanced learners' ability to recognize spoken words and understand the main ideas in listening texts. Additionally, songs have been shown to facilitate vocabulary acquisition, indirectly supporting listening comprehension (Albalawi et al., 2021).

In addition to cognitive benefits, English songs contribute to the emotional aspects of learning. Studies show that songs can foster a relaxed classroom atmosphere, alleviate learners' anxiety, and boost confidence during listening exercises (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019; Pavia et al., 2019). This positive emotional environment is particularly important for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, as anxiety has been identified as a major factor influencing listening performance (Purwanto et al., 2022).

Despite the many studies examining the effectiveness of English songs in improving listening comprehension and vocabulary learning, fewer studies have focused on students' perceptions of using English songs, especially at the senior high school level. Most existing research emphasizes learning outcomes rather than how students perceive and experience song-based listening activities (Millington, 2019). It is essential to understand students' perceptions because their attitudes and beliefs toward learning media can influence their engagement, motivation, and learning success (Nuray & Ceylan, 2021).

Therefore, there is a need for studies that explore how students perceive English songs as a medium for developing listening comprehension in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, particularly among tenth-grade high school students. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how students perceive the use of English songs in listening instruction and how these

perceptions relate to their learning experiences.

**3. METHODS**

This study used a descriptive qualitative design to explore how senior high school students perceive English songs as a medium for developing listening comprehension. A qualitative approach was chosen because it focuses on understanding students' experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of learning media rather than measuring learning outcomes quantitatively. Previous studies on students' perceptions of using English songs for learning have commonly used qualitative or descriptive approaches to capture learners' viewpoints in depth (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2021).

The participants were 35 of tenth-grade students (Grade X) at SMA Negeri 1 Semarang, Central Java, Indonesia, who completed a questionnaire. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants, as all students had prior experience learning listening through English songs. This sampling technique ensured that the participants could provide relevant, meaningful information related to the research focus (Song, 2025).

Data were collected using two instruments: a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire consisted of 14 close-ended statements designed to investigate students' perceptions of English songs as a listening medium, covering aspects of motivation, listening comprehension, vocabulary exposure, affective factors, and perceived effectiveness. The questionnaires employed a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Likert-scale questionnaires are widely used in perception studies to measure students' attitudes and responses toward learning media in a systematic manner (Joshi et al., 2015). The questionnaire was distributed through Google Forms to ensure convenience and accessibility for the participants. Prior to data collection, the researcher explained the

**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

purpose of the study and provided clear written instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. Students completed the questionnaire independently and without time constraints.

To strengthen the findings of the questionnaire, three students were interviewed based on their positive perceptions in questionnaire responses to explore their views in greater depth. Semi-structured Interviews are commonly used in perception studies to obtain deeper explanations and personal experiences that cannot be fully captured through questionnaires alone (Isnaini & Aminatun, 2021). The semi-structured interview utilized five open-ended questions to investigate students' perception, personal experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges related to the use of English songs for developing listening comprehension. Following the questionnaire distribution, interviews were conducted online with the selected participants. Each interview was conducted individually and recorded to ensure accurate data transcription.

A qualitative descriptive approach was used for data analysis. Questionnaire

**4.1 Questionnaire Results**

responses were analyzed descriptively to identify general patterns and tendencies in students' perceptions. Interview data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis involving familiarization with the data, developing themes, and interpreting them in relation to the research objective (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Integrating the questionnaire and interview data enhanced the credibility and depth of the findings.

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This section presents the findings of a study investigating students' perceptions of using English songs to develop listening comprehension in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Data were obtained from a Likert-scale questionnaire completed by 35 tenth-grade students, which was supported by semi-structured interviews. The 14-item questionnaire measured students' perceptions of several aspects, including enjoyment, motivation, listening comprehension, vocabulary exposure, affective factors, and the perceived effectiveness of English songs in listening activities.

**Table 1. Result Test of Students' Questionnaire**

No	Statement	Scores				
		SD	D	N	A	SA
1	I enjoy using English songs as a medium for learning English more quickly.	0	0	6	15	14
2	Listening to English songs makes me more interested in learning English.	0	0	5	9	21
3	I often practice my English listening by listening to English songs outside the classroom.	0	3	8	13	11
4	Listening to English songs makes me more familiar with how English words are pronounced.	0	0	3	14	18
5	By listening to English songs, I can imitate English pronunciation more naturally.	0	0	8	16	11
6	Using English songs helps me understand pronunciation and intonation in spoken English.	0	0	6	12	17
7	English songs help me learn new English words.	0	1	5	15	14
8	Listening to songs makes it easier to memorize new vocabulary in the lyrics.	0	1	7	14	13
9	English songs help me recognize the correct pronunciation of new words.	0	0	6	14	15
10	Listening to English songs makes me feel more confident when listening to English.	0	0	9	13	13

**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

11	English songs reduce my anxiety when listening to English.	0	1	7	15	12
12	I feel more comfortable learning listening skills through English songs than through regular teaching-learning activities.	0	0	8	17	10
13	I think English songs are an effective medium for improving listening comprehension.	0	0	8	17	10
14	English songs are a good learning medium because I can listen to them anytime and anywhere.	0	0	3	14	18

Note:

SD: Strongly Disagree

D: Disagree

N: Neutral

A: Agree

SA: Strongly Agree

Statement 1 shows that English songs are generally considered an enjoyable medium for learning. 15 respondents (42.9%) said that learning English through songs is enjoyable, while an additional 14 (40%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 6 (17.1%) chose neutral, suggesting that some students enjoy songs but do not consider them essential for learning. No respondents selected disagree or strongly disagree, showing that English songs do not elicit negative reactions from students.

Statement 2 shows that English songs increase students' interest in learning the language. A total of 21 (60%) of respondents strongly agreed and an additional 9 respondents (25.7%) agreed that songs make learning English more interesting. Meanwhile, 14.3% selected neutral, which suggests that individual learning preferences vary. No respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed, suggesting that English songs are widely perceived as a motivating learning tool. These results align with those of Febrianti et al. (2025) who found that music-based materials enhance learner interest and motivation.

In statement 3, English songs are frequently used for listening practice outside the classroom. The 13 respondents (37.1%) agreed that they practice listening with English songs, and an additional 11 respondents (31.4%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 8 respondents (22.9%) selected neutral, suggesting that some students occasionally use songs for listening practice rather than regularly. Only 3 (8.6%) selected

disagree, indicating that not all students rely on songs for independent listening practice. These findings support research that highlights songs as accessible tools for informal language learning (Qurrota A'yun & Wahyuni, 2025).

Statement 4 shows that English songs help students become familiar with English pronunciation. The respondents 18 (51.4%) strongly agreed, while an additional 14 respondents (40%) agreed. Meanwhile, 3 (8.6%) selected neutral, which suggests limited attention to pronunciation features while listening. No respondents selected disagree or strongly disagree, showing strong overall agreement. These results are consistent with research indicating that repeated exposure to music improves pronunciation awareness (Amelia et al., 2024).

In Statement 5, English songs help students imitate English pronunciation. 16 respondents (45.7%) agreed, while an additional 11 (31.4%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 16 (22.9%) selected neutral, which suggests that some students may need more guidance to accurately imitate pronunciation. No respondents selected disagree.

In statement 6, English songs help students understand pronunciation and intonation. 17 respondents (48.6%) strongly agreed, while an additional 12 respondents (34.3%) agreed. Meanwhile, 6 (17.1%) selected neutral, suggesting that intonation patterns may still be challenging for some

**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

learners. No respondents selected disagree or strongly disagree.

Statement 7 indicates that English songs play a meaningful role in helping students learn new vocabulary. 15 respondents (42.9%) agreed that listening to English songs helps them learn new words, and an additional 14 (40%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 5 (14.3%) were neutral, which suggests that some students listen to English songs primarily for entertainment rather than for learning vocabulary. A very small number of people chose disagree, and no one selected strongly disagree, suggesting that very few students perceive English songs as ineffective for vocabulary development. These results are consistent with previous studies that have found vocabulary can be learned incidentally through repeated exposure to song lyrics (Pavia et al., 2019; Tegge, 2015).

Statement 8 shows that English song lyrics help students memorize new vocabulary. 14 respondents (40%) agreed that lyrics help them remember new words, and 13 (37.1%), strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 7 (20%) were neutral, suggesting that vocabulary memorization depends on individual learning strategies. Only a small number of respondents disagreed, and none strongly disagreed, which indicates that most students view song lyrics as beneficial for vocabulary retention. This finding is similar to research showing that repetition and melody in songs can improve memory and long-term vocabulary retention.

It is indicated by statement 9 that English songs are used to help students recognize correct pronunciation. 15 respondents (42.9%) strongly agreed, while an additional 14 (40%) agreed. Meanwhile, 16 (17.1%) selected neutral, which suggests that some learners may need teacher clarification. No respondents selected disagree or strongly disagree. This finding supports research highlighting songs as authentic pronunciation models (Putrsarii et al., 2022).

As shown in statement 10, English songs boost students' confidence in their ability to listen to English. 13 respondents (37.1%) agreed, while an additional 13 (37.1%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 9 (25.7%) selected neutral, which suggests that confidence levels differ among learners. No respondents selected disagree or strongly disagree. These data align with research indicating that enjoyable listening activities enhance learner confidence (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2019).

In statement 11 shows that English songs help reduce students' anxiety while learning listening skills. A total 15 respondents (42.9%) of respondents agreed that English songs reduce listening anxiety, while 12 (34.3%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 7 (20%) selected neutral, which suggests that anxiety levels may vary among learners. Only 1 (2.9%) disagreed and no one strongly disagreed, showing that English songs are generally perceived as a low-anxiety learning medium. These results support previous findings that positive emotional experiences, such as enjoyment, can lower anxiety and facilitate language learning.

Statement 12 English songs make learning more comfortable. 13 respondents (37.1%) agreed, while an additional 9 (25.7%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 12 (34.3%) selected neutral, suggesting that some students perceive both approaches as equally comfortable. Only a small percentage selected disagree and no one selected strongly disagree.

Statement 13 shown English songs have been found to be an effective tool for enhancing listening comprehension. 17 respondents (48.6%) agreed, while an additional 10 (28.6%) strongly agreed. Meanwhile, 8 (22.9%) selected neutral, which may suggest varying levels of perceived improvement. No respondents selected disagree or strongly disagree. This finding supports previous studies that have demonstrated the effectiveness of English songs as listening materials. These songs

**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

provide authentic language input and repeated exposure to spoken English, both of which contribute to improved listening comprehension.

It is indicated statement 14 that English songs are highly effective learning media. 18 respondents (51.4%) strongly agreed, while an additional 14 (40%) agreed. Meanwhile, 3 (8.6%) selected neutral, which may suggest occasional access limitations. No respondents selected disagree or strongly disagree. These findings align with research that highlights digital platforms as facilitators of flexible language learning (Qurrota A'yun & Wahyuni, 2025).

**4.2 Interview Results**

The interview data were transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2019). This process involved familiarization, theme development, and interpretation in relation to the research objective of exploring students' perceptions of English songs for listening comprehension. Five themes emerged from the three students' responses and were triangulated with questionnaire findings.

The first questions asked about students' experiences listening to English songs outside the classroom to improve their listening skill:

*"Can you describe your experience listening to English songs outside the classroom to improve your English listening skills?"*

Students 1:

*"Outside the classroom i very often listening to music using my headphones, whenever i'm doing nothing i will be just listen to spotify. I have a lot of English songs in my playlist, most of them like rock or pop. I feel like listening to those songs helps me to find a new English word."*

Students 2:

*"So my experience i was listening song since i was in my elementary school, and i like k-pop. Some K-pop songs use English language, so that's why i became interested in listening to songs, especially those in English or even the English songs."*

Students 3:

*"Well i listen to English song a lot outside the classroom, while studying or while cleaning my room. So i enjoy a lot listening to music especially English music."*

The findings show that all informants often listen to English songs outside of class as part of their daily routine. They perceive English songs as medium that allows them to engage voluntarily with English listening input. These results suggest that English songs functions as informal learning resource, supporting continuous exposure to English beyond formal instruction. This is consistent with Zakly's (2023) findings that incidental listening habits contribute to EFL listening development.

The second question addressed the influence of English songs on students' listening comprehension:

*"How have English songs influenced your listening comprehension?"*

Students 1:

*"By listening to English songs that i have in my playlist, it has help me to understand how to pronounce words, common words or new words that use in the lyrics. I'm still learning obviously to pronounce this English word. I feel like it does help me in my English learning journey."*

Students 2:

*"Maybe my pronunciation, because the more i listen to music in English, the easier it becomes for me to understand how to pronounce words correctly."*

Students 3:

*"Listening to English song it has significantly improve my listening skills, and i have also learned many new words from listening to English songs."*

The results revealed that improved pronunciation was the most commonly reported benefit of listening to English songs, followed by enhanced vocabulary. Students believed that repeated exposure to English songs helped them become more familiar with spoken English and proper pronunciation. These results align with those of Afriyuninda and Oktaviani (2021), who found that English songs facilitate pronunciation development through

**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

repetition and exposure to authentic spoken language.

The third question asked students how they felt about learning listening skills through English songs compared to regular classroom activities.

*"How do you feel when learning listening through English songs compared to regular teaching-learning activities?"*

Students 1:

*"I honestly prefer learning Listening through listen to English songs because it feels fun and more creative ways."*

Students 2:

*"Using English music it makes me more enjoy... I feel like there's no pressure when I'm learning listening using English song as the media."*

Students 3:

*"I feel like learning Listening through Listening to English songs is more like fun for me. It's more interesting and enjoyable."*

Based on the students' responses, they experienced positive emotions while learning to listen to English songs. They perceived song-based listening as more enjoyable, interesting, and less stressful than traditional classroom activities. Research shows that students are often more motivated, comfortable, and engaged when English songs are used for listening activities. This can enhance enjoyment and the willingness to practice listening skills outside of routine classroom tasks (Wusqo et al., 2025).

The fourth question focused on the benefits and challenges students faced when using English songs to enhance listening comprehension.

*"What benefits and challenges have you encountered when using English songs to improve your listening comprehension?"*

Students 1:

*"The benefit I've received from using English songs as a learning medium is that it's actually very fun for me. Trying new, correct pronunciations while singing is enjoyable for me in general. One challenge is if there's slang in the lyrics or music, because then it's harder to learn. You must understand the background and meaning of the word in that context."*

Students 2:

*"The benefit is I can enjoy while learning and the challenges Because some songs have a fast tempo, sometimes it's hard to understand them after just one listen, so you have to listen to them several times and read the lyrics."*

Students 3:

*"The challenge is that sometimes, when slang is used, I must look up the meaning of a word. The benefit is that I learn new vocabulary and understand new sentences and words better. I can also understand what native speakers are saying."*

The findings revealed that students perceived English songs as beneficial for improving pronunciation, vocabulary, and listening comprehension overall. However, they also identified challenges such as slang expressions and fast song tempos. These challenges reflect the authentic nature of song lyrics. Similar findings were reported by Putri et al. (2022), who noted that, while songs may present comprehension challenges, they also provide valuable learning opportunities through authentic content.

The fifth question asked students for their opinions on the role of English songs in improving listening comprehension.

*"What is your opinion on the role of English songs in improving students' listening comprehension?"*

Students 1:

*"Well, I would say it's quite effective. It can be used as a useful learning tool, but it needs to go along with regular classroom learning where you know the English teacher. They can assign you work, and you will never replace that. However, English songs can be useful for learning how to pronounce English words or understanding what natives are saying."*

Students 2:

*"Listening to English music can improve students' English skills, especially their listening skills. It's enjoyable."*

Students 3:

*"For me, it's really beneficial for students. Many people enjoy listening to English music right now. For example, listening to English music often helps us expand our vocabulary, improve our pronunciation, and understand English more easily."*

**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

Overall, students perceived English songs as an effective medium for improving listening comprehension. Although they acknowledged the importance of classroom instruction and teacher guidance, students believed that English songs enhance listening development by increasing exposure to, motivation for, and familiarity with spoken English. These findings align with recent perspectives on the value of songs as pedagogical tools in EFL contexts when integrated with formal instruction (Tasnim, 2022).

**5. CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings, this study concludes that English songs are positively perceived by tenth-grade students as a supportive medium for enhancing listening comprehension in the EFL classroom. The results imply that incorporating English songs as supplementary instructional materials can foster a more engaging, motivating, and low-anxiety listening environment, while simultaneously supporting learners' pronunciation awareness, vocabulary acquisition, and listening confidence when accompanied by appropriate teacher guidance and structured activities. Pedagogically, these findings suggest that English teachers and curriculum designers should thoughtfully integrate songs into listening instruction to complement conventional materials rather than replace them. For future research, further studies could involve larger and more diverse participant groups, employ mixed or experimental research designs, and examine the long-term effects of song-based listening instruction on learners' listening proficiency across different proficiency levels and educational contexts.

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**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

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**Vol 9, No 1 (2026): ESTEEM**

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