

THE EFFECT OF ENGLISH SONGS SUBTITLES ON TENTH GRADE STUDENTS' SPEAKING AT SMK PGRI 4 KEDIRI IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/2026

Zefanya Kristina¹, Agung Wicaksono², Khoiriyah³

1 English Education Department/University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri

zefanyaaa454@gmail.com

2 English Education Department/University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri

agungwicaksono@unpkediri.ac.id

3 English Education Department/University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri

khoiriyah@unpkediri.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This research examines whether using songs in English with subtitles can improve the speaking of tenth-grade students at SMK PGRI 4 Kediri in the 2025/2026 academic year. Many students still face difficulties in speaking English, especially in terms of pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and confidence. This is mainly due to the fact that they more often learn using methods that tend to rely more on textbooks. In this research, songs in English with subtitles were used as learning media to address these issues because they provide enjoyable learning experiences, natural models of pronunciation, and repeated vocabulary. For this quantitative research, a one-group design pre-test and post-test involving 30 selected students was used. Students took a pre-test, had a few treatment sessions with songs in English with subtitles, and then took a post-test. Pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary were used to evaluate their speaking performance. A paired t-test was used to determine whether there was a significant improvement after the treatment. Based to the results of the research, songs with subtitles in English will make it easier for students to understand spoken language, speak more confidently, and improve their accuracy and fluency. Additionally, the findings are expected to provide useful insights for teachers on how to use more creative, engaging, and effective media in English speaking classes.

KEYWORDS: *English song, Subtitles, Speaking, Audio-visual media*

INTRODUCTION

Since speaking requires students to actively create meaning through vocal communication in real time, it has long been acknowledged as one of the most important aspects of learning the English language. Speaking is more than just saying words; it's an interactive activity that involves creating, receiving, and processing information, according to Brown (1994).

Speaking abilities are still difficult to develop in the Indonesian EFL setting because of the lack of exposure to real language models, the lack of communicative practice, and the teaching methods that frequently place more emphasis on reading and grammar than oral production. Although speaking is emphasized as a fundamental component of communicative competence in Canale and Swain's (1980) paradigm, many students fall short of the required proficiency due to a lack of opportunities to practice language in meaningful, spontaneous encounters.

According to Brown (2004) and Thornbury (2005), many tenth-grade students at SMK PGRI 4 Kediri still struggle with pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and accuracy all crucial components of speaking skills.

These challenges are often compounded by psychological factors such as anxiety and lack of self-confidence, and fear of making mistakes conditions commonly recognized in EFL research as impediments to speaking performance (Chiang, 2006; Ferginan, Ilma, & Desvitasari, 2025). Although traditional textbook-based instruction rarely allows for creativity or natural language use, students in vocational high schools typically emphasis practical, interesting, and relevant learning activities. Harmer (2007) emphasizes the significance of learner engagement in

fostering good speaking outcomes, pointing out that stress-free and enjoyable environments help students learn to talk more successfully. However, students are rarely exposed to natural rhythm, intonation, and vocabulary all of which are crucial for oral communication because many English classes primarily focus on written activities and teacher-centered explanations. This gap emphasizes the need for alternative teaching methods that use multimodal input and real-world language experiences that are in line with the interests of modern learners.

The use of English songs in EFL instruction is one strategy that is becoming more and more popular. Songs are excellent for enhancing pronunciation, vocabulary, and fluency because they offer rhythmic, repetitive, and memorable language input (Murphey, 1992; Hadi, 2019). Additionally, studies show that music lowers nervousness and creates a more laid-back classroom environment, enabling students to participate in speaking exercises with greater confidence (Karimullah, 2024). The combination of visual (subtitles) and aural (melody and spoken lyrics) input promotes deeper processing and long-term retention, building on Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. Boothe and West (2015) go on to say that songs represent real-world English usage, exposing students to intonation, rhythm, and stress patterns that are uncommon in textbooks. When used effectively, songs provide students meaningful, emotionally stimulating experiences that encourage oral expression, bridging the gap between formal education and everyday communication.

By allowing students to simultaneously connect spoken and written forms, the inclusion of subtitles increases the utility of songs as teaching tools. Subtitles greatly enhance learners' speaking performance, especially in pronunciation, word recognition, and fluency, according to studies by Fauji and Zuhriyah (2022), Laelasari et al. (2019), and Megawati & Nuroh (2018). By offering visual scaffolding that facilitates comprehension, promotes imitation, and improves recall of new linguistic forms, subtitles assist learners. Additionally, subtitles assist students in deciphering idiomatic language, quick speech, and foreign accents that could otherwise hinder comprehension. Through their meta-analysis, Alotaibi et al. (2023) highlight how subtitle-supported learning results in quantifiable improvements in oral production, demonstrating its efficacy in a variety of EFL contexts. These results suggest that English songs with subtitles provide dual-channel input that can simultaneously improve communicative competence, speaking confidence, and linguistic accuracy.

There has been a lot of research on songs and subtitles separately, but there aren't many studies that look at how they both affect speaking abilities, especially in Indonesian vocational schools. The majority of current studies concentrate on the advantages of songs for vocabulary and motivation (Kusnierek, 2016; Iffah et al., 2024) or the efficiency of subtitles in enhancing pronunciation and comprehension (Alotaibi et al., 2023; Fauji & Zuhriyah, 2022). As a result, there is a glaring study gap concerning the combined use of music and subtitles as a cohesive multimedia strategy to improve speaking ability. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate how English songs with subtitles affect the speaking abilities of tenth-grade students at SMK PGRI 4 Kediri in the 2025-2026 school year. This study aims to demonstrate how multimodal musical input might help students speak more confidently, naturally, and accurately by focusing on pronunciation, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary components described by Brown (2004). It is anticipated that the results will provide instructors looking to implement creative, interesting, and student-centered teaching methods in vocational English classrooms with insightful information.

METHODOLOGY

One group was given a pre-test and a post-test in this quantitative pre-experimental design investigation. This approach was selected because it is frequently utilized in actual classroom settings where random assignment is challenging and allows for the measurement of students' improvement before and after the therapy without the necessity for a control group (Creswell,

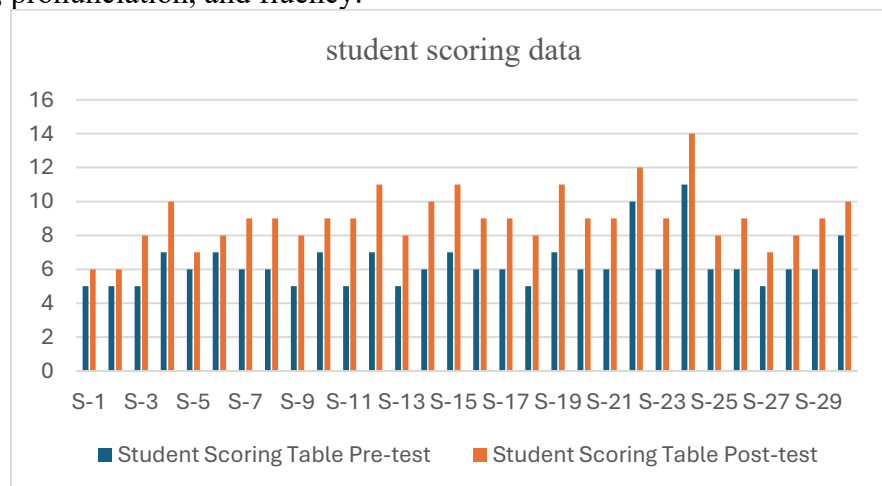
2015; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2002). Purposive sampling was used to choose 30 tenth-grade students from SMK PGRI 4 Kediri as participants because their class schedule and level of English proficiency were appropriate for the treatment. The researcher employed a speaking exam that was given both before and after the treatment to collect data. Following Brown's (2004) criteria for evaluating speaking, students were asked to talk for a few minutes on basic subjects. Their performance was evaluated using an analytical rubric that focused on pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and grammar.

English songs with subtitles were used to teach the students during the course of several meetings. Each session involved students listening to songs while reading the lyrics displayed on the screen, practicing pronunciation by repeating lines from the song, discussing the lyrics' meaning, and completing brief speaking exercises inspired by the music. While subtitles assist learners connect spoken and written language, making vocabulary and pronunciation simpler to grasp (Fauji & Zuhriyah, 2022), the use of songs in language learning is known to lower anxiety and encourage students to talk more actively (Murphey, 1992; Karimullah, 2024). Students' development in speaking abilities was measured by having them complete a post-test with activities that were identical to the pre-test.

The researcher used a paired samples t-test to compare the students' pre-test and post-test scores in order to examine the findings. This approach is suitable for assessing if two sets of scores from the same group differ significantly (Creswell, 2015). The analysis assisted in determining if English songs with subtitles significantly and meaningfully improved the students' speaking skills.

FINDING

The following chart shows how using English songs with subtitles improved student speaking abilities. On the post-test, the average score improved from 6.30 on the pre-test to 9.00. The data is confirmed by SPSS analysis, which shows significant variations between the two assessments, demonstrating the effect of using songs with subtitles to improve students' vocabulary, pronunciation, and fluency.



The data from the mean of pre test dan total score. And then compared with post test using this steps or with following steps.

$$MPre = \frac{\sum pre}{N}$$

$$MPost = \frac{\sum post}{N}$$

In this research, the speaking of tenth-grade students were improved by the usage of English songs with subtitles. Before the medication was offered, students demonstrated various issues in speaking, especially in pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and confidence. These difficulties emerged because

students had minimal exposure to actual English input and were largely taught using conventional and textbook-based techniques. The pre-test findings, which indicate that the students' speaking proficiency was still low, support this condition. Thirty students participated in total. The pre-test results showed that most students were still performing below expectations when it came to speaking, with a mean score of 6.30, the highest score of 8, and the lowest score of 4.

Students' speaking performance significantly improved after employing English songs with subtitles during treatment sessions. The songs gave natural examples of pronunciation and vocabulary, while the subtitles helped students understand the lyrics and connect written and spoken versions more effortlessly. This progress is verified by the post-test findings, which reveal that the mean score improved to 9.00, with the best score reaching 12 and the lowest score 6. These results imply that students got more confident and accurate when speaking. It is evident from the rise in students' grades that using English songs with subtitles helped them become more proficient speakers.

Additionally, this improvement is further supported by statistical analysis performed with SPSS. With a correlation value of 0.839 and a significance level of $p < .001$, the paired samples correlations demonstrated a high association between pre-test and post-test scores, demonstrating students' constant improvement. The paired samples t-test revealed a significant difference between the two tests, with a mean difference of -2.700 and $p < .001$, demonstrating that the improvement was not accidental but stemmed from the treatment. Overall, the data demonstrate that English songs with subtitles are effective learning media for boosting students' speaking.

Based on the pre- test and post- test results are analyze using SPSS and get the results as below:

Table 1
Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pretest	6.30	30	1.393	.254
	posttest	9.00	30	1.682	.307

Based on the table above, the appropriate sample statistics indicate that after the intervention, students' speaking scores improved. There was a significant increase of 2.70 points from a pre-test average score of 6.30 to a post-test average score of 9.00. Since all 30 students completed both tests, this comparison is reliable. The standard deviation values indicate that student scores fluctuated slightly more on the post-test, although the difference was still reasonable. The lower standard error values also indicate that the average scores represent the data well. Overall, these findings indicate that student speaking performance was improved by the intervention.

Table 2
Paired Samples Correlations

N	Correlation	Significance	
		One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
30	.839	<.001	<.001

The Paired Samples Correlations results demonstrate that there is a very significant association between the pretest and posttest scores, with a correlation value of 0.839. This significant correlation shows that changes in students' abilities from before to after the treatment follow a regular pattern. This suggests that students who initially had reasonably excellent abilities continued to demonstrate good development following the treatment, while students with lesser initial abilities also showed improvement in keeping with the data trend. The statistical significance of the association between the two scores is confirmed by the significance value of $p < .001$. The notion that the treatment had a significant impact on students' abilities is supported by this data.

Table 3

Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower	Upper
Pair 1	pretest - posttest	-2.700	.915	.167	-3.042	-2.358

Paired Samples Test

				Significance	
		t	df	One-Sided p	Two-Sided p
Pair 1	pretest - posttest	-16.155	29	<.001	<.001

Students' scores after the treatment were significantly higher than their scores prior to the treatment, according to the paired samples t-test results. The students consistently improved, with an average rise of 2.700 points. The confidence interval (−3.042 to −2.358) also reveals that the true improvement is clearly above zero, implying the progress is real and not due to chance. The highly significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores is confirmed by the t-value of −16.155 and the significance level of $p < .001$. In basic terms, the statistical test significantly demonstrates that the treatment given such as employing English songs with subtitles successfully enhanced students' speaking scores.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that English songs with subtitles significantly improved the speaking of tenth-grade students at SMK PGRI 4 Kediri. Before the treatment, students' speaking scores were still low, with an average pre-test score of 6.30, reflecting problems in pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and confidence. After being taught using English songs with subtitles, their speaking ability increased noticeably, shown by the post-test mean score of 9.00. The statistical results also confirmed this improvement, with a strong correlation and a highly significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores ($p < .001$), proving that the progress did not occur by chance. Overall, the findings conclude that English songs with subtitles are an effective and enjoyable learning medium that helps students speak more confidently and accurately, and this method is recommended for use in English speaking classes.

REFERENCE

- Alotaibi, H. M., Mahdi, H. S., & Alwathnani, D. (2023). Effectiveness of subtitles in L2 classrooms: A meta-analysis study. *Education Sciences*, 13(3), 274.
- Boothe, D., & West, J. (2015, June). English language learning through music and song lyrics—the performance of a lifetime. In *Conference Proceedings. The Future of Education* (pp. 248-252).
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language Assessment: Principles and Classroom Practices*. Pearson Education.
- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language

teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–47.

- Chiang, L. C. (2006). Voices from the language classroom: a descriptive study of interactive-decision making of an expert teacher. *Engl. Teach. Learn.* 4, 23–45.
- Fauji, M.S. & Zuhriyah, M. (2022). *The Impact of Using English Subtitled Movies in Students' Speaking Ability* ejournal-fkip.unisi.ac.id
- Ferginan, Y., Ilma, R., & Desvitasari, D. (2025). The Role of Non-Verbal Communication in Teaching English Speaking Skills: Students' Voices. *ENGLISH FRANCA: Academic Journal of English Language and Education*, 9(1 May), 31-44.
- Hadi, M. S. (2019). The use of song in teaching English for junior high school student. *English Language in Focus (ELIF)*, 1(2), 107-112.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th ed.). London: Pearson Longman.
- Iffah, U., Firdaus, N., & Nurizqiyanti, U. (2024). The Effect of Using English Song Media toward Students' Speaking Skills. *JOEY: Journal of English Ibrahimy*, 3(1), 71-85.
- Karimullah, I. W. (2024). Improving students speaking ability with English song. *Journal of Social Research*, 3(3), 888-900.
- Kusnierek, A. (2016). The role of music and songs in teaching English vocabulary to students. *World Scientific News*, 43.
- Laelasari, T. J., Yulianto, S. W., & Sibarani, J. (2019). THE INFLUENCE OF WATCHING ENGLISH MOVIE BY USING SUBTITLE TOWARD STUDENTS'SPEAKING SKILL. In *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Universitas Subang (SENDINUSA)* (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 123-129).
- Megawati, F. (2018). *THE EFFECT OF ENGLISH SUBTITLE IN "ZOOTOPIA" MOVIE IN SPEAKING SKILL FOR 9TH GRADE STUDENTS OF SMPN 6 SIDOARJO* (Doctoral dissertation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo).
- Murphey, T. (1992). *Music and Song*. Oxford University Press.
- Thornbury, S., & Harmer, J. (2005). *How to teach speaking* (Vol. 156). Harlow: Longman.