

The Use of Songs in English Language Teaching: A Systematic Literature Review to Identify Advantages and Appropriateness of Age Categories

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To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i1/20729>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v13-i1/20729

Published Online: 15 February 2024

Abstract

To improve the level of English language proficiency, the use of songs in English language teaching is one of the methods created by educational experts. This writing aims to identify the advantages of using songs in English language teaching. In addition, this writing also aims to identify the appropriateness of the age category of students in the use of this method. In this study, the search for articles through the SCOPUS e-database with the keywords "Song based learning", "Integration of Song", "Implementation of Song", "English lesson", "English classroom" "ESL" "EFL". In addition, ResearchGate and Google Scholar are also sources for searching articles by researchers. The researcher used document analysis techniques to identify the advantages of using songs in teaching English and the suitability of age categories using this method. Systematic literature review procedures are such as search strategy, selection criteria, selection process, data collection and data analysis for the articles obtained. The researcher sets criteria for article selection such as year of publication and field of study. The researcher summarized 4 advantages of using songs in teaching English, which are improving listening and speaking skills in English, increasing student motivation and engagement, learning the correct pronunciation and remembering vocabulary easily. After researching and analysing 13 articles, the researcher found that the use of songs in English language teaching is appropriate for each age category.

Keywords: Song in English Language Teaching, Students, Advantage, Age Category

Introduction

English plays a dominant role in the 4.0 era (Mampuono, 2023). Our lives cannot avoid the use of English in technology, business and information search. This is because most of the information is delivered in English. Referring to data published by the Statista Research Department on March 31, 2023, there will be 1.5 billion people worldwide using English in 2022.

However, not everyone masters the English language well. Therefore, education experts have created a method of song interaction in mastering a language. Incorporating music into education has roots dating back centuries, and its role as a pedagogical tool has evolved

alongside advancements in educational theory and practice. The effectiveness of using songs for language learning can be understood through the theory of multiple intelligence: musical intelligence. This theory highlights the importance of providing meaningful and engaging learning experiences that promote language acquisition. Schellenberg (2005) established that there is a connection between musical intelligence and proficiency in music with other cognitive abilities, including linguistic skills, social skills and expressive capabilities. Numerous studies, including those conducted by Fonseca-Mora, Toscano-Fuentes, and Wermke (2011), have demonstrated that individuals with musical aptitude excel across various domains, including general intelligence, verbal memory, literacy, visual perception and spatial skills. Additionally, this study has highlighted a robust positive correlation between musical intelligence and proficiency in learning foreign language.

In music, the use of songs in English language teaching has become a topic of extensive and interesting research for education experts. In language teaching, songs can act as an interesting and useful tool to improve listening skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, student motivation, and understanding of English language culture. This method is suggested because the process of learning English as a second language always brings pressure to students who cannot master English (Kumar et al., 2022). English teachers need to create a learning environment that does not threaten students and carry out meaningful learning activities through fun activities (Kumar et al., 2021).

The use of songs in English Language Teaching (ELT) has garnered significant attention due to its potential benefits in enhancing language acquisition and engagement among learners. However, there remains a gap in the literature concerning the systematic identification of the advantages and appropriateness using songs across different age categories of learners. While some studies have explored the efficacy of using songs in ELT, they often lack a comprehensive analysis of age-specific considerations. Understanding the advantages and appropriateness of songs for different age group is crucial for educators to tailor their teaching approaches effectively.

Therefore, this systematic literature review aims to address the following research objectives and research questions

Objectives of the Study

- i) Identify the advantages of using songs in English language teaching.
- ii) Identify the appropriateness of the age category of students in the use of songs in English teaching.

Research Questions

- i) What are the advantages of using songs in teaching English?
- ii) Is the use of songs in English teaching appropriate for students of different ages?

Methodology

This study is based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses 2020 (PRISMA, 2020). The researcher used the document analysis method to examine and analyse the articles found. In accordance with the recommendations of Shaffril et al (2018), the systematic search strategy involves four phases, namely the identification phase, the screening phase, the qualification phase and the inclusion phase of articles in a systematic literature review. Therefore, the study was conducted through four steps, namely article search, article selection criteria, article selection process, data collection and data analysis.

Article Selection Criteria

The researcher carried out a systematic literature review of studies that have been carried out by other researchers on the use of songs in English language teaching. SCOPUS and Google Scholar, Research Gate as sources for searching for suitable articles by researchers. The keywords used are "Song based learning", "Integration of Song", "Implementation of Song", "English lesson", "English classroom" "ESL" "EFL". According to Shaffril et al., 2021, the process of diversifying keywords can be done through searching for vocabulary that carries the same meaning (synonyms), related words and variations to keywords that have been identified. The inspection phase caused the number of articles to be reduced. The researcher sets the following criteria

- 1) Selected articles should be published in 2019 or later.
- 2) The article is about the use of songs in the teaching of English subjects only.
- 3) The study covers samples from preschool to university students.
- 4) Studies must be related to the field of Education, Music, Use of English Songs
- 5) The language of the article is English
- 6) Consists of journal articles.

A summary of the screening criteria is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Article selection criteria (Acceptance and rejection)

Acceptance	Rejection
1) Selected articles should be published in 2019 or later. 2) The article is about the use of songs in the teaching of English subjects only. 3) The study covers samples from preschool to adults.	1) Published before 2019. 2) Articles that are not related to the use of songs in the teaching of English subjects. 3) Articles in languages other than English or Malay. 4) Proceedings, conference and books.
4) Studies must be related to the field of Education, Music, Language, Linguistics. 5) The language of the article is English 6) Consists of journal articles.	

Article Selection Process

The article selection process has been carried out. Figure 1 is the researcher's process of selecting articles. This diagram is an adaptation of the PRISMA flow diagram. Initially, a total of 15,156 articles were found through SCOPUS, Google Scholar and Research Gate. After that, the researcher screened the articles using the set criteria, that is, the articles must be in Malay or English. Articles that do not have full text, do not fit the context of the study and are similar from other databases will be excluded. Therefore, after undergoing some screening, filtering and research, there were 15 articles that were identified and included in the systematic literature review.

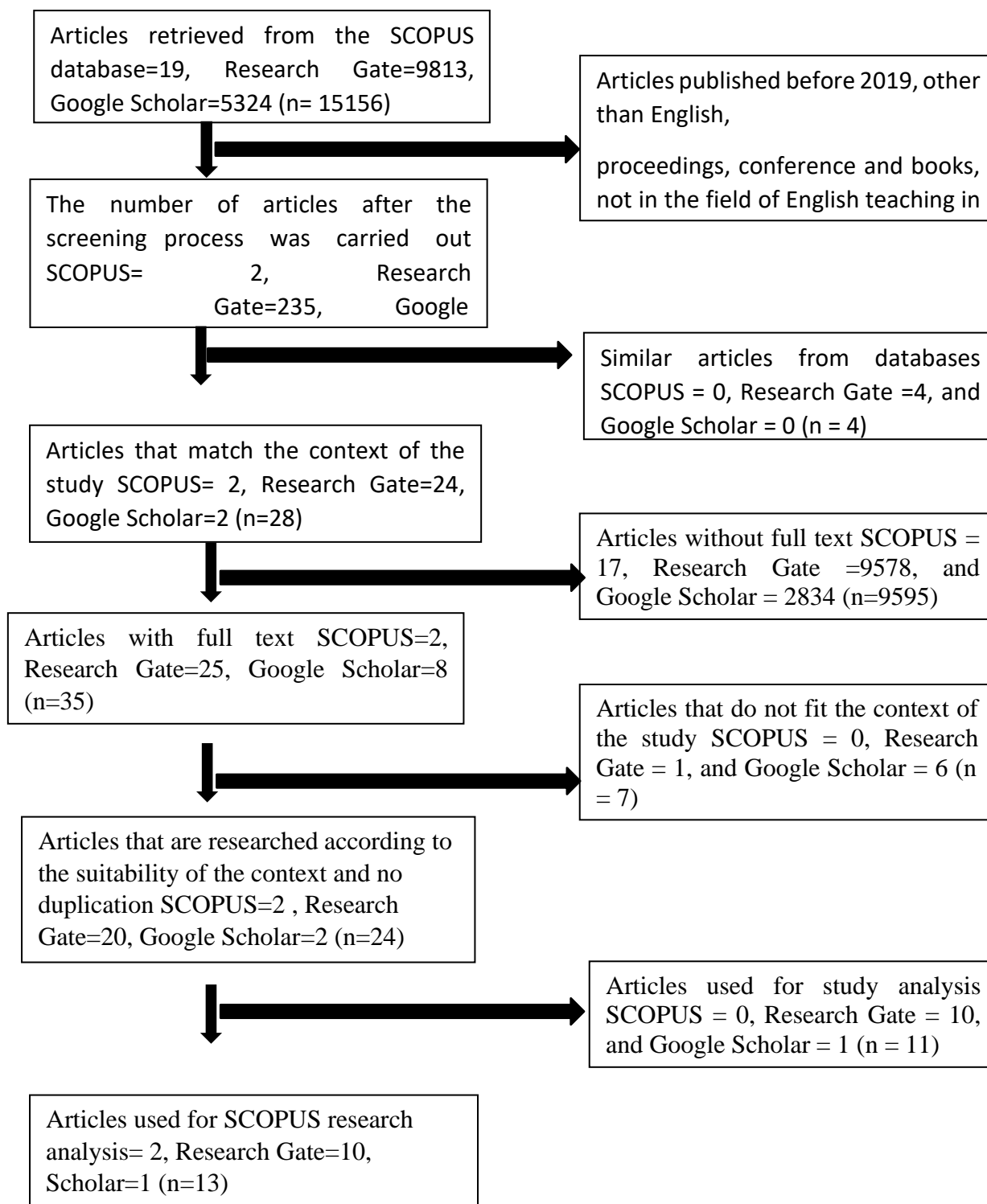


Figure 1: Flow diagram of Article Selection Process

Data Collection and Analysis

In data collection, a total of 15 articles were obtained from SCOPUS, Research Gate and Google Scholar. The data collection process is through a screening process that identifies the title of the study, the year of publication, the purpose of the study, and the effect of applying songs in English language teaching.

The researcher analysed the data by producing a table to classify the advantages of applying songs in English teaching based on the title of the article. In addition, the researcher also made a student age category based on the articles read. The results of data analysis from the study conducted will be presented in the form of a table. Table 2 shows a list of previous research articles screened by the researcher based on the set criteria. Then, a conceptual framework was developed based on past studies to be used as a reference for future studies.

Table 2

List of article names, authors, study type and study design

No	Name of the Author	Research topic	Type of Study	Research design
1.	Thomas (2019)	Lyrics from Popular Songs and Rhyme to Enhance the ESL Learner's Proficiency in English Language.	Qualitative	Document analysis
2.	Avdiu (2021)	Non-native English teachers' views on the use of music and songs in teaching English as a foreign language to primary school learners.	Qualitative	Survey study
3.	Yu et al.(2022)	Effects of Multimedia Assisted Song Integrated Teaching on College Students' English Learning Interests and Learning Outcomes.	Quantitative	Survey study
4.	Butar &	EFL Students' Perceptions Toward Vocabulary	Quantitative	Survey study
	Katamba (2023)	Learning By Listening To English Songs On Spotify.		
5.	Latif & Rahmanl (2020)	Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through English Songs At Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 North Halmahera.	Quantitative	Experimental study
6.	Zulfa et al. (2020)	Teacher's Perspective Toward The Use of Song In English Language Classroom.	Qualitative	Survey Study

7.	Ruslin (2022)	The Effect of English Song Lyrics On the Improvement of Students' Vocabulary Proficiency At The Eleventh Grade At Sma 4 Palu.	Quantitative	Quasi experiment
8.	Bsharat (2021)	The influence of music and educational songs on EFL students' achievement from their teachers' perspective in Jenin Region	Quantitative	Survey study
9.	Waris(2019)	The students' achievement in pronouncing English song using Smule application.	Quantitative	"Descriptive statistical approach"
10.	Sase(2022)	The Use of Song in Teaching English Pronunciation (students and teachers' perceptions)	Qualitative	Survey study
11.	Huda & Feri (2022)	The Effectiveness of Song with Wondershare QuizCreator in Teaching Listening	Quantitative	Quasi experiment
12.	Kumar et al. (2022)	Use of Music and Songs as Pedagogical Tools in Teaching English as Foreign Language Contexts	Qualitative	Descriptive study
13.	Arasomwan & Mashiy (2021)	Early childhood care and education educators' understanding of the use of music-based pedagogies to teach communication skills	Qualitative	Case studies

Findings and Discussion of the Study

Advantages of Using Songs in Teaching English

A systematic literature review was conducted to identify specific student changes after the use of songs in English language teaching. In addition, identifying the use of songs in teaching English is appropriate for students of different ages. As a result of the article screening, 13

articles have been selected. Therefore, the results of the analysis from this study found 4 advantages of using songs in English teaching.

Improve listening and speaking skills in English

The use of songs in English sharpens students' listening skills. Songs help train listening skills by introducing them to various English vocabulary and intonations. This helps to strengthen understanding of pronunciation and listening skills, as well as expand students' ability to understand the English language. Huda & Feri (2022) carried out an experimental study to identify the effectiveness of songs through the Wondershare QuizCreator application to increase the level of mastery of listening skills among students. The treatment group used songs in learning English listening skills and the control group was the opposite. The findings have supported the statement that the use of songs has improved listening skills in English among the treatment group. Arasomwan (2021) states that children master the way of speaking in communication easily through songs.

Remember Vocabulary Easily

Song lyrics that contain lots of useful English vocabulary and phrases. By using songs in teaching, students can develop their vocabulary in a more interesting and effective way (Butar & Katemba, 2023; Arasomwan, 2021). Through repeating the lyrics in the context of the song, students can remember vocabulary more easily (Avdiu, 2021; Ruslin, 2022) and use it in the right context. The findings of this study can also be supported in the study of Latif & Rahmanl (2020). There is an increase in the post test on the achievement of English vocabulary mastery from the pre test. The pre-test is 58.9 and the post-test is 75.1 and the alternative hypothesis which states that teaching English vocabulary through English songs can improve the mastery of English vocabulary is accepted. Bsharat (2021) has done a survey of experienced English teachers in the city of Jenin. Respondents strongly agree that the use of songs improves English vocabulary knowledge and pronunciation skills among students.

Learning the Correct Pronunciation

The use of songs improves students' pronunciation and intonation. This is so because the singers of English songs are white people who master English as their mother tongue. The songs provide direct examples of how a word should be pronounced, thus helping students improve their oral communication fluency (Avdiu, 2021). Tahani RK Bsharat's study (2021) strongly supports the use of songs to improve pronunciation skills among students. Waris & Juhansar (2019) with the support of survey results show that the use of songs (Smule application) has improved pronunciation skills among students. This is because the students will be singing duets with white people who speak English as their mother tongue. 33.33% of students strongly agree that English songs are a good medium to train English pronunciation, 58.33% agree and 8.33% disagree. The study of Sase (2022); Kumar et al (2022) supports the study of Mustamir (2019) that English pronunciation can be improved by listening to English songs.

Increase student motivation and engagement

The use of songs in teaching English can increase student motivation and engagement. Music has a strong emotional appeal and can create a fun and interesting learning atmosphere (Thomas, 2019). In Deborah A. Arasomwan's study (2021), the researcher also proved the impact of the use of songs during the monitoring of the teacher's teaching in the class that

makes the class lively. Songs will stimulate active student involvement such as singing, dancing (Thomas, 2019; Avdiu, 2021; Kumar et al., 2022; Arasomwan, 2021). This will increase students' interest in learning English (Yu et al., 2022 & Alfiyah et al., 2020).

After the researcher examined 13 articles, Table 3 shows that 46.2% of the articles touch on the use of songs to help students remember vocabulary easily and increase their motivation and involvement in learning. 38.5% of articles emphasize the use of songs to support students in learning pronunciation correctly. 15.4% of the articles found that the use of songs can improve listening and speaking skills in English.

Table 3

The name of the author and the advantages of using songs in English language teaching

No		Improve listening and speaking skills in English	Remember vocabulary easily	Learn the correct pronunciation	Increase student motivation and engagement
1.	Thomas (2019)				/
2.	Avdiu(2021)		/	/	/
3.	Yu et al. (2022)				/
4.	Butar & Katemba (2023)		/		
5.	Latif & Rahmanl (2020)		/		
6.	Zulfa etal. (2020)				/
7.	Ruslin (2022)		/		
8.	Bsharat (2021)		/	/	
9.	Waris (2019)			/	
10.	Sase (2022)			/	
11.	Huda & Ferry (2022)	/			
12.	Kumar et al. (2022)			/	/
13.	Arasomwan & Mashiy (2021)	/	/		/
	Amount	2	6	5	6

	Percent ² x 100% 13	2 x 100% 13 = 15.4%	6 x 100% 13 = 46.2%	5 x 100% 13 = 38.5%	6 x 100% 13 = 46.2%
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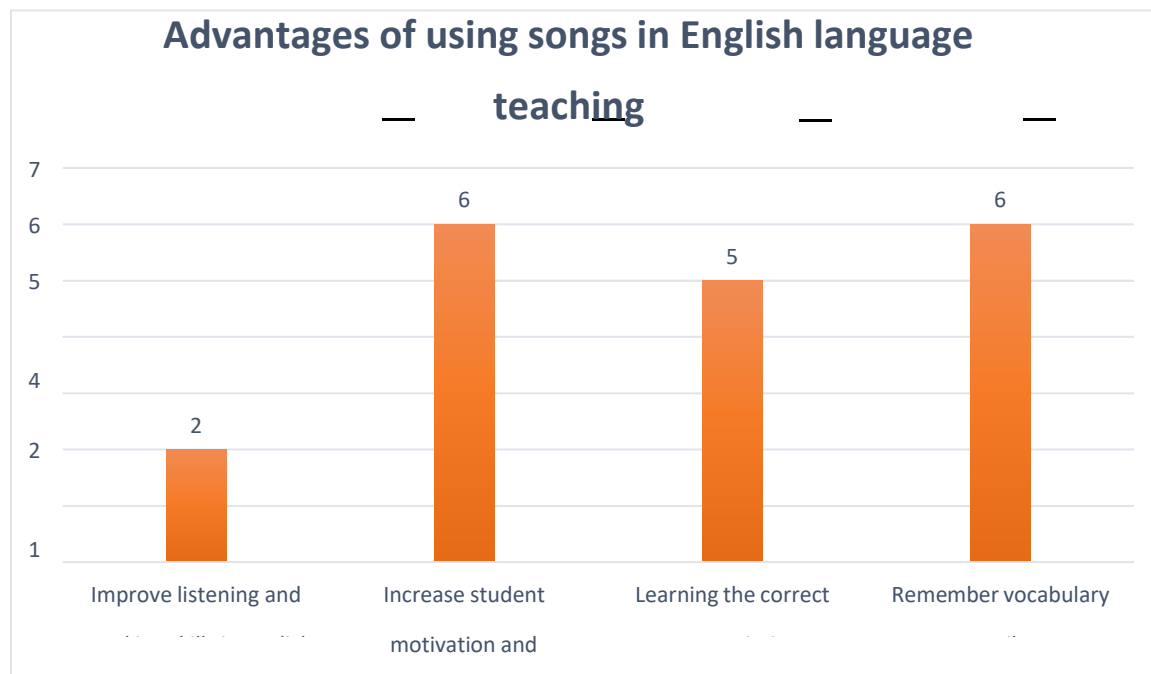


Figure 2: Bar Chart Advantages of using songs in English language teaching

Age of Student

This session will collect and analyze the age categories of study participants from the 13 studies that were examined. The researchers have conducted a study of the use of songs in English classes. The study participants for each study are different in terms of age. There are 2 studies that study the use of songs on preschool students; 3 studies involving primary school student study participants. 4 studies focused on high school students while 4 studies focused on university students. There was one study conducted for an adult. After the implementation of the study, 4 impacts have been formulated in Table 3. This means that the use of songs is indeed appropriate for each age category.

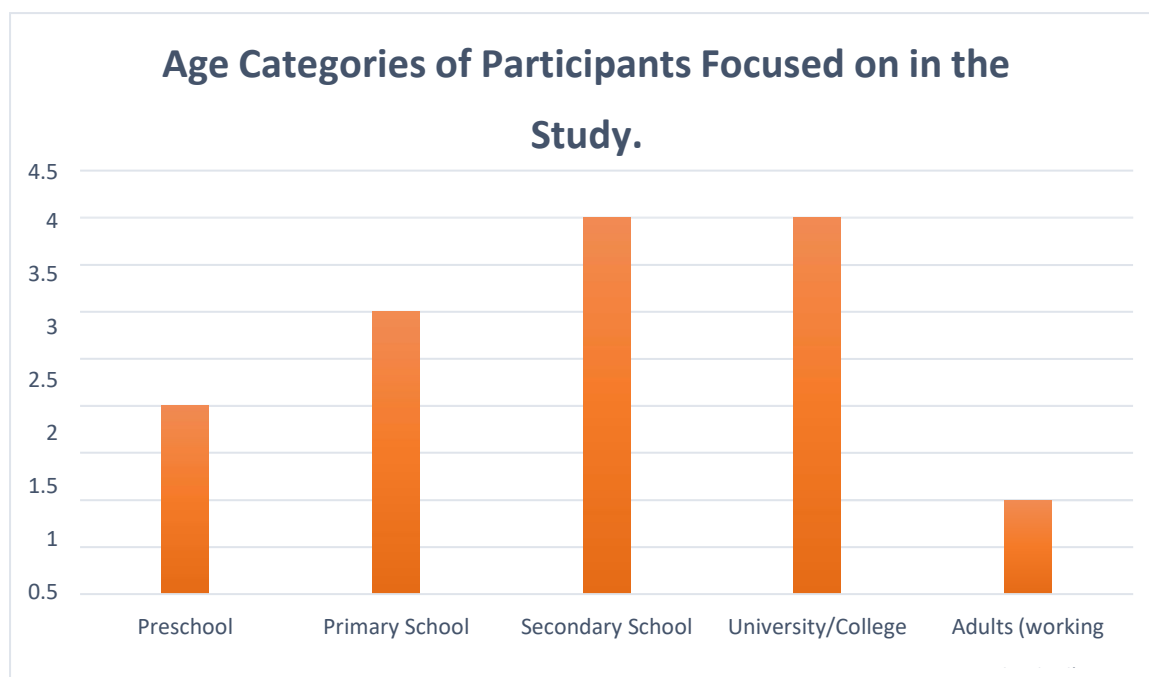


Figure 3: Bar Chart of Age Categories of Participants Focused on in the Study.

Table 4

Age category and study list

Age	Research topic	Researcher
Preschool	Early childhood care and education educators' understanding of the use of music-based pedagogiesto teach communication skills.	Arasomwan & Mashiy (2021)
	Lyrics from Popular Songs and Rhyme to Enhancethe ESL Learner's Proficiency in English Language	Thomas (2019)
Primary school	The influence of music and educational songs on EFL students' achievement from their teachers' perspective in Jenin Region	Bsharat (2021)
	Lyrics from Popular Songs and Rhyme to Enhance the ESL Learner's Proficiency in English Language	Thomas (2019)
	Non-native English teachers' views on the use of music and songs in teaching English as a foreign language to primary school learners	Avdiu (2021)
Secondary school	EFL Students' Perceptions Toward Vocabulary Learning By Listening to English Songs on Spotify.	Butar & Katemba (2023)
	Students' Vocabulary Mastery Through English Songs At Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 North Halmahera.	Latif & Rahmanl (2020)
	The Effect Of English Song Lyrics On The Improvement Of Students' Vocabulary Proficiency At The Eleventh Grade At Sma 4 Palu	Ruslin (2022)

	The Effectiveness of Song with Wondershare QuizCreator in Teaching Listening	Huda & Ferry (2022)
University/college	Effects of Multimedia Assisted Song Integrated Teaching on College Students' English Learning Interests and Learning Outcomes.	Yu et al. (2022)
	EFL Students' Perceptions Toward Vocabulary Learning By Listening to English Songs on Spotify.	Butar & Katemba(2023)
	The students" achievement in pronouncing Englishsong using Smule application	Waris(2019)
	Lyrics from Popular Songs and Rhyme to Enhance the ESL Learner's Proficiency in English Language	Thomas (2019)
Adults	Use of Music and Songs as Pedagogical Tools in Teaching English as Foreign Language Contexts.	Kumar, etal. (2022)

Conceptual Framework

Based on the diagram, the selected sample consists of students of different ages such as preschool, primary school, high school, university/college students and working adults. Referring to the figure below, it is clear that the use of songs in teaching English through systematic literature study brings four advantages, namely improving listening and speaking skills in English, increasing student motivation and engagement, learning the correct pronunciation and remembering vocabulary easily.

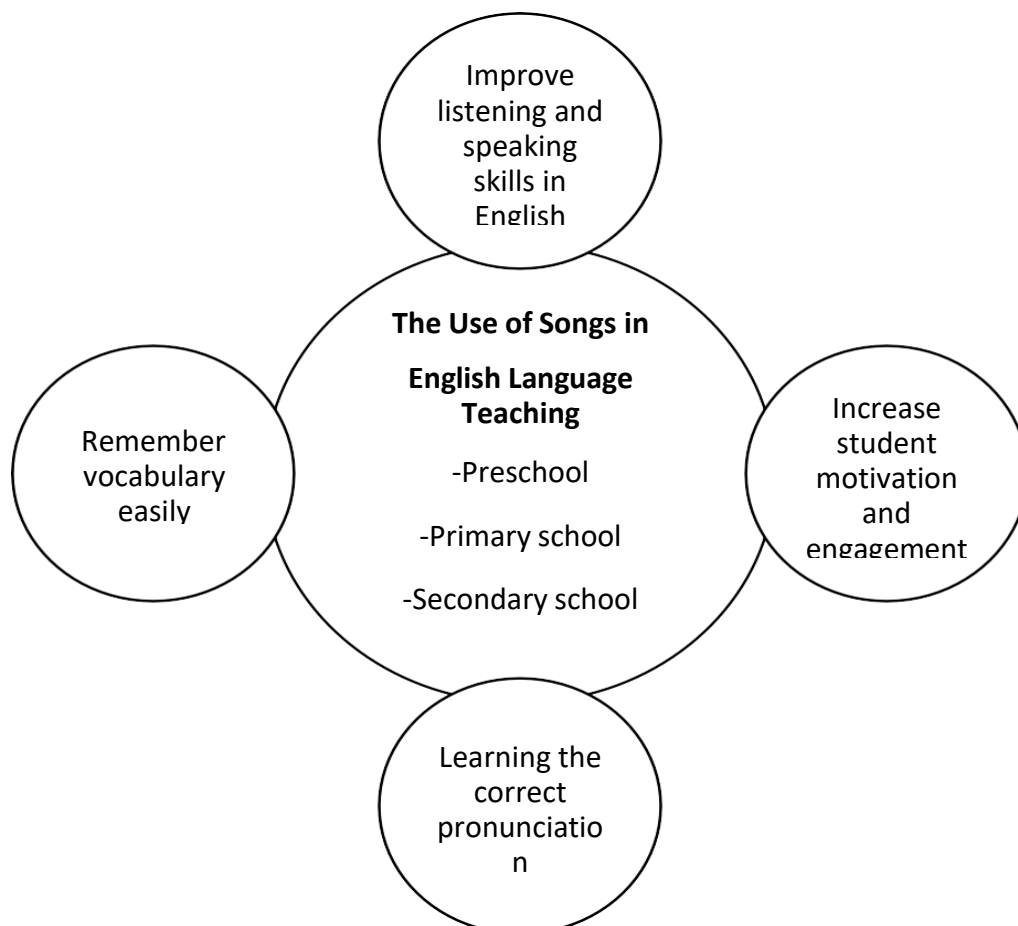


Figure 4: Advantages of using songs in English language teaching and age categories

Study Question 1: What are the advantages of using songs in English language teaching?

Based on Table 5, there are four advantages of using songs in English teaching. First, improve listening and speaking skills in English; Second, increase student motivation and engagement; Third, learn the correct pronunciation; Fourth, remember vocabulary easily. Among the 13 studies, 6 studies stated that the use of songs in teaching English can increase student motivation and engagement and help students remember vocabulary easily. 5 studies conclude that this method supports students in learning pronunciation correctly while 2 studies note that the method of using songs can improve listening and speaking skills in English.

Table 5

Advantages of using songs in teaching English

No	Advantage	Number
1.	Improve listening and speaking skills in English	2
2.	Increase student motivation and engagement	6
3.	Learn the correct pronunciation	5
4.	Remember vocabulary easily	6

Research Question 2: Is the use of songs in English teaching appropriate for students of different ages?

After the researcher examined 13 articles, the use of songs in teaching English can be adapted to students of different ages. Lucas (2022) says that English teachers always agree that the integration of songs in English is very suitable for children. It is undeniable that children learn through singing, and teenagers love to sing the lyrics of their favourite artists. In addition, the use of songs in teaching is also effective for adults. This is so because the song contains linguistic elements (rhythm, pronunciation, intonation) as a guide for students to learn pronunciation and vocabulary (Krishna, 2011). However, songs should be chosen based on the age of the students. Lems (1996); Poppleton (2002) suggested that song lyrics should be clear, while vocabulary should be appropriate to the students' level of knowledge, and song lyrics should be screened first to avoid sensitive elements such as sexual harassment, religious issues and elements of violence.

Limitations and Recommendations

The researcher detected limitations as long as the researcher conducted a systematic literature review. The limitation detected is that the researcher found that studies like this (Using Songs in Teaching English) with criteria in the duration of 2019 to 2023 and conducted in Malaysia are rarely found. Most are 2018 and below for studies conducted in Malaysia. In addition, researchers face limitations in finding articles on the use of songs in English language teaching for each different age category. Most of the age categories are students from elementary school, high school and university or college. The category of adults who have worked is less found.

Among the suggestions to improve this study is that the researcher can apply the results of the systematic literature review to conduct a new study that focuses on the use of song lyrics that are suitable for each age. In addition, the researcher can also narrow the scope to be studied such as the use of songs in teaching English pronunciation or the use of songs in improving listening skills in English and so on.

Conclusion

It is clear that the use of songs in English teaching has a positive impact on teachers and students. The benefits are improving listening and speaking skills in English, increasing student motivation and engagement, learning the correct pronunciation and remembering vocabulary easily. This method is also very suitable for every age category. The implementation of this method is highly encouraged among teachers. While there is existing literature on the advantages of using songs in ELT, there may be a gap in research specifically focusing on the appropriateness of different types of songs for different age categories of learners. For instance, there might be a lack of studies comparing the effectiveness of using nursery rhymes for young learners versus pop songs for teenagers. Besides that, research may not have thoroughly explored how the use of songs varies in effectiveness across different proficiency levels.

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