



Students' perceptions of how English songs improve their listening skills

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to discover students' perception of how English songs improve their listening skills. Also, this study wanted to investigate whether there is significant difference on students' perception of how English songs improve their listening skills based on gender. The methods used in this research was descriptive and comparative. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire adapted from Ngoc (2021). This research was conducted to the eleventh-grade students enrolled in the first semester of the 2022/2023 academic year at a private high school in North Minahasa. The results were: (1) the students agreed on the reasons and principles of using English songs in improving their listening skills; (2) they also agreed that English songs were a good learning resource to help them improve their listening skills (3); students also agreed that English songs play an important role in learning listening; (4) however, there was no significant difference on students' perception of how English songs improve their listening skills based on gender. Thus, this research recommended that (a) using English songs in class should be an option for teachers in teaching, especially in teaching English; (b) also, further research needs to be conducted to see other factors that can significantly affect students' listening skills.

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INTRODUCTION

English song is believed to enhance listening skills. According to Listiyaningsih (2017), one way to improve listening skills is by listening to English songs. When someone hears English songs, their ears unconsciously become accustomed to hearing so that someone accustomed to listening to song may find it simpler to understand in a listening class interpretation of the narrator's words. Many media can be helpful for learning English, especially when it comes to listening. Students' listening abilities are enhanced by listening to songs and watching movies (Afriyuninda & Oktaviani, 2020). Songs are media that can help with listening skills because they are ubiquitous and can help

listeners train their ears for better comprehension. Moreover, according to Afriyuninda and Oktaviani, the lyrics of a song played in class can be memorized and retained in a student's long-term memory. Therefore, there are numerous benefits of using English songs to enhance listening skills.

The researchers would like to point out some of the main problems with listening skills. The problem found is that the low level of English skills in education can occur anywhere. For example, low listening was found among elementary school students in Turkey. Kahraman (2008) found that elementary school students in Turkey have low listening skills because students experience that the songs are played fast and the singer's pronunciation is not very clear. Similarly, in Indonesia, Putri, Bunau, and Rezeki (2018) found that class XII students at SMK Mandiri Pontianak have low listening skills because many students still have difficulty distinguishing English words. In addition, problems are also found at the junior high school level. Lestary and Serjadi (2019) found that seventh graders at SMP in Sumedang have low listening skills. Moreover, it was found that there were students in junior high school in North Minahasa who had listening skills problems. The researchers has also asked English teachers at a private secondary school in North Minahasa about students' listening skills in English classes. The researchers received information that many students attended online classes at that school, especially for English classes. When native speakers spoke, most of them did not understand because when native speakers spoke too quickly, they did not understand it. Also, the accent used was British English, so it was difficult for them to understand, resulting in low English scores. Thus, the researchers found that elementary, junior high school, and high school students still had difficulty listening because they had low listening skills.

In addition, the researchers were also interested to see whether there was significant difference in students' perceptions of how English songs improve their listening skills based on gender. Previous studies have shown different results in regard to students' listening skills based on gender. For example, Alavinia and Sameei (2012) in their research on potential bonds between extroversion/introversion and Iranian EFL learners' listening comprehension ability found no significant differences in students' listening study based on gender because the results found that gender did not affect their listening skills. However, Maulina and Hutauruk (2021) obtained a different result in their research on gender-based character improvement of listening study with social media in schools at Dharma Analitika Vocational School. They found that there was significant difference in students' listening skills based on gender because they found that male students were more likely to be lazy, less concerned with assignments and less creative in making assignments than female students. Therefore, based on the results of the previous studies, the researchers was interested in knowing whether there was significant difference in students' perceptions of how English songs improve their listening skills based on gender. This is because previous research focused on the difference in students' listening skills and not differed differed.

Furthermore, the researchers researched this topic because one of them has experienced it. Based on one of the researchers' own experiences, while sitting in high school or in college, the researcher refers to be silent during English class because she could not understand what the teacher was saying. In addition, according to one of the researchers' experiences, the researcher also has low listening skills because of lack of vocabulary. Simanjuntak and Uswar (2021) proposed that students have low listening skills because they still experience difficulty in listening and are struggling with words and vocabulary that are unfamiliar to them. In addition, the researchers also wanted to see whether the students agreed that English songs could help improve their listening skills to prove the English teacher's assumption at the private high school in North Minahasa. Therefore, it was important to conduct this research to identify the students' perceptions of how English songs improve their listening skills and how it might differ based on gender since studies on students' perceptions of how English songs improve their listening skills in North Minahasa are still dearth.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was quantitative. This research is called quantitative research because the reporting uses statistical or numerical data. Abebe, Daniels, McKean, and Kapenga (2016) stated that quantitative research is a research strategy by using number to analyze data. This study also used descriptive method. This descriptive study aimed to determine the students' perceptions of how English songs improve their listening skills. Thus, the research method used was descriptive. A comparative method was used to determine the differences in students' perceptions on how English songs improve their listening skill based on gender. Harvey (2012) explained that the comparative method is "the process of comparing situations, groups, cultures, or whatever, which were similar and yet which differ in known ways" (para. 2). Therefore, these were the methods that were most suitable and easier to help the researchers in analyzing the research questions.

Respondents in this study were 100 students in the eleventh-grade class at a private high school in North Minahasa. More specifically, the respondents were students of the eleventh-grade class Social Science and the eleventh-grade class Science 1, 2 and 3 in the first semester of the 2022/2023 academic year. The respondents in this study were 50 male and 50 female students, bringing the number of students to 100 people.

In collecting data on the first variable, namely students' listening skills, researchers have used a questionnaire about students' perceptions on how English songs improve their English skills adapted from Ngoc (2021). The questionnaire consisted of 15 items which are divided into 3 parts. The first part, Reason and Principles of Using English Songs, consists of 3 items, 1, 2, and 3. The second part is English songs as a good learning resource to help students improve their listening comprehension, consisting of 9 items, namely items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 9, 10, 11, and 12. The other part is, English songs play an important role in learning listening consisting of 3 items, namely 13, 14, and 15.

The items have been translated from English to Bahasa Indonesia to help the respondents better understand the questionnaire items. Before distributing this questionnaire, the researchers consulted with three English teachers for expert validation before conducting the pilot study. The questionnaire used a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Neutral), 4 (Agree), and 5 (Strongly Agree).

The Mean score was used to determine the students' perceptions of using English songs to improve their listening skills. Furthermore, to determine the significant difference in students' perceptions of how English songs improve their listening skills based on gender, the t-test was used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

What is the students' perception of how English songs improve their listening skills regarding the reasons and principles of using English songs?

The first question used descriptive statistics. The average score of reasons and principles for using English songs was 3.83 (see table 1). According to the interpretation of the data, the scale of reasons and principles for using English songs is in the range of 3.50 - 4.49. The results showed that the students agree on the reasons and principles of using English songs to improve their listening skills. For instance, the students think that playing English songs while studying can make students think more clearly. Sekeon, Rombepajung, and Kumayas (n.d). also found that English songs can make the learning atmosphere more relaxing. Thus, it can help students think more clearly.

Table 1.
Mean Score of the Reasons and Principles of Using English Songs

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Reasons and Principles	100	3.70	5.00	3.83	.20132
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Moreover, Ngoc (2021) also found that 45.8% of Ho Chi Minh University of Food Industry students agreed that English songs can help them think more clearly. The reason the students agree with the reasons and principles of using English songs could be because English songs can help make the learning situation more relaxed and fun. Jiang (2004) explained that using English songs is effective because it becomes an effective filter that can create a relaxed and fun atmosphere. In addition to that, Jiang added that English songs are easy to be memorized. Thus, these might also be one of the reasons why the students agree that English songs in terms of the reasons and principles of using English songs can improve their listening skills.

What is the students' perception of how English songs improve their listening skills in terms of English songs as a good learning resource to help students improve their listening skills?

The average score of English songs as a good resource to help students improve their listening skills is 3.8 (see table 2). Based on the interpretation of the data, the scale of English songs as a good learning resource to help students improve their listening skills is in the range of 3.50 – 4.49. The results showed that the students agree that English songs is a good learning resource to help students improve their listening skill since the mean score was 3.80. For instance, the students agree that they can become more familiar with English words when they spend time listening to English songs.

Table 2.
Mean Score of English Songs as a Good Learning Resource to Help Students Improve Their Listening Skills

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Good Learning Resource	100	1.40	5.00	3.80	.69420
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Similar to the result of this study, Hidayati (2016) also discovered that students agree that English songs were a good learning resource to help students improve their listening skills. This could be because as teachers use English songs, students feel more motivated and interested in improving their listening skills. In addition, Simanjuntak and Usuar (2021) found that the teaching and learning processes are better when teachers use English songs in class. This could be seen from the students being more active and enthusiastic in learning when teachers use English songs. Thus, students becoming more motivated and active in class through English songs could help explain why the researchers found that the students agree that English songs are a good learning resource to help improve their listening skills.

What is the students' perception of how English songs improve their listening skills in terms of English songs play an important role in learning listening?

The average score of English songs play an important role in learning listening is 3.82 (see table 3). Based on the interpretation of the data, the scale of English songs play an important role in learning listening is in the range of 3.50 – 4.49. As shown in Table 3, the mean score of 3.82 indicates that the students agree that English songs play an important role in learning listening.

Table 3.
Mean Score of English Songs Play an Important Role in Learning Listening

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
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Important Role	100	2.00	5.00	3.82	.77041
Valid N (listwise)	100				

Students agree that English plays a vital role in learning listening because they think that English songs help motivate them to learn English, especially in learning pronunciation. This is because students can also learn or improve their pronunciation when listening to English songs. Moreover, Sadilah and Gaol (2021) argued that when using English songs, students did not feel bored while studying, even during outside class hours. In addition to that, Afriyuninda and Oktaviani (2021) found that students who listen to English songs can improve their vocabulary in English. Similarly, Sekeon, Rombepajung, and Kumayas (n.d.) also found that listening to English songs can make students more familiar with English words. Thus, students feeling that English songs can help improve their pronunciation and vocabulary might explain why they agree that English songs play an important role in learning listening.

Is there any significant difference in students' perception of how English songs improve their listening skills based on gender?

Table 4 shows the average scores of students' perceptions on how English songs improve their listening skills by gender. 50 respondents were male students and 50 were female students. The results showed that the average score obtained by students' perception on how English songs improve their listening skills from male students was 45.18, which is lower than female which was 46.04. However, when looking at the significant difference, it was found that there is no significant difference on students' perceptions of how English songs improve their listening skills (see Table 5).

Table 4.
Means Score Based on Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Std. Error Mean
Students' Perceptions	Male	50	45.18	8.38534	1.18587
	Female	50	46.04	7.16841	1.01377

The researchers used an *independent sample T-test* to this research question. If the significance value of p is less than the significance level = 0.5, a significant difference is found in the variables. Based on table 4, the results of the study show that there is no significant difference on students' perception on how English song improves their listening skill based on gender because the significant value (p value) is 0.583 and $0.583 > 0.05$ (see table 5). Thus, the hypothesis stating "There is no significant difference on students' perceptions of how English improve their listening skill based on gender" is failed to be rejected. This result is similar to the finding of Maulina and Hutauruk (2021), which found no significant difference based on gender.

Table 5.
Difference on Students' Perceptions Based on Gender

		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-table)
Students' Perceptions	Equal Variances	1.017	.316	-.551	98	.583
	Equal variances not assumed			-.551	95.685	.583

This finding indicates that both male and female students agree that English songs can help improve their listening skills. For instance, it was found that both male and female students agree using popular songs could help improve their English (Rahcmawati, Apollonia, & Meila, 2020).

Similarly, Iqbal et al. (2018) found that both male and female students agree that English songs can help improve their learning English pronunciation. Thus, it can be seen that both male and female students did not differ significantly on their perceptions of how English songs can help improve their listening skills.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it is concluded that the students agree that English songs can help improve their listening skills. Moreover, it is concluded that both male and female students have the same perception of using English songs to improve their listening skills. In other words, both male and female students agree that English songs can help improve their listening skills.

Several recommendations were given based on this study's findings and conclusions. Firstly, it is recommended that English teachers use English songs to help improve students listening skills as they agree that English songs can help improve their listening skills. For example, teachers can apply more pop or relaxing songs as part of their teaching materials so that students in class can be more motivated to learn English and not get bored easily. Moreover, when students are used to listening to English songs, they are expected to understand better what native speakers say starting from the words spoken. Moreover, students can also listen to English songs, especially those soothing to the ears to help them feel relaxed in learning. Thus, they are expected to improve their English skills, especially their listening skills. Lastly, it is recommended that other researchers conduct similar study with different methods, namely qualitative methods or experimental study, to see whether English songs can improve students' listening skills. Lastly, recommendations are also for future researchers to conduct further research with different questionnaire items which can thoroughly measure the students' perceptions of how English songs improve their listening skills and they can also be more specific with the types of English songs that can be used in English class to identify which types of English songs that can affect or improve their English skills.

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