

THE USE OF POPULAR SONGS THROUGH YOUTUBE MUSIC TO IMPROVE EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS' LISTENING SKILLS AT SMPN 3 PALOPO

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine the effectiveness of using Popular Songs through YouTube Music in improving students' listening skills. The research method used was a pre-experimental design. The population in this research were eight-grade students, with a sample of one class consisting of 26 students. The sampling technique used total sampling at SMPN 3 Palopo. The instruments used in this research were listening test (pre-test and post-test) to measure students' listening skills and self-assessment to identify students' perceptions. The data were analyzed using SPSS. Based on the normality test results, the data were not normally distributed, so the analysis was continued using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test non-parametric test to determine the difference in students' listening skills before and after the treatment. The results showed that there was a significant improvement in students' listening skill after the treatment. This was evidenced by the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value $0.00 < 0.05$, which means that Hypothesis (H_1) can be accepted, and Hypothesis (H_0) was not accepted. Based on this average results, it can be stated that the use of Popular song through YouTube Music in teaching listening skill is effective in improving students' listening skills.

Keywords: Popular Song, Pre-experimental, Listening Skills.

1) INTRODUCTION

Listening is one of the most fundamental skills in English language because it enables learners to receive, interpret, and understand spoken language effectively. As a repetitive skill. Listening plays a crucial role in second language acquisition since students acquire pronunciation, vocabulary, and language patterns through auditory exposure. However, despite its importance, listening remains one of the most challenging language skills for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly at the junior high school level. Many students experience difficulties in understanding spoken English due to limited vocabulary, unfamiliar pronunciation, rapid speech, and insufficient exposure to authentic listening materials.

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In Indonesian classrooms, listening instruction is often conducted using conventional teacher-centered methods, where teachers read texts aloud and students answer comprehension questions. Such practices tend to provide limited authentic listening exposure and may reduce students' engagement in the learning process. Based on preliminary observation conducted at SMPN 3 Palopo, eighth grade students showed difficulties in comprehending spoken English during listening activities. Many students struggled to identify main ideas, recognize detailed information, and infer meaning from spoken texts. In addition, the lack of varied instructional media and technological support in listening instruction contributed to students' low motivation and poor listening performance.

To address these issues, English teachers need innovative and engaging learning media that can provide authentic listening input while increasing students' motivation. One of the alternative media that can be integrated into listening instruction is popular songs. Songs contain authentic pronunciation, natural rhythm, contextualized vocabulary, and repetitive language patterns that may support listening comprehension development. According to Rost (2011), listening comprehension improves when learners receive meaningful and contextualized language input. Songs can provide such input in a format that is familiar and enjoyable for learners.

Moreover, previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of songs in improving listening skills. Daqsatqani (2024) found that popular songs significantly improved junior high school students' listening achievement. Similarly, Teppa et al. (2022) reported that song lyrics enhanced students' listening comprehension through repeated exposure to authentic spoken language. However, although prior studies have investigated the use of songs in listening instruction, most of them focused on conventional audio media and did not specifically integrate digital music platforms into the learning process.

The emergence of digital platforms such as YouTube Music offers additional opportunities for listening instruction. YouTube Music provides easy access to authentic songs, synchronized lyrics, replay features, and diverse song selections, making it a potentially effective medium for listening practice. Despite these advantages, limited research has explored the integration of YouTube Music as a digital platform in teaching listening to junior high school students. This gap suggests the need for further investigation into how digital music streaming platforms can enhance English listening instruction.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether the use of popular songs through YouTube Music can improve eighth grade students' listening skills at SMPN 3 Palopo. In addition, this study seeks to examine students' responses toward the use of popular songs through YouTube Music as a learning medium in listening instruction. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to English language teaching practices by providing an alternative and engaging strategy for teaching listening skills in EFL classrooms.

2) METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a pre-experimental design with a one-group pre-test and post-test design. This design was selected to determine the effectiveness of popular songs through YouTube Music in improving students' listening skills by comparing students' listening achievement before and after the treatment. In this design, a pre-test was administered prior to the treatment, followed by the implementation of the treatment, and finally a post-test was conducted to measure students' improvement.

The research was conducted at SMPN 3 Palopo during the 2025/2026 academic year. The population of this study consisted of 332 eighth grade students enrolled at the school. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select one class as the research sample. The selected sample consisted of 26 students from class VIII-E.

The instruments used in this study were listening tests and students' perception questionnaires. The listening tests consisted of a pre-test and a post-test, each containing 25 items in the forms of multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blank items, and lyric gap-fill exercises. The tests were designed to assess students' listening sub-skills, including identifying main ideas, recognizing specific details, making inferences, and understanding vocabulary in context. In addition, a perception questionnaire was administered after the treatment to examine students' responses toward the use of popular songs through YouTube Music in listening instruction.

Prior to data collection, the research instruments were validated through content validity by an English lecturer experienced in teaching listening. The instruments were evaluated in terms of relevance to learning objectives, clarity of instructions, appropriateness of language level, and suitability for measuring listening sub-skills. Revisions were made based on the validator's feedback before the instruments were administered.

The treatment was conducted in four meetings over a two-week period. During the treatment sessions, students were taught listening using selected popular songs delivered through YouTube Music. In each meeting, students participated in listening activities such as identifying the main idea of songs, recognizing detailed information, answering inference questions, completing lyric gap-fill worksheets, and discussing the meanings of the songs. The songs used in the treatment were selected based on students' language level, lyric clarity, and thematic appropriateness for junior high school learners.

The data obtained from the listening tests were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to calculate the minimum score, maximum score, mean score, and standard deviation of the students' listening performance. Before conducting hypothesis testing, a normality test was performed to determine the distribution of the data. Since the data were found to be not normally distributed, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to analyze the significance of differences between the pre-test and post-test scores. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26 for Windows.

3) RESULTS

The students' listening scores before and after the implementation of popular songs through YouTube Music were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the students' pre-test and post-test scores.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Listening Scores

Steps	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test	26	40	68	58.6	8.61
Post-test	26	63	91	82.9	8.83

As shown in Table 1, the mean score of the pre-test was 58.6, while the mean score of the post-test increased to 82.9. The minimum score improved from 40 in the pre-test to 63 in the post-test, while the maximum score increased from 68 to 91.

Table 2 presents the classification of students' listening scores in the pre-test.

Table 2. Classification of Students' Pre-test Scores

No	Clasification	Score	Pre-test	
			Frequency	Percentage
1.	Very Good	81-100	-	-
2.	Good	66-80	8	31%
3.	Fair	56-65	8	31%
4.	Poor	41-55	8	31%
5.	Very Poor	<40	2	8%
Total			26	100%

The data in Table 2 show that most students were categorized in the fair, good, and poor classifications before the treatment.

Table 3 presents the classification of students' listening scores in the post-test.

Table 3. Classification of Students' Post-test Scores

No	Clasification	Score	Post-test	
			Frequency	Percentage
1.	Very Good	81-100	14	54%
2.	Good	66-80	10	38%
3.	Fair	56-65	2	8%
4.	Poor	41-55	-	-
5.	Very Poor	<40	-	-
Total			26	100%

As shown in Table 3, the majority of students were classified in the very good category after the treatment.

The normality test results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Normality Test Results

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	.154	26	.114	.896	26	.013
Post-test	.202	26	.008	.853	26	.002

The significance values of both the pre-test and post-test were below 0.05, indicating that the data were not normally distributed.

Therefore, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test was used to test the hypothesis. The result is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test Result

Type of Test	Comparison Variable	Asymp. Sign. (2-tailed)	Description
Wilcoxon Signed Rank	Pre-test-Post-test	0.000	There is significant difference

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test showed that the significance value was 0.000. In addition to the test scores, students' perceptions toward the use of popular songs through YouTube Music were collected through a questionnaire. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Students' Perceptions Toward the Use of Popular Songs Through YouTube Music

Statement	Agree
The use of songs increased motivation in learning English	100%
Songs helped understand English messages better	92%
Songs helped recognize singer's feeling/attitude	100%
Songs helped catch important details while listening	96%
Songs reduced difficulty in understanding fast spoken English	69%

The questionnaire results indicated that most students responded positively to the implementation of popular songs through YouTube Music in listening instruction.

4) **DISCUSSIONS**

The findings of this study indicated that the use of popular songs through YouTube Music significantly improved the listening skills of eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Palopo. This was evidenced by the increase in the students' mean score from 58.6 in the pre-test to 82.9 in the post-test, as well as the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test result showing a significance value of 0.000. These findings suggest that popular songs delivered through digital music platforms can serve as effective instructional media for listening instruction.

The improvement in students' listening achievement may be attributed to several factors. First, songs provide repetitive and meaningful language input, which allows students to hear vocabulary, sentence patterns, and pronunciation multiple times. Such repetition may facilitate better word recognition and listening comprehension. According to Rost (2011), repeated exposure to contextualized spoken input helps learners process auditory information more effectively and improves comprehension over time.

Second, the integration of YouTube Music enhanced the learning experience by providing synchronized lyrics and replay features. These features enabled students to match spoken language with written text while listening repeatedly, which likely supported vocabulary recognition and pronunciation awareness. This finding aligns with Medina (2002), who argued that music supports second language acquisition by combining auditory and linguistic input in an engaging format.

Furthermore, the students' positive questionnaire responses indicated that the use of songs increased motivation and reduced anxiety during listening activities. Most students agreed that learning through songs was enjoyable and helped them understand spoken English better. This supports Harmer's (2007) assertion that enjoyable and motivating classroom activities positively influence students' language learning outcomes.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research. Daqsatqani (2024) reported that the use of popular songs significantly improved students' listening achievement in junior high school. Similarly, Teppa et al. (2022) found that songs enhanced students' listening comprehension through repeated exposure to authentic spoken English. Therefore, the present study strengthens previous evidence regarding the effectiveness of songs as listening media while extending the literature by highlighting the role of YouTube Music as a digital platform for delivering song-based instruction.

Despite the positive findings, this study had several limitations. First, the study employed a pre-experimental design without a control group, which limited the ability to compare the treatment effect with alternative instructional methods. Second, the sample size was relatively small and involved only one class from one school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are recommended to use quasi-experimental or true experimental designs with larger and more diverse samples. Further research may also investigate the effectiveness of different genres of songs or compare various digital music platforms in listening instruction.

5) CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the use of popular songs through YouTube Music effectively improved the listening skills of eighth grade students at SMPN 3 Palopo. The students' listening achievement increased significantly after the treatment, as indicated by the improvement in the mean score from 58.6 to 82.9 and supported by the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test result showing a significance value of 0.000.

In addition to improving listening performance, the use of popular songs through YouTube Music also generated positive student responses, particularly in increasing motivation, engagement, and confidence during listening activities. The enjoyable and authentic nature of song-based learning appeared to create a more supportive environment for listening practice.

Therefore, popular songs through YouTube Music can be recommended as an alternative instructional medium for teaching listening in English as a Foreign Language classrooms, particularly at the junior high school level. English teachers are encouraged to integrate technology-based song media into listening instruction to create more engaging and effective learning experiences.

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