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ENGLISH SONGS AS LEARNING MEDIA TO TEACH EFL STUDENTS: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

Anisah Almauizzah¹, Aprilia Devi Hindriana²

Universitas Negeri Semarang^{1,2}

Corresponding Email: almauizzah@students.unnes.ac.id, liaaprilli31@students.unnes.ac.id

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Abstract

This research is a systematic literature review that aims to find out what are the English language skills that can be improved through songs for EFL students. This research followed the PRISMA 2020 guideline statement for systematic literature reviews, by investigating articles from SCOPUS and Google Scholar databases (2015 - 2025). Out of the many studies, 15 studies were considered suitable for this review. Based on the analysis of previous studies, it was found that songs have a positive impact on improving language skills, including speaking, listening, writing, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation. Songs provide authentic, fun and memorable language exposure due to their repetitive and contextual. Besides that, songs also help to increase learning motivation, self-confidence, and create a more relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere. This finding shows that songs can be used as one of the effective learning media. Therefore, teachers are suggested to integrate songs in the learning process to support the improvement of students' English language skills.

Keywords: EFL, Language Skills, Learning Media, Song, Teaching English

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INTRODUCTION

The learning process will be more interesting and interactive when using songs as a medium to encourage student participation in English classes (Güler & Bozkurt, 2021). Songs foster a relaxed learning environment and give possibilities for language practice through repetition, listening comprehension, language association and assimilation, and phonological development (Pangaribuan & Chairunnissa, 2023). However, despite the availability of songs as an engaging medium, most students have difficulty in mastering English because they do not make it a daily habit and only rely on limited classroom learning (Huang et al., 2022; Panggabean, 2015). Another possible reason is that students feel bored with the way English teachers deliver materials or monotonous materials (Riyanti, 2019). Students also have difficulty in learning English due to lack of vocabulary, confusing grammar, problems in pronunciation, lack of confidence in speaking, and poor listening skills (Huang et, al 2022; Suryanto & Sari, 2021).

Referring to the stated issues, teachers should provide the best solution to students' concerns through the use of a learning medium. Teachers can utilize songs as an effective learning medium to improve students' English language skills (Hadi, 2019). According to Wijaya (2018), songs are highly valued and useful media among the materials utilized in the teaching-learning process. Songs can encourage interesting and entertaining activities in the classroom, create positive learning environments, increase student attention, relieve tension or stress, develop inspiration and motivation (Ammelia et al., 2024; Asmaradhani et al., 2018; Ilinawati & Dharma, 2018; Wijaya, 2018; Jabak, 2021). Asmaradhani et al. (2018) also stated that songs can energize learning activities, improve memory, enhance imagination, and add a sense of fun. Moreover, the use of songs as media can help students enhance language abilities, such as increase students' vocabulary acquisition (Ammelia, 2024; Karim et al., 2022; Mannarelli & Serrano, 2024). Ammelia (2024) also stated that using songs can improve listening ability and grammar. Using songs helps students learn the target language by improving pronunciation of comprehension and production of crucial pronunciation qualities (Ammelia, 2024; Asmaradhani, 2018; Judijanto et al., 2024).

Several research on the use of songs as a medium for learning English have been conducted. Among others are, Wong Jun Hui and Jamaludin (2024) discovered that using songs in English language teaching has advantages, including improving listening and speaking skills in English, increasing student motivation and engagement,

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learning correct pronunciation, and making vocabulary easier to remember, and that the use of songs in English language education is appropriate for all age categories. There is also a study by Singh and Jeganmohan (2020) that shows that songs, especially action songs, can improve students' English proficiency, students' motivation and attitude towards the use of songs in the classroom as well as teachers' and students' perceptions towards the use of songs. Furthermore, Nguansumangk et al. (2020) looked at the features of songs and how they are utilized in language learning, and discovered that songs can be used for motivation, listening, speaking, vocabulary growth, grammar structure improvement, reading practice, writing practice, and critical thinking practice. However, these reviews have not addressed what English language skills can be improved through songs for EFL students. Thus, this systematic review is intended to fill that gap by focusing on songs and their influence on EFL students' language skills in depth.

This research aims to analyze what are the English language skills that can be improved through songs for EFL students. Through a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), this research seeks to identify the various language skills that are affected by songs as learning media. Theoretically, this systematic literature review is expected to contribute to a greater understanding and insight into the use of English songs to improve various language skills for EFL students. Furthermore, this study adds to the existing literature review and serves as a reference for future research. While, in practice, this research seeks to provide recommendations for teachers about integrating songs as learning medium into English language teaching for EFL students. By identifying the impact of using songs as learning media, this research equips teachers to enhance students' learning experience to make it more interesting, effective, and create a positive classroom atmosphere that encourages better language skills.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research methodology used in this study is a systematic literature review approach. This approach was carried out in accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) 2020 statement which includes a checklist and a flow chart.

Eligibility Criteria

To ensure the relevance and quality of these studies in this Systematic Literature Review (SLR), specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. The inclusion criteria for this study ensured that only relevant research was considered. While, studies that do not meet the mentioned criteria are not included in this review. For further details, can be seen through table 1.

Table 1. Eligibility Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion	Justification		
Date	Journal articles that were published between 2015-2025	Journal articles that were published before 2015	This study used a time range of the last 10 years (2015-2025) to ensure relevant findings using current literature and to avoid outdated information.		
Study focus	Studies focus on using English songs to teach English for EFL students and focus on students' language skills.	Studies that discussed another learning medium, focused on ESL students, or native English speakers are excluded	The selected studies had to focus on English songs as a learning medium for the development of various language skills. Also, focus on the use of English songs as learning media for EFL (English as Foreign Language) students, not ESL (English as Second Language) or native speakers because EFL, ESL, and native speakers have differences in the learning context.		
Publication	Peer reviewed journal articles	Non peer reviewed journal articles, such as result conference, part of book, book, etc.	The use of peer-reviewed articles is used to ensure the quality and credibility of the research because it has been evaluated by experts in the field. Meanwhile, non-peer reviewed sources do not necessarily have the same level of academic rigour.		
Language	Written in English	Not written in English	The selection of articles was limited to English to maintain consistency and		

			avoid potential misinterpretation in the analysis process.
Database	SCOPUS, Google Scholar indexed by SINTA 1, 2, and 3	Not indexed by SINTA and indexed SINTA 4, 5, and 6	Google Scholar database with SINTA (Science and Technology Index) level 1-3 is used because the higher level of the Sinta journal category, the better the quality. While the Scopus database was used because it includes international journals from various publishers, provides a global perspective on EFL teaching using
			English songs, and has strict quality standards for indexed journals.

Subject or Source

SCOPUS and Google Scholar databases indexed by SINTA were used to address the study's research questions. The database search will be finished in March 2025. The database along with the research strategy and results can be seen through the following table 2.

Table 2. Subject or Source

Table 2. Subject of Source					
Databases	Research Strategy				
Scopus	TITLE (song OR "English song") AND (language AND skill OR				
	reading OR writing OR speaking OR listening OR pronunciation OR vocabulary) AND (efl OR english AND foreign AND language OR				
	learning OR study) AND PUBYEAR > 2015 LANGUAGE (english) KEY (song OR "English songs" OR "language skill" OR "language ability" OR "learning English" OR EFL OR "English Foreign				
	Language")				
Google Scholar	"English song" "medium" "learning English" "teaching English"	116			
•	"language skill" "reading" "writing" "speaking" "listening" "				
	"vocabulary" "pronunciation" "EFL"				
Total		217			

Data Collection Procedure

For screening, the researchers collected journal articles based on the research topic and sorted them into Mendeley for SCOPUS and MS Excel for Google Scholar indexed by SINTA. Duplicate titles and articles that do not fit the context of using English songs for EFL students will be eliminated. The qualifying criteria given in Table 1 are then used to conduct screening. The appropriate articles will serve as research material using the systematic literature review method. The deadline for the article search is March 16, 2025.

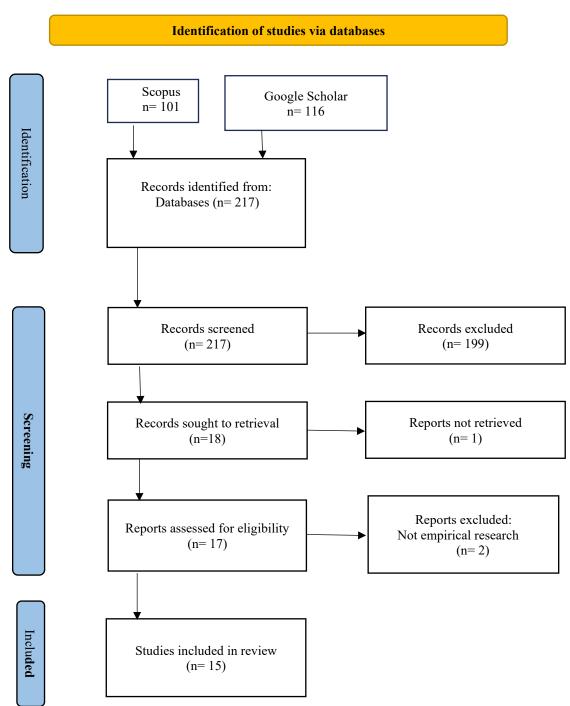
The researchers find references through two databases, which are SCOPUS with formulas TITLE (song OR "English song") AND (language AND skill OR reading OR writing OR speaking OR listening OR pronunciation OR vocabulary) AND (EFL OR English AND foreign AND language OR learning OR study) AND PUBYEAR > 2015 LANGUAGE (English) KEY (song OR "English songs" OR "language skill" OR "language ability" OR "learning English" OR EFL OR "English Foreign Language") and Google Scholar indexed by SINTA with keywords "English song" "medium" "learning English" "teaching English" "language skill" "reading" "writing" "speaking" "listening" "vocabulary" "pronunciation" "EFL". Through the SCOPUS database the author found 101 journal articles based on keywords, while through the google scholar database there were 116 journal articles, with a total of 217 articles from both databases.

The titles of journal articles from the two databases obtained were collected using Mendeley for SCOPUS and MS Excel for Google Scholar indexed by SINTA to review the correlation of titles with the researcher's topic. Besides that, researchers selected only a few articles that had been accredited by SINTA by looking at the accreditation label on the journal display. From 217 articles, no duplicates were found, so all the articles discovered were considered for review. After reviewing the articles based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 199 articles were excluded because they did not match the research topic and were unable to address the research question.

The remaining 18 studies were screened for data extraction. There is 1 article that cannot be retrieved and the remaining 17 articles were examined for eligibility, and it was found that 2 articles did not involve empirical

research. After assessing feasibility, 15 studies were selected for review. Figure 1 depicts a step-by-step search and selection process for conducting a Systematic Literature Review using the PRISMA 2020 framework.

Figure 1: Flowchart of the Screening and Selection Procedure



Data Analysis

After having 15 journals to be analyzed, the researcher conducted data collection on MS Word by categorizing themes from several previous research findings. Then, the researcher identified, categorized and interpreted the repetitive themes in the journals. Each finding was classified based on the research focus and the results of the research on the use of songs in English language learning.

This grouping process included some data to be categorized into themes such as general language skills improvement, vocabulary improvement, pronunciation improvement, influence on listening, speaking and writing skills. Then, the researcher organized the findings systematically in a table to make it easier to answer the research question.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

What are the English language skills that can be improved through songs for EFL students?

The research question was answered by addressing the use of songs to improve language skills, such as speaking, listening, writing, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

Improving Language Skills through Songs

There are some studies that show the use of songs to improve students' language skills by Hendriani et al., (2020). The finding can be seen from the following data:

"... songs improve their listening, their speaking, their pronunciation, and their vocabulary mastery. Besides, songs increase their knowledge, their confidence, and their motivation, and make them calm and relaxed, because in their opinions, songs are entertaining and fun." (Hendriani et.al,., 2020, p. 243)

So, songs are believed by EFL students in Indonesia to have many benefits in learning English. Songs are also considered a fun and effective learning medium for independent learning outside the classroom (Hendriani et al., 2020). These findings are supported by several other studies with findings that show the use of English songs have a positive impact on students' self-learning. Songs provide an increase in English vocabulary through listening to songs and tend to use the new words in daily communication, increase learning motivation, encourage speaking practice using new vocabulary, and help develop students' writing skills (Jabak, 2021). Moreover, students feel that the use of songs as media in learning English can help them in various aspects such as improving listening skill, improving pronunciation, increasing vocabulary, developing confidence in speaking, help build a calm and relaxing learning session, restoring students mood and focus in the classroom (Pangaribuan & Chairunnissa, 2023). From those studies, the authors indicate that songs have some advantages for students in improving language skills, increasing confidence and relaxation, and boosting their mood and focus in the classroom. So, many educators consider songs as a useful tool because songs are not only entertaining but also enhance teaching and learning in the EFL context.

Songs to Improve Speaking Skill

There is a study that shows the use of songs to improve students' speaking skills by Wijaya (2018). The finding can be seen from the following data:

"... The techniques become the factors that have a vital role in enhancing the teaching learning activity more effectively and efficiently. Therefore, teaching speaking by using songs is applicable to teaching English. It is one of the appropriate media in teaching speaking ..." (Wijaya, 2018, p. 83)

From the data, the use of songs is proven to improve speaking skill in the aspects of pronunciation, fluency, comprehension, grammar and vocabulary. Songs also create a fun learning atmosphere and motivate students to speak in English. In this study, the author indicates that songs can be an effective medium because they help overcome students' difficulties in speaking English, improving performance significantly compared to the usual methods. So, songs can be a medium for teachers to help students improve their speaking skills.

Songs to Improve Listening Skill

There is a study that shows the use of songs to improve students' speaking skills by Rohana & Saharani (2023). The finding can be seen from the following data:

"... song can give positive contribution in teaching listening. Listening to the song can help students to engage the learning process and to get an exciting experience in learning English especially in their listening skill. It also helps the students to be more active and easier to understanding the dialogue of listening in class..." (Rohana & Saharani, 2023, p. 79)

So, the use of songs as an authentic material can improve EFL students' listening skills. Songs not only help improve students' listening comprehension, but also create a fun learning atmosphere, increase student engagement, and strengthen learning motivation (Rohana & Saharani, 2023). These findings are supported by other study with findings that using song in listening class is one of the strategies that can be used to improve students' listening skills specifically which are to teach grammar and vocabulary, practice intonation and stress of words, discuss the meaning of songs or discuss song lyrics, develop students' writing skills, reduce anxiety because

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students feel happy and so on, and can expand vocabulary. The advantages and benefits of using songs can be obtained if the implementation is done well (Yuliarini, 2022). From those studies, the authors indicate that using songs as medium in the English classroom significantly improves students' listening skills, strengthening their interest or motivation, engagement and comprehension ability, and creating a fun learning atmosphere. So, songs can be a recommended medium for teachers to teach EFL students in improving their listening skills

Songs to Improve Writing Skill

There is a study that shows the use of songs to improve students' speaking skills by Haris & Siswana (2022). The finding can be seen from the following data:

"... the use of songs as a pedagogical tool significantly enhances students' writing skills. The acceptance of the alternative hypothesis confirms that songs can create a more engaging and effective learning environment, which leads to better student outcomes compared to traditional instruction methods. ..." (Haris & Siswana, 2022, p. 419)

So, the use of songs in the writing classroom can be a useful method to improve EFL students' writing skills compared to traditional methods. Songs can be an effective pedagogical tool in increasing students' motivation, engagement, and ability to compose better writing (Haris & Siswana, 2022). Through this study, the author indicates that songs can serve as an effective pedagogical tool in improving writing performance in EFL environments. The use of songs in writing instruction not only increased students' motivation and participation, but also resulted in measurable gains in writing competence. Therefore, EFL classroom teachers can use songs as part of teaching techniques to improve students' learning outcomes as songs can be a creative and interactive way to address some of the common problems students face.

Songs to Improve Vocabulary

There are some studies that show the use of songs to improve students' language skills by Ilinawati & Dharma (2018). The finding can be seen from the following data:

"... teaching vocabulary through song improved their students' vocabulary in several aspects ..." (Ilinawati & Dharma, 2018, p. 69)

So, teaching vocabulary through songs can improve students' vocabulary in several aspects, such as students' memorization improved in finding the meaning, students' knowledge in identifying the words, and students' pronunciation improved gradually since they have a lot of practice. Besides that, songs as media also affect students' interest, increase students' motivation, and increase students' enthusiasm in learning (Ilinawati & Dharma, 2018). These findings are supported by other studies with findings that students with high song listening habits have better vocabulary acquisition and help to expand vocabulary, because they provide exposure to new vocabulary, phrases, and sentence patterns in a repetitive and enjoyable way (Wardiansyah et al., 2019). Moreover, songs help students in vocabulary learning because the songs are fun, contextual, memorable and repeatable. Songs also improve focus, engagement, pronunciation and can be linked to reading and writing skills (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020).

The other study shows that the use of songs in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) can improve students' vocabulary learning through both explicit and implicit teaching approaches. However, the explicit approach was shown to result in greater improvements indicating the need for active cognitive engagement and instructional focus in vocabulary learning through songs in the EFL classroom (Mannarelli & Serrano, 2024). From those studies, the authors indicate that the use of songs in teaching English can enhance EFL students' vocabulary, promote a positive learning atmosphere, strengthen memory through active cognitive engagement and instructional focus in the classroom. It will be stronger if it becomes a habit. So, this method is considered effective and appropriate to be applied to support students' vocabulary learning. Teachers should take advantage of this and provide students with strategies to maximize vocabulary learning from songs, not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

Songs to Improve Pronunciation

There are some studies that show the use of songs to improve students' language skills by Mulatsih (2015). The finding can be seen from the following data:

"The use of English song is able to increase the pronunciation of student of Unswagati. The students were more interested in learning pronunciation using English song. Because of they got something new and enjoyable during their study. They did not feel nervous and bored." (Mulatsih, 2015, p. 299

So, songs are proven to make the learning process more fun and interesting, thus increasing the motivation to learn as well as the accuracy of learners' pronunciation (Mulatsih, 2015). These findings are supported by other studies with findings that songs allow students to directly listen to pronunciation from native speakers, enrich vocabulary, understand intonation and word stress, and create a fun and motivating learning atmosphere (Judijanto et al., 2024). Moreover, EFL learners who were taught using songs showed higher improvement in pronunciation skills as well as having higher learning motivation than students who were taught using text. Songs are proven to create a fun learning atmosphere, lower anxiety, and increase students' active participation in the learning process (Saldıraner & Cinkara, 2021).

Besides that, songs provide authentic sound models for vowels, consonants and diphthongs, and improve understanding of connected speech in a fun and natural way. It also reduces affective filters and creates a positive learning atmosphere. Students show high interest in learning pronunciation through songs, and the majority of students agree that songs make learning more interesting, effective and make it easier for them to imitate native speakers' pronunciation (Asmaradhani et al., 2018). From those studies, the authors indicate that song is an effective method in improving students' pronunciation skills, encouraging learning motivation, active participation, creating a fun learning atmosphere and reducing students' anxiety in the learning process. So, teachers can implement the use of song in the classroom because they provide real examples of natural intonation, rhythm, and pronunciation. Through song, students get something new and fun during learning and they do not feel nervous and bored during the learning process.

The findings provide valuable insights into the impact of the use of songs on EFL students' language skills such as speaking, listening, writing, vocabulary, and pronunciation. In terms of language skill development, songs offer authentic exposure to natural English usage than traditional mediums. The integration of English songs into language learning not only provides language skill development but also supports emotional and psychological aspects that are important for EFL learners. Songs as a learning medium have been proven useful for increasing learning motivation, building self-confidence, creating a pleasant learning atmosphere, reducing learning anxiety, and improving students' focus and mood. Through songs, students can learn contextually, repetitively, and interestingly.

For speaking skills, songs serve as an effective medium for pronunciation, intonation, and rhythm. Songs encourage students to practice articulation, fluency, and reduce tension in speaking. Besides that, the use of songs also strengthens listening skills through repeated exposure to different accents, vocabulary, and grammatical structures in songs. This will train students' listening skills to understand English more effectively. When students enjoy listening to songs, their focus and engagement naturally increase, leading to a significant improvement in listening comprehension. Also, songs can improve students' writing skills by producing more interesting and purposeful writing, as songs often contain narratives or emotional expressions that provide meaningful content that can stimulate ideas in the writing process.

Furthermore, songs are proven to increase vocabulary through exposure to repetitive and memorable songs. This repetition helps students in strengthening word recognition, memorization, and understanding of vocabulary in a fun way. Another potential use of songs is for students' pronunciation development. Songs provide authentic sources including vowel and consonant articulation, word stress, sentence stress, and intonation patterns. Listening to songs regularly, allows students to imitate native-like pronunciation which leads to better pronunciation proficiency.

The findings of this systematic literature review contribute to improve the learning and teaching of English language skills for EFL students. Because, English songs are not just an entertaining medium, but also a powerful tool that can significantly improve a wide range of language skills for EFL students. Thus, educators are advised to integrate songs in the learning process both inside and outside the classroom to support the development of students' language skills as a whole. In addition, this result also encourages the need for an active and directed approach, so that learning through songs is not only entertainment, but also actually improves students' learning outcomes in concrete ways.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the systematic literature review, it can be concluded that English songs are useful in helping English language learning for EFL students. Songs not only make the learning process more fun and interesting, but also proven to improve various language skills such as speaking, listening, writing, vocabulary acquisition, and pronunciation. Through songs, students get exposure to English naturally and repeatedly. Songs can also build confidence, increase learning motivation, and create a relaxed and fun learning atmosphere. Therefore, songs can be an effective medium in the English learning process. Teachers are advised to utilize songs as one of the learning strategies both inside and outside the classroom, so that learning becomes more meaningful and student learning outcomes can improve as a whole.

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