

# THE INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH POP SONG ON LISTENING SKILL AMONG TENTH GRADE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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## Abstrak

*This study explores the influence of English pop songs on the listening skills of tenth-grade students at SMA YP PGRI 2 Makassar, using a quantitative descriptive method, it identifies factors like motivation, vocabulary, rhythm, and intonation. Data were collected through a questionnaire and a gap-fill lyric listening test. Findings show that English pop songs enhance students' interest and engagement in learning. The learning process becomes more enjoyable and effective with music integration. Average test scores indicate a fairly good level of listening comprehension. Challenges included mishearing caused by fast tempo, unclear articulation, and phonetic similarity. Despite this, English pop songs proved valuable in developing listening skills. Proper teaching strategies are needed to maximize their effectiveness. This study offers insights for using music in English language teaching to improve the listening skill of students.*

**Keywords:** *Pop Song, Listening Skills, Authentic Media.*

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## INTRODUCTION

English is universally acknowledged as an international language, employed almost in every location worldwide. However, as Indonesians, English is a foreign language that not everyone can understand or speak. This language, In the current era, where to get a decent job, a person must not only have talent and work ability but is also required to be able to understand English. Therefore, everyone is trying hard to be fluent in English, so that in the future they can achieve what has been targeted from the start of their struggle. Apart from that, students, teachers, or ordinary people spend a lot of time to be able to master English, especially the four main skills, reading, speaking, listening, and also writing skill. It is hoped that these four skills must be mastered in order to be able to speak English well and correctly. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, EFL listening refers to the listening skills developed by learners. It is a crucial aspect of language learning, as it forms the foundation for understanding spoken input in various contexts. In the EFL setting, discussions often focus on its characteristics, challenges, and strategies for improvement. EFL listening has several key characteristics, such as being oriented toward understanding meaning, where the main focus is on comprehending the message, both explicitly and implicitly (Field,2008). In EFL, students required to master all skills. Teachers are also required to find the right way or method, so that their students can improve their english language skills, especially improving their listening skills. It was found that most students had difficulty understanding what was said in english compared to the other three skills, listening skill is one that is difficult for students to master, they have difficulty understanding the pronunciation or words they hear.

According to DeVito (2014), listening is an active process consisting of several stages, receiving, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding. The receiving stage involves the listener capturing the message conveyed by the speaker. After that, the listener attempts to understand the meaning of the message, including interpreting words and nonverbal cues. The understood information

is then stored in memory for future use or response. Next, the listener evaluates the received message by determining its validity, relevance, and significance. The final stage is responding, where the listener provides feedback to the speaker to indicate that the message has been received and understood. DeVito emphasizes that listening is not merely about hearing sounds but requires attention and active engagement to ensure effective communication. Generally, students often encounter significant challenges when it comes to effective communication, such as difficulties in understanding various accents and intonations, especially when speakers use informal speech styles. A lack of vocabulary mastery often hinders comprehension, while the speaking speed of native speakers can make it hard for learners to process information. Furthermore, listening materials are sometimes presented without visual context, such as gestures or facial expressions, making comprehension even more difficult. This difficulty may stem from a lack of participation or engagement during lessons, where students tend to remain passive and avoid interacting with their teachers or peers. The absence of active involvement hinders their ability to develop strong communication skills, and this can be particularly problematic when it comes to improving listening skills, which require consistent practice and engagement.

Difficulties like this are also faced by class 10 students at SMA YP PGRI 2 Makassar, where students often face various difficulties in English listening skills, such as limited vocabulary which makes it difficult for them to understand new words or idiomatic phrases, as well as the speaking speed of native speakers which often times too fast for them to follow. Apart from that, the various accents and differences in pronunciation between British, American and Australian English are also challenges for them. Another difficulty is a lack of focus and concentration, especially if the material is too long or the topic is less interesting, as well as the influence of the mother tongue which makes students tend to translate directly, thereby slowing down their understanding. To address this issue, it is essential to implement more dynamic and interactive teaching strategies that specifically focus on listening skill development. In this study, pop songs will be utilized as an instructional medium to enhance the listening skills of students at SMA YP PGRI 2 Makassar. The use of pop songs as a learning medium to enhance students' listening skills is based on several key reasons. Pop songs can increase students' motivation and interest in learning due to their relatable lyrics and catchy melodies. In addition, pop songs provide exposure to authentic English, helping students understand commonly used vocabulary and pronunciation.

The repetition in songs also plays a crucial role in improving students' retention and comprehension of the language. Furthermore, song-based learning creates an enjoyable and interactive atmosphere, making students feel more relaxed and actively engaged in the learning process. Pop songs also introduce students to the cultural aspects of native speakers, which is essential for cross-cultural communication. For this reason, the Researcher has chosen to incorporate English Pop songs as part of the learning process, hoping that this approach will help students improve their listening abilities in an enjoyable way. Murphey (1992) explains that songs have great potential as a medium for language learning, particularly in enhancing listening skills. According to him, songs not only create an enjoyable learning atmosphere but also motivate students to be more engaged in the learning process. This concept is supported by recent research conducted by Sari (2019), which found that the use of songs as a learning medium has proven effective in improving the listening skills of tenthgrade high school students. In her study, she demonstrated that songs not only help students better understand the material but also increase their interest and motivation to learn English. These findings further strengthen Murphey's theory on the benefits of songs in language learning, making it one of the relevant methods to apply in the context of modern education.

This study aims to identify the factors within English pop songs that may influence students' listening skills at SMA YP PGRI 2 Makassar. Employing a quantitative descriptive method, the research focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical data to describe students' responses regarding their experiences with English pop songs. Although English pop songs are not officially used as a teaching material in the school, many students are already familiar with them outside the classroom. This prior exposure, or pre-knowledge, plays a crucial role in shaping how students comprehend the language through song lyrics. The study investigates how elements such as sentence structures, idiomatic expressions, and lyrical

meanings found in pop songs contribute to students' listening skill. With repeated informal exposure, students may develop a natural sensitivity to English sounds, rhythm, and common expressions, which supports their ability to understand spoken English in daily contexts. The researcher aims to reveal how this consistent, casual interaction with English pop songs influences students' listening skills and how they perceive this form of input as both entertaining and educational.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Purnamasari (2014), in her study "The Effectiveness of Using English Songs to Improve Listening Skills of Tenth Grade Students at SMA Negeri 1 Karanganyar," found that the integration of English songs markedly improves students' listening skills. These songs assist students in acclimating to vocabulary and linguistic structures within a natural environment, enhancing their understanding of quotidian language. Sari (2017) in "The Effect of Pop Songs in English to Improve Students' Listening Comprehension" asserts that pop songs, by reiterating essential language and phrases, might augment listening skills, particularly among junior high school students. Both studies highlight the efficacy of songs as an engaging educational instrument. Purnamasari emphasises the wide use of English songs, whereas Sari underscores the benefits of pop songs, which are more readily accessible to students. Both studies underscore the significance of repetition and contextual relevance in enhancing listening abilities. Hidayati (2018) demonstrates that English pop songs enhance listening abilities by providing relatable material, straightforward lyrics, and repetition. This approach improves student engagement and language proficiency. Likewise, Rahmawati (2020) discovers that English songs enhance listening abilities in senior high school students by introducing them to more intricate language structures. Both studies underscore the efficacy of songs in improving listening abilities, with Hidayati concentrating on junior high students and Rahmawati on senior high students.

These studies found that the use of English pop songs can significantly improve students' listening skills, as students become better able to understand English pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. These four studies also show that pop song lyrics introduce new vocabulary that is commonly used in everyday English, which then makes it easier for students to understand the conversational context and improves comprehension when listening. Apart from that, this research agrees that the use of pop songs that students are interested in increases their learning motivation, so that students are more enthusiastic about learning listening skills. Pop songs also have a positive impact on cultural understanding, as they often reflect the culture of native speakers, which assists students in understanding the underlying cultural context of English and benefits the improvement of their listening skills.

The key difference between previous studies and this research lies in the specific focus and context. Previous studies generally explored the impact of songs on improving listening skills across different educational levels, including junior high school and high school students. These studies also highlighted various factors, such as motivation, vocabulary acquisition, and preferences for song complexity, as influencing the effectiveness of using songs as a learning tool.

In contrast, this study narrows its scope to investigate the effects of English pop songs on the listening skills of tenth grade secondary school students by considering their pre-existing exposure (pre-knowledge) to English pop songs. Unlike earlier studies that applied songs directly in classroom instruction, this research explores how informal exposure outside the school environment can contribute to students' listening development. By focusing on a specific genre of English pop songs, this study aims to provide a more detailed and relevant understanding of how popular modern music can serve as an effective medium for improving listening skills among adolescents in a secondary school setting. In addition, this study also seeks to identify certain factors in pop songs such as rhythm, melody, repetition, and lyrical content that can contribute to the development of students' listening skills.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a quantitative descriptive method. The population comprised 15 tenth-grade

students at SMA YP PGRI 2 Makassar. Data were collected using a listening skill test (gap-fill lyrics) and a 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire. The test assessed students' ability to understand song lyrics, while the questionnaire gathered their perceptions of pop songs as a learning medium. Data analysis included mean score and standard deviation calculations, followed by categorization based on performance levels.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### FINDINGS

The findings are presented in a descriptive form based on the data collected through listening skill tests and are discussed to determine the influence of English pop songs on students' listening skill.

#### Listening skill result

To evaluate the students' listening skills, a gap-fill lyric test was used to assess the student's listening comprehension. The 20-item exam was created to gauge the students' comprehension of spoken English by having them listen to English pop music. This approach was selected because song lyrics are a powerful tool for improving listening comprehension since they incorporate a variety of real spoken language elements, including vocabulary, syntax, intonation, and pronunciation, all in a contextualised manner.

Fifteen students took the test. Students had to fill in the blanks in the lyrics of a few English pop songs they had listened to during the test. It was anticipated that this exercise would help students become more focused, better at making predictions, and more aware of the context of the songs. The scoring system for the test follows the formula provided by L.R. Gay, which is as follows on the table 1.

**Table 1** Students scores of the test

No	Samples	Coreect Answer	Score
1	R	9	45
2	AN	17	85
3	SFP	18	90
4	SO	17	85
5	MIS	14	70
6	FF	16	80
7	MF	20	100
8	NM	9	45
9	EAV	10	50
10	ABK	10	50
11	MTH	12	60
12	SJ	12	60
13	A	19	95
14	PF	10	50
15	ES	11	55
Total			$\sum Xi = 1020$

Based on the table 1, the total overall score is 1020. The highest score was obtained by only one student with a score of 100, while the lowest score was 45, obtained by two students.

In general, the distribution of scores shows that most students have moderate to high listening skills. This is indicated by the dominance of scores between 50 and 100 gain by the students. Thus, the calculation results show that students' average listening ability is 68. This average reflects the overall performance of students in understanding the listening material given. Based on the established assessment scale, the average value of 68 can be categorised as quite good. This is implied that most students have been able to understand oral information in English quite adequately, although there are

still some aspects that need to be improved, such as accuracy in recognising words, understanding the context of sentences, and capturing the overall meaning of the text being listened to. Although the average (6 students) is in the fairly good category, this finding also indicates the need to develop students' listening abilities more optimally through more interactive learning methods and more varied media, such as the use of English songs.

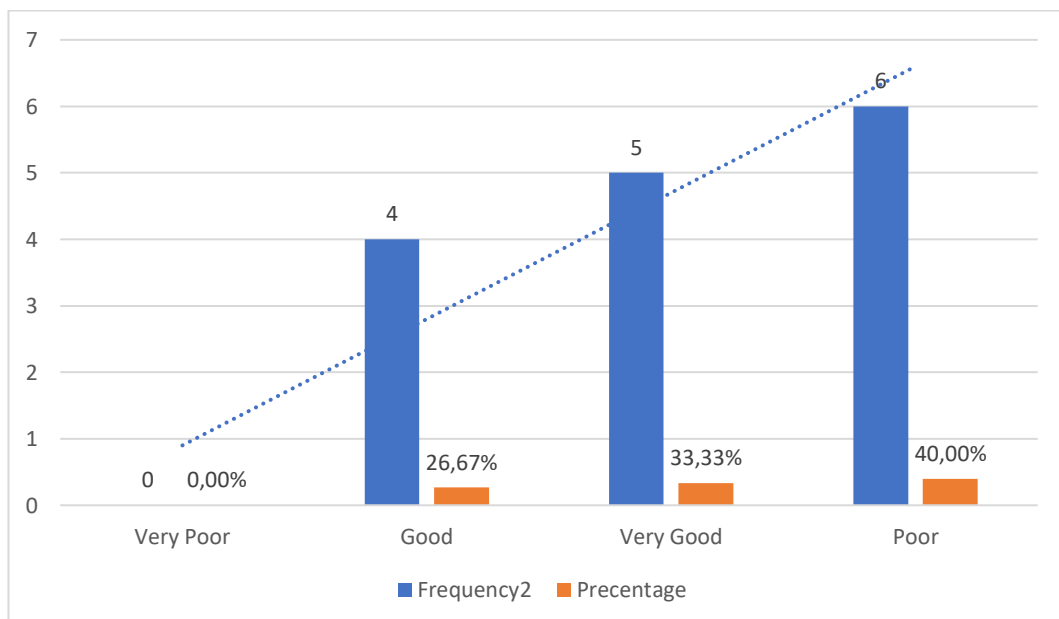
To measure students' listening skills, a song lyrics completion test was conducted on April 15, 2025. In this test, students were asked to listen to English songs and fill in the blank parts of the lyrics. This test consists of 20 questions that must be completed by students. Based on the test results, each student obtained a varying score, with the total score being 1050 from 15 student samples. Based on the value classification, there were four criteria and the percentage of the test values on the table 1.

**Table 2.** Classification and rate percentage of the students score of the test

No	Classification	Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	Very Good	81 - 100	5	33,33
2	Good	61 - 80	4	26,67
3	Poor	41 - 60	6	40,00
4	Very Poor	20 - 40	0	0
Total			15	100%

Based on the table 2, the average listening score was 68, classified as “Good” based on Table 4.3. However, the standard deviation of 19.44 indicates a wide variation in student performance—some scored very high, while others performed poorly. This is evident in the distribution: 5 students (33.33%) were in the “Very Good” category, 4 (26.67%) in “Good”, and 6 (40%) in “Poor”. Despite the average being “Good,” the high variation suggests that additional support is needed, especially for students who struggled to meet the standard.

The following chart is shown to give a better idea of how the students' scores are distributed. Based on the results of their listening skills tests, this graphic shows the proportion of pupils in each performance area.



**Figure 1.** Percentage of students Score

### Questionnaire result

In this section, the researcher analyzes the questionnaire results to identify factors influencing students' listening skills through the use of English pop songs. This analysis addresses the research questions and provides insight into how and to what extent pop songs contribute to students' listening skill development. The students' answers are shown in Table 4.3. A Likert scale was used to translate each response into a score, and the aggregate of the responses to all questionnaire items was the final score. Students' opinions, motivation, and level of interest in using English pop music to improve their listening abilities are reflected in these scores. The data were examined using a descriptive quantitative approach to determine broad response patterns and to categorize students' opinions toward the use of pop songs as a medium in listening skill development.

**Table 3.** Scoring the Resnponses

No	Responden	Score
1	R	62
2	AN	82
3	SFP	85
4	SO	76
5	MIS	66
6	FF	72
7	MF	96
8	NM	81
9	EAV	77
10	ABK	69
11	MTH	56
12	SJ	40
13	A	75
14	PF	66
15	ES	68
Total		$\sum X_i = 1072$

The mean score of the responses is 71.47. This score indicates the average level of agreement among students toward the questionnaire statements, which were measured using the Using the Likert Scale (1–5), this score represents the average degree of agreement that students had with the statements in the questionnaire. With a mean score of 71.47, the respondents appear to have a typically high level of agreement or positive assessment, given the maximum potential score per respondent (assuming 20 questions with a maximum value of 5) is 100.

This suggests that most students agreed or strongly agreed with the comments made in the survey, suggesting that they had a generally favourable and open mindset towards how English pop music affected their listening abilities. Such a response implies that these students understand the positive impact that English pop music listening has on improving their comprehension of spoken English, which makes the learning process more interesting and successful. This positive opinion emphasises the potential of popular music as a useful and motivating tool for language learning, especially for enhancing students' listening skills.

## DISCUSSION

### Listening skill test

The listening test for this study was administered on April 15, 2025. The test was taken by fifteen tenth-grade students from SMA YP PGRI 2 Makassar. Five students achieved a Very Good score (81–100), four students achieved a Good score (61–80), and six students obtained a Poor score (41–60), according to the results. The majority of students had a pretty excellent degree of listening skills, as evidenced by the fact that no student obtained a Very Poor score (0–40). The sum of all students' scores was  $\sum X_i = 1020$ . The score ranged from a minimum of 45 to a maximum of 100.

These results showed that the tenth graders at SMA YP PGRI 2 Makassar generally had good listening skills. Even though just one student had a perfect score, the other 14 students still had some trouble understanding English pop songs, indicating that they still need to work on their listening comprehension. The most common mistakes were found in words with phonetic similarities, such as "bite" being mispronounced as "breath," "point" as "brushing," and "champion" as "fighter," according to the test, which asked students to fill in the missing lyrics. More over 60% of students' responses revealed these misconceptions, underscoring a persistent problem with distinguishing identical sounds.

There are a number of musical and aural reasons for these mistakes. First of all, the song's quick tempo put students under time pressure, making it harder for them to comprehend every word. Second, the singer's pronunciation frequently overlapped with the sounds of the background instruments, making it harder to understand what they were saying. Last but not least, songs are more difficult for students at this level to understand since their natural rhythm and related speech patterns frequently diverge from classroom speech models. These results show that although songs like Roar can be interesting listening exercises, the linguistic intricacy and melodic components provide difficulties that impair students' comprehension precision. Thus, in order to enhance hearing results, the use of song-based listening assessments should be accompanied by suitable scaffolding techniques, such as slow playback, numerous repeats, and vocabulary previews.

Although, there are certain difficulties, the results of this study suggest that using English pop songs to teach listening skills has a lot of promise. These findings are consistent with those of Wusqo, Wahab, and Fersiyanto (2019), who found that background music, quick tempo, and difficult pronunciation were common obstacles in song-based listening exercises. It has been demonstrated that these three components impair students understanding, especially when songs are the primary medium for listening instruction. This study analysed and described students' performance on a listening exam that included English pop song lyrics using a descriptive quantitative approach. Although students shown excitement and interest in learning through songs, the research found that a number of common mistakes were made, particularly in vocabulary comprehension, intonation, rhythm, and pronunciation. Stated differently, the test results demonstrated the limitations of employing song as a learning tool without sufficient pedagogical support, even though there was a discernible improvement in the students' listening skills.

### **Questionnaire**

A 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire was used to assess students' perceptions of the use of English pop songs to improve their listening skills. Every statement focused on a different facet of developing listening skills, such as motivation, interest, rhythm, pronunciation, and comprehension. Descriptive analysis was used to determine trends based on the mean scores of each item. Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The findings showed a number of recurring trends. The majority of students agreed, or strongly agreed, that listening skills development was made more enjoyable and motivating by English pop songs. When it came to whether music alone could enhance focus or particular subskills like grammar and vocabulary, opinions were more divided. This implies that although music is captivating, its efficacy may differ based on the learning goal. Numerous items in the "setuju" and "sangat setuju" categories garnered the most responses, as can be seen in the dominating answer tables, suggesting a substantial upward trend in student perceptions.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the descriptive quantitative analysis of the data obtained from both the listening skill test and the questionnaire, it can be concluded that English pop songs have a significant and positive influence on the listening skill development of tenth-grade students at SMA YP PGRI 2 Makassar. The use of these two research instruments was essential for this study. The listening skill test was used to measure actual improvements in students' listening comprehension, while the questionnaire was designed to capture students' perceptions, motivation, and affective responses toward learning through English pop songs.

In order to take into account, the students' prior knowledge, this dual strategy was implemented. At first, it was discovered that English pop songs had not been used in the school's listening exercises. Therefore, it became crucial to investigate if the introduction of this medium would affect attitude and performance.

The results from the listening skill test indicated improvements in several key aspects of listening, including:

- 1) Vocabulary acquisition: Because song lyrics are repetitive and contextual, students were better able to comprehend and remember new terms.
- 2) Pronunciation awareness: After listening to real audio from songs, many students improved their ability to recognise spoken words and started to mimic native pronunciation.
- 3) Rhythm and intonation: By becoming more aware of stress patterns and intonation, students were better able to understand spoken English more fluently.

The questionnaire responses, which showed that most students had good opinions about the utilisation of English pop music in the classroom, further corroborated these findings. Increased motivation, interest, and enjoyment—all essential components of successful language learning—were noted by them.

The results of this study are consistent with earlier research by Murphey (1992), who highlighted the value of music in language learning through engagement and repetition, and Eng (2013), who pointed out that music is a genuine input that improves motivation and comprehension. Additionally, Medina (1993) discovered that music might greatly enhance second language learners' vocabulary and listening comprehension.

In summary, this study has provided comprehensive answers to each of its research questions. Mastering vocabulary, improving pronunciation, and comprehending rhythm and intonation are some of the elements that contribute to the development of listening abilities through English pop music. The improved exam scores and encouraging questionnaire responses amply illustrated the beneficial effect. English pop songs are therefore a useful addition to the curriculum for improving high school students' listening skill.

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