



Elementary Students Perception Towards the Use of Songs in English Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates elementary students' perceptions of using songs in English language learning, exploring how songs affect vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, listening comprehension, and overall student engagement. The background highlights the growing trend of incorporating music into language instruction, yet there is a gap in understanding how younger students perceive its effectiveness. A quantitative research design with a descriptive approach was employed, utilizing a questionnaire to gather data from 30 Grade 5 students at a private elementary school in Manado. The results indicate that students perceive songs as a highly effective and enjoyable tool for learning English, with a mean score of 4.61, reflecting strong agreement on their impact on vocabulary and pronunciation. However, some students expressed concerns about the long-term retention of vocabulary and the limited contribution of songs to grammar and speaking fluency. The study concludes that while songs enhance motivation and specific language skills, a more integrated approach combining songs with other methods is necessary for comprehensive language acquisition. This research contributes valuable insights into the pedagogical value of music-based instruction in language learning and offers practical recommendations for educators.

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INTRODUCTION

Language education plays a pivotal role in shaping communication skills, which are essential for personal, professional, and societal development (Bondarchuk, 2024; Zhang, 2024). As English has become a global lingua franca, its acquisition is crucial for fostering effective interaction across diverse cultural contexts (Zhang et al., 2024; Atasheva, 2024). The integration of music into language instruction offers a dynamic and engaging approach to learning, which is not only enjoyable but also effective in supporting various language skills (Wu et al., 2023; Rorintulus et al., 2023). Research highlights the importance of

emotional engagement and motivation in language learning, and music has been shown to play a key role in these areas. By incorporating songs into language learning, students are able to develop critical skills such as vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and listening comprehension in a more immersive and enjoyable environment (Babayev, 2025). This study, which examines the perceptions of elementary-level students toward using songs in English language learning, is important as it contributes to understanding how music can enhance language education, making it a more inclusive and effective practice for learners in diverse contexts.

A significant challenge in language education today is finding methods that engage students while facilitating effective language acquisition (Ye, 2024). Traditional teaching methods often fail to capture the attention and motivation of learners, especially in younger age groups (Sakr et al., 2024; Yuan, 2024). This lack of engagement leads to reduced participation, lower retention rates, and slow progress in language learning (Hiver et al., 2024; Romsis et al., 2024). Moreover, students often struggle with aspects such as pronunciation, listening comprehension, and vocabulary retention, which are fundamental to language mastery. With the growing recognition of music's potential as a pedagogical tool, there is a need to explore its benefits and identify whether it can address these issues effectively (Yusoff et al., 2023; Chen, 2024). The integration of songs into English language instruction could provide a creative solution to these challenges, promoting motivation and improving language skills (Rorintulus et al., 2023). Therefore, investigating how songs impact students' perceptions and language acquisition is a timely and essential research endeavor.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend in language classrooms worldwide to incorporate music, especially songs, as part of the instructional strategy (Hontarenko et al., 2024). Teachers have begun recognizing the value of songs in language learning due to their ability to engage students in a fun, interactive, and emotionally resonant way (Bao, 2023). Songs, with their rhythm and melody, offer an effective platform for students to practice pronunciation, improve listening comprehension, and expand their vocabulary. Despite this trend, many teachers continue to rely on traditional methods that do not fully tap into the potential of music as a pedagogical tool (Yao et al., 2023). While some schools have experimented with incorporating songs into lessons, the widespread adoption of this approach is still limited, and there is a need for deeper investigation into how students perceive and benefit from learning through songs. Understanding these perceptions will help bridge the gap between theory and practice in language education.

Previous research has shown that music, particularly songs, can be an effective tool in enhancing language learning. Rorintulus et al (2023) highlights how song lyrics provide authentic linguistic input, facilitating vocabulary acquisition and grammatical awareness. Sadiqzade (2024) also emphasizes that the rhythm and repetition in songs help learners internalize language patterns, making it easier to retain new information. Moreover, Babayev (2025) found that songs significantly contribute to improving pronunciation, listening comprehension, and speaking fluency by creating an engaging and low-stress learning environment. However, while these studies have demonstrated the positive effects of music in language instruction, they often focus on specific language skills or contexts, leaving a gap in research on how learners perceive and engage with music-based methods. This research gap needs to be addressed, particularly regarding elementary-level students' perspectives on the effectiveness of songs in enhancing their language skills.

While existing studies provide valuable insights into the benefits of music in language learning, there remains a lack of comprehensive studies that examine the perceptions of students, particularly at the elementary level (Wu et al., 2023). Most research has focused on secondary or adult learners, leaving a significant gap in understanding how younger learners interact with and benefit from music-based language instruction. Moreover, few studies have explored the broader motivational impact of songs in the classroom, focusing instead on specific linguistic outcomes like vocabulary or grammar acquisition. This study aims to fill this gap by focusing on elementary-level students' perceptions and exploring both the cognitive and affective aspects of learning through songs. By addressing this gap, the research will contribute new insights into the pedagogical value of integrating songs into English language classrooms and offer practical guidance for educators and curriculum designers.

This study explores the perceptions of elementary-level students regarding the use of songs in English language learning, focusing on how this method impacts their language acquisition. While previous research has examined the role of music in language learning, few studies have concentrated on younger learners, who are critical for building foundational language skills. By analyzing students' views on the effectiveness of songs in improving vocabulary, pronunciation, listening comprehension, and speaking fluency, this research aims to offer new insights into the cognitive and motivational benefits of music-based approaches. The findings are expected to guide future teaching strategies, encouraging more engaging and interactive language instruction that fosters student motivation and retention.

The primary contribution of this study lies in addressing the gap in research on the use of music for language learning among elementary-level students. By providing practical recommendations for educators, curriculum designers, and language program developers, this research will offer valuable guidance on integrating songs into language instruction. The study aims to demonstrate how music-based methods can enhance student engagement and improve language acquisition, providing evidence for the effectiveness of incorporating songs into English language teaching. Ultimately, the findings will enrich teaching practices, offering a more dynamic and accessible approach to language learning for students of all ages.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research design with a descriptive approach to explore students' perceptions of using songs in English language learning. The quantitative design allows for the collection of numerical data that can be analyzed statistically, providing a clear understanding of students' views. This approach is ideal for measuring the relationship between music-based instruction and language learning outcomes objectively, without altering or manipulating variables. The descriptive approach is particularly suitable for providing a detailed account of students' perceptions, offering insights into the potential benefits of song-based language instruction.

The research was conducted at a private elementary school in Manado, involving Grade 5A and 5B students. Grade 5B was selected for the study to ensure an unbiased sample, as they had not participated in the pilot study with Grade 5A. The school's technology-driven approach and shift to online learning during the research period facilitated efficient data collection through Google Forms, WhatsApp, and Google Meet. The use of these online platforms ensured that data could be gathered remotely, minimizing logistical challenges and allowing for comprehensive participation during the final exam period.

Once the data was collected, the researcher performed statistical analysis using descriptive statistics, following a systematic process. The first step was data condensation, where all responses from the questionnaire were organized into a table format for easier analysis. The data was then reduced to identify patterns and key insights regarding students' perceptions of learning through songs in English. This involved organizing and categorizing the responses into relevant themes. The next step was data display, which involved presenting the findings in clear visual formats such as tables or graphs to allow for easy interpretation. Finally, the data was verified to ensure accuracy and consistency with the research context. Verification involved cross-checking the data with the research objectives and consulting with a methodology expert to confirm the appropriateness of the analysis.

To ensure data validity in this study, both content validity and reliability were checked. Content validity was assessed by requesting feedback from three English language experts who reviewed the questionnaire items to ensure they were appropriate and relevant for measuring students' perceptions of using songs in language learning. The experts provided feedback, which was used to refine the questionnaire, ensuring that it accurately captured the intended constructs. For reliability, the researcher conducted a pilot study in Grade 5A, and the Cronbach's Alpha value obtained was 0.908, indicating very high reliability. This result suggests that the 12 items in the questionnaire have strong internal consistency and measure the same underlying construct reliably. The high Cronbach's Alpha value assures that the instrument is reliable for use in the main data collection process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Students' Attitudes Towards Learning English Through Songs

This study explores students' attitudes towards learning English through songs, focusing on their emotional responses, perceptions, and overall disposition toward using songs as a language learning tool. It examines how students view the integration of songs in lessons, whether they find it enjoyable, motivating, or engaging, and how they perceive songs in relation to improving their language skills. The study defines this perception as encompassing both cognitive and emotional responses, guiding students' participation in song-based activities and their overall engagement in learning English. The findings suggest that songs are generally viewed as an enjoyable and effective way to learn, contributing to students' interest and enthusiasm for language acquisition.

Informant 1, a Grade 5 student, expressed a very positive attitude towards learning English through songs, highlighting that songs make learning fun and less stressful. She noted that singing helps her feel relaxed and happy, making it easier to remember new words. This reflects the motivational and emotional benefits of song-based learning, which reduces the usual pressure of language acquisition and makes learning more accessible. The emotional engagement of students, as seen in Informant 1's response, supports the idea that songs create an enjoyable atmosphere that fosters better language retention.

On the other hand, Informant 2 offered a more neutral view, acknowledging the enjoyment of songs but expressing difficulty in seeing how they help with grammar. This suggests that while students may enjoy singing, they may not always understand how songs relate to more complex language skills such as grammar. This indicates a gap between the motivational aspects of song-based learning and its explicit educational value in areas like grammar

acquisition. Informant 2's response points to the need for clearer connections between the song content and language learning objectives to bridge this gap.

Classroom observations further supported these findings, showing that students were highly engaged during song-based activities, actively participating and discussing the lyrics. However, the observations also revealed that some students struggled to focus on the language learning aspects of the songs, particularly when the activities did not directly relate to the lesson's grammatical or vocabulary goals. While songs were highly motivating, they were not always perceived as directly contributing to the development of more complex language skills. This suggests that a more integrated instructional approach, where songs are closely tied to learning objectives, is necessary to ensure that students not only enjoy the activities but also gain educational value from them.

The Impact of Songs on Vocabulary Acquisition

In this study, the "impact of songs on vocabulary acquisition" refers to how songs influence students' ability to learn, retain, and recall new vocabulary. Songs help students internalize new words through repetition, melody, and context, making vocabulary learning more engaging and memorable. This study's operational definition encompasses both the immediate learning and long-term retention of vocabulary, emphasizing that songs support more effective language acquisition by reinforcing words in a meaningful and enjoyable way.

Informant 1, a Grade 5 student, shared a positive view, stating that songs help her remember new vocabulary better because the music keeps her focused and makes the words easier to recall. This reflects the idea that the repetitive and rhythmic nature of songs aids memory retention, offering a multisensory learning experience that integrates auditory and cognitive elements. In contrast, Informant 2 expressed a more cautious perspective, acknowledging the benefits of songs but also noting that the long-term retention of new vocabulary requires additional practice. This suggests that while songs are helpful in the short term, they might not be sufficient on their own for sustained vocabulary retention without reinforcement.

Classroom observations support the idea that songs are effective for immediate vocabulary learning, as students engaged more with vocabulary when songs were used. However, some students struggled to recall vocabulary after a few days, indicating that songs alone might not be enough for long-term retention. The researcher noted that, without songs, students were less engaged and had difficulty recalling the words learned. These observations suggest that

while songs are effective in stimulating initial learning, supplementary activities, such as vocabulary quizzes or practical use of the words, could help improve retention and provide a more comprehensive approach to vocabulary acquisition.

Table 1. Impact of Songs on Vocabulary Acquisition

Informant Role	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Student A	"Whenever we learn new words through songs, I can remember them better because the music helps me stay focused. It's easier to recall words when I hear them in the song."	Short-term vocabulary retention
Student B	"I like songs, but sometimes I forget the new words after a while. It helps a little, but I think I need more practice to really remember them."	Need for additional practice

This study examines students' perceptions of using songs in English language learning, revealing that while songs are generally viewed as an enjoyable and effective tool, their impact varies across different language skills. Informant 1, a Grade 5 student, emphasized that songs make learning fun and help her remember vocabulary faster due to the repetition in lyrics, aligning with prior research on the effectiveness of songs in enhancing language acquisition. However, Informant 2 expressed a more neutral view, noting that the music sometimes distracts from focusing on the words and doesn't contribute as much to developing grammar or speaking fluency. Classroom observations supported these perceptions, showing high student engagement during song-based activities, particularly for vocabulary retention, but also revealing struggles with grammar when the songs weren't explicitly tied to language structure. These findings suggest that while songs are valuable for engaging students and enhancing vocabulary acquisition, they need to be complemented with other instructional strategies to fully support all aspects of language learning, particularly more complex skills like grammar and speaking fluency.

Improvement in Pronunciation and Listening Skills Through Songs

In this study, "improvement in pronunciation and listening skills through songs" refers to how songs enhance students' ability to pronounce words accurately and understand spoken English. The rhythm, melody, and repetition of songs support pronunciation by providing students with models of natural language, while also improving listening comprehension by exposing them to various accents, intonations, and speech patterns embedded in the lyrics. Songs serve as both a tool for auditory discrimination (listening skills) and a model for proper pronunciation, contributing to better language fluency.

Informant 1, a Grade 5 student, shared that singing along with songs helps improve pronunciation, stating that she notices how certain words are pronounced and tries to mimic them. The rhythmic and repetitive nature of songs aids in the process of pronunciation improvement by reinforcing the correct articulation of words. This indicates that songs are not only enjoyable but also effective in helping students solidify the connection between sounds and spelling, ultimately supporting accurate language production.

Informant 2 expressed a similar view on how songs help improve listening comprehension. They mentioned that listening to songs makes it easier to understand what people are saying in movies and shows, as repeated exposure to phrases and words enhances their ability to catch words and understand their meaning. Songs help students become familiar with various pronunciations and accents, thus enhancing their listening skills in different contexts. This highlights that songs can also aid in the development of listening skills by providing exposure to diverse language patterns.

Classroom observations revealed that students were more focused on pronunciation when songs were part of the lesson. They frequently mimicked the pronunciation of words from the lyrics, and the repetition seemed to enhance their ability to recognize different sounds and phonetic patterns. However, some students struggled to apply these pronunciation improvements to real-world conversations outside the song context. This suggests that while songs are effective in improving pronunciation and listening skills in the short term, additional practice and reinforcement are necessary to ensure that these improvements are sustained in everyday language use.

Students Perception of Songs as a Tool for Enhancing Speaking Fluency

This study examines students' perceptions of using songs in English language learning, focusing on their attitudes, feelings, and beliefs about songs as an educational tool. The concept assesses whether students find songs enjoyable, motivating, or effective for enhancing skills such as vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, listening comprehension, and speaking fluency. Informant 1, a Grade 5 student, expressed a very positive attitude, stating that songs make learning easier and more fun. She noted that the repetition of words in songs helps her learn vocabulary faster, which aligns with previous studies highlighting the effectiveness of songs in language acquisition by making learning enjoyable and memorable.

In contrast, Informant 2 had a more neutral perspective, acknowledging the fun of singing but expressing difficulty in focusing on the words due to the distraction of the music. While Informant 2 appreciated the enjoyment of song-based learning, the student felt that songs did not always help with grammar or

speaking fluency. This highlights the concern that while songs can be motivating and engaging, they may not directly contribute to all aspects of language learning, particularly more complex skills like grammar and speaking.

Classroom observations supported these findings, showing that students were highly engaged during song-based activities, actively participating and recalling vocabulary from the songs. However, some students struggled with focusing on grammar when the songs were not explicitly linked to language structure. This suggests that while songs are effective for enhancing vocabulary retention and engagement, their impact on more complex language skills may require supplementary instructional strategies. Overall, students generally perceive songs as a valuable tool for learning English, but a more integrated approach is needed to address all aspects of language acquisition.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Students Perception

Variable	N	N*	Mean	SE Mean	StDev	Minimum	Median	Max
Students Perception	30	0	4,61	0,068	0,40	3,83	4,62	5,00

In summary, the study shows that students have a very positive perception of learning English through songs, as evidenced by the high mean score of 4.61. Songs are generally viewed as an enjoyable and effective way to acquire new vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and increase overall motivation. However, there are concerns that songs alone may not address other language skills, such as grammar and speaking fluency. To maximize the benefits of song-based learning, it is important to combine songs with other activities that focus on these areas.

Discussion

The findings of this study align closely with existing literature on the use of songs in language learning, particularly with respect to their positive impact on vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and student engagement. As reflected in the responses of Informant 1, students generally perceive songs as an enjoyable and effective method for learning new words. This finding corroborates previous studies by Pandey (2022), which highlight the efficacy of songs in reinforcing vocabulary through repetition and melody, making the learning process more enjoyable and memorable. In both this study and prior research, songs help students internalize new words by engaging them in a multisensory learning experience, integrating both auditory and cognitive elements to support vocabulary retention (Meni, 2024; Bao, 2023). However, a slight divergence arises

with the findings from Informant 2, who expressed concerns about the long-term retention of vocabulary acquired through songs, suggesting that songs alone might not be enough for sustained vocabulary acquisition. This concern was also addressed by Chen (2025), who found that while songs boost short-term vocabulary retention, their long-term effectiveness can be limited unless complemented by other reinforcement methods such as quizzes or practical usage.

Additionally, the study's findings on pronunciation improvement support previous research that emphasizes the role of songs in enhancing students' pronunciation skills. Informant 1's experience of becoming more aware of pronunciation through singing resonates with the findings of Misa (2024), who noted that the rhythmic and repetitive nature of songs helps learners improve their pronunciation by providing natural models for imitation. The use of songs as auditory models of correct pronunciation, as observed in classroom activities, demonstrates how songs serve as a low-pressure and engaging environment for students to practice articulation and intonation. This aligns with Muhammed (2024) argument that songs' repetitive nature makes them ideal tools for reinforcing pronunciation patterns and improving fluency. However, as shown in the observations and in Informant 2's response, some students struggled to transfer these improvements into real-world communication. This indicates that while songs are effective in the classroom, their impact on pronunciation may need to be reinforced through additional speaking practice outside of song-based activities, an aspect not always emphasized in the literature (Acar et al., 2025; Misa, 2024).

In terms of listening comprehension, the study's findings are consistent with the work of Gomez et al (2025), who suggested that listening to songs helps students develop better listening skills by exposing them to different accents, speech patterns, and informal expressions. Informant 2's observation that listening to songs helps improve understanding in other contexts, such as movies and shows, echoes Gomez findings, indicating that songs are an effective tool for familiarizing students with natural spoken English. However, the impact of songs on grammar and speaking fluency, as discussed by Informant 2, reveals a gap that is not sufficiently addressed by song-based activities alone. Despite the positive effects on listening and pronunciation, songs were not perceived as significantly aiding grammar acquisition, which highlights the need for a more comprehensive approach to language instruction (Ramani, 2024). This finding diverges from some studies that emphasize the comprehensive benefits of songs for all aspects of language acquisition, including grammar. It suggests that while songs are highly beneficial for certain skills, they must be integrated into a broader curriculum that targets grammar and speaking fluency more directly.

The theoretical implications of these findings suggest that while songs are an excellent tool for increasing motivation and enhancing specific language skills, they should not be seen as a standalone solution in language instruction. The positive emotional responses to songs highlight their role in creating an engaging and low-stress learning environment, which is essential for student motivation and continued participation in language learning (Sadiqzade, 2025). However, as seen in the study, songs alone may not fully address the complexity of language learning, especially in areas such as grammar and fluency. Therefore, the theoretical contribution of this study lies in its argument that songs, when combined with other instructional strategies like focused grammar lessons and speaking practice, can offer a more balanced and effective approach to language learning. Teachers should be aware of the strengths of songs in vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and listening comprehension, while also integrating other methods to address the full spectrum of language skills (Assadi et al., 2025).

From a practical perspective, the study suggests that language teachers can enhance their teaching by incorporating songs in a way that aligns with specific learning objectives. The findings indicate that songs are particularly effective for vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation, but teachers should ensure that the use of songs is purposefully connected to the language structures being taught. This could involve selecting songs with clear pronunciation models, reinforcing new vocabulary through follow-up exercises, or using songs to introduce and practice specific grammar points. Moreover, teachers should be aware of the potential distractions that songs may cause, as highlighted by Informant 2, and strive to maintain a balance between enjoyment and educational value. Additionally, to maximize the effectiveness of songs in improving listening comprehension, teachers can use songs to expose students to different accents, colloquial language, and contextual language use, while providing opportunities for real-life application through listening activities outside of the classroom. Overall, the study underscores the importance of a holistic, multi-method approach in language teaching that capitalizes on the strengths of songs while addressing their limitations in other areas of language acquisition.

CONCLUSION

The primary finding of this research is that elementary-level students generally perceive the use of songs in English language learning as a highly effective and enjoyable method, significantly enhancing motivation, engagement, and enjoyment in the learning process. Songs, with their rhythmic and repetitive nature, help students improve vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation, and listening comprehension by creating a memorable learning experience. However, while songs are effective for short-term learning,

particularly for vocabulary retention and listening skills, their impact on long-term vocabulary retention and more complex language skills, such as grammar and speaking fluency, may be limited without additional instructional support. The study highlights the need for an integrated approach that combines songs with other teaching methods to address all aspects of language acquisition.

This research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the role of songs in language education, particularly for elementary-level students, an area underexplored in existing literature focused on secondary or adult learners. While the study supports previous findings on the effectiveness of songs for enhancing basic language skills, it also emphasizes the importance of a balanced approach that links songs with language learning objectives. Despite its contributions, the study has limitations, including a small sample size and the lack of direct measurement of the impact of songs on more complex language skills. Future research could expand the sample size, explore different cultural contexts, and investigate the effects of specific types of songs on various aspects of language learning, including grammar and speaking fluency.

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