

# English Teachers' Perceptions Using English Child-Friendly Songs in Teaching English for Young Learners

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**Abstract.** English Child-friendly songs as teaching media for young learners are a type of learning material that utilizes song lyric as a tool to teach English skill. This research aims to explore teachers' perceptions in using English child-friendly song in teaching English to young learners. The method of this study used descriptive method (case study) and this study used Interviews as instrument to collect the data. The instrument were involved with two novice teachers and one senior teacher who use English child-friendly songs in teaching English to young learners in the classrooms. The result showed that the teachers informed positive views of using the songs when teaching English to young learners such as helping young learners increasing young learners' vocabulary mastery, and increasing young learners' memory, and increasing young learners' overall enjoyment of learning English in the classroom. This research concluded that the using of English child-friendly song is effective to enhance learning quality in teaching English to young learning.

**Keywords:** Teachers' Perceptions; English Song; TEYL.

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## INTRODUCTION

English is one of the subjects that should be introduced to elementary students so that they can have a basic knowledge of the English language when they are in the junior high level. In this situation, teachers must teach English to young learners. Teaching English to young learners is not easy. Nowadays, many teachers face several problems when teaching in elementary schools, such as students' difficulty in imitating different sounds and intonations in English, which can affect their comprehension and communication; Many children lack enthusiasm and feel bored when learning English in classroom; and they often forget the vocabulary they have learned. seeing these difficulties, a teacher must find solutions to address the issues so that the teaching and learning process can be successful as expected. so, English teachers must be able to understand the characteristics of their pupils and then determine suitable strategies to use in teaching. In line with Katemba (2020) found that a teacher must understand the characteristics of young learners, namely; designing lessons that suit the child's nature, both in terms of material and learning style so that teaching English at elementary school level can be successful. So, teachers in elementary schools must be more creative in determining suitable strategy to be used in teaching English in elementary schools, for instance; teaching media.

Teaching media is something that we can use to share the message, it can stimulate attention, interest, students' though and feeling in learning activities to achieve learning goals. This argument is supported by Marhamah et al. (2022) mentioned that teaching media is a mode of learning message to students that can help teachers to enhance their learning achievement. So, it can make learning achievable. In line with Febriyona et al. (2019) found that the teaching media can be used by English teachers in establishing relationships with young learners during teaching.

in teaching and learning English, Teaching media is important. According to Andriani et al. (2022) teachers can establish more productive learning environments in the classroom by incorporating appropriate media in teaching language. In addition, it is the way of presenting lesson material carried out by English teachers so that a learning process occurs in students in an effort to achieve goals (Sutikno, 2019). One teaching media that can be used in elementary schools is English child-friendly songs. Learning English through the songs can be an effective means of

enhancing young learners' memory and ability in learning English, this can be proven by young learners can follow and remember the songs easily (Ranuntu & Tulung, 2018). Besides, Using songs in teaching English in elementary schools can make it easier for teachers to explain materials being taught.

Songs have several benefits in learning, namely; fostering interest and strengthening the attractiveness of learning, as a bridge in improving learning material, creating more fun and humanistic learning, the process of internalizing the values contained in learning material, and encouraging learning motivation (Qulub et al. 2022). Furthermore, English songs have gained wide popularity as a teaching resource for educating English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. some English teachers use English songs as a means to teach pronunciation (Asmaradhani et al. 2019) to improve young learners' listening comprehension (Lestary, 2019) or to facilitate the development of oral communication skills (Wijaya, 2018). So, songs have a good impact as a teaching media because of improving students' listening and speaking skills, enriching students' vocabulary, and increasing enjoyment of the learning process. these arguments is supported by teachers' perception from previous research.

Teachers' perception refers to the way educators interpret and make sense of their experiences, surroundings, and interactions within the educational context. It encompasses their beliefs, attitudes, and understandings of various aspects of teaching and learning. In term of teaching, teachers must also have perceptions on teaching and learning process. Teachers' perception reflect their attitudes derived from observations. The results of these observations will give rise to a perception where this perception can be positive or negative depending on each individual's observations (Wood, 2013). Additionally, teachers' perception is the teacher's opinion which is influenced by knowledge, thinking ability, experience. He also added that the perception of a teacher will be different from the perception of other teachers, because each teacher has different knowledge, experience and interpretation (Rahmawati, 2020). Similarly teachers' perception in using songs in teaching English at primary school.

Gaining insight into teachers' perspectives regarding the use of child-friendly English songs in the classroom will provide English teacher with valuable information about potential areas for teaching improvement. English child-friendly songs have been known to have a pedagogically oriented external function so elementary teacher tend to use them to convey knowledge and values to the pupils (Conesa & Rubio, 2015). Songs are very important for young learners to know. in addition, young learners do not have the ability to differentiate between music that is considered suitable or not. In the young learners' context, music is considered music, as stated by (Vinge, 2017). In addition, English Child-friendly song is a special song created for children. the song is designed by teachers with tunes, lyrics, and topics that suit children's understanding and interests and can help in the education and entertainment process. Besides, English child-friendly songs have an important role in the development of pupils learning English. It can also be considered a valuable pedagogical tool particularly to help learners improve vocabulary mastery (Rohmah & Indah, 2021). In addition, it can be used as a teaching tool for teachers to introduce vocabulary to children. The use of songs in teaching foreign languages is very effective because songs can make learning more interesting and interactive for young learners (Hermida, 2019). In line with Pourkalhor & Tavakoli (2017) stated that songs can be considered an excellent teaching tool because they can help students improve vocabulary skills. So, English child-friendly songs are very suitable to be implemented in teaching English to young learners.

Teaching English to Young Learners or teaching English at primary school level is guiding and facilitating Young Learners in ages 5-12 years old, for their activities in learning, knowing, understanding, and comprehending ideas, attitudes values, skills, and information of English using tricks and strategies which will be used in changing and redefining their thought forward their daily surrounding situation as foreign languages learners (Hijriati, 2023). Additionally, Teaching English to young learners requires good teaching skills, creativity, thorough preparation, and patience. All of these qualities are necessary for teachers to inspire their pupils to stay motivated (Prayatni, 2019). In the context of language learning, young learners are believed to learn English more effectively under certain situations. Therefore, according to Syafei (2016) stated that When teaching English as a foreign language at primary

school, there are a few language learning presumptions that need to be taken into consideration namely; firstly, Learning should be fun and natural for young learners. Secondly, The language should be first presented through sounds, not written symbols. Lastly, young learners are more sensitive to anything that touches the senses; they react easily to physical objects.

Numerous studies have been done on the use of English children's songs in teaching English to elementary students; these studies have mostly focused on the perspectives of both teachers and students. One of the research was conducted by Fauzan (2021), which explored about English students' perception on the use of English songs in the English learning process. Another research by Sekeon et al. (2022) investigated students' perceptions whether using songs in the classroom can provide benefits in the teaching and learning process. In addition, there are also several studies on teachers' view of using English children's songs to teach English language. A previous research by Saraswati & Widyastuti (2022) explored teachers' perceptions on the implementation of using songs to teach English pronunciation to young learners. Additionally, Nguyen & Nguyen (2020) focused on the use of songs perceived by teachers in vocabulary instruction to young learners within the teaching. However, this current research is different from the previous research. The study focuses on teachers' perceptions in using English child-friendly song in teaching English for young learners.

## **METHOD**

Qualitative research methods (case study) were used in this research. This research applies narrative inquiry which describes perspectives through words. The participants in this research were two novice teachers and one senior teacher who taught third grade. The two novice teachers are 23-year-old women with an English education background. Meanwhile, senior teacher with ASN PPPK status is a 33-year-old woman who has been teaching for 9 years, a bachelor's degree graduated of the English education study program who teaches at a junior high school in the Rumbia district and she also teaches at one of elementary school in Rumbia district. Three teachers were chosen as participants because they were familiar with the use of English child-friendly songs as their media in teaching English in elementary schools.

Prior to conducting a structured interview, the researcher ensures that every participant has provided consent to participate and is ready to conduct the interview. The researcher's aims are to record data, participant criteria, data collection procedures, and information about the expected duration of the study (number of sessions, duration of sessions, total number of days). Further, the researcher estimates the potential benefits to the community or general public and the potential scientific discoveries that are anticipated to arise from this study. Researchers advise participants that the information they provide will be kept confidential and used exclusively for study objectives. To quantify the effect, researchers used codes and group names to identify the participants, such as "novice teacher 1," novice "teacher 2," and "senior teacher." Once they have achieved their goals, the process of gathering data will begin.

The method of data collection employed in this study was structured interviews with three teachers. The primary method of gathering data is through structured interviews by teachers consisting of ten questions that related to using English child-friendly songs. The majority of the data discussed comes from teacher interviews conducted using the Zoom app in order to address this research question. Interviews were in Indonesian to make it easier for participants of the research. After gathering the data, the researcher analyzed it by translating the interviewees' responses verbatim from the Zoom recordings into written text and translating them from Indonesian to English. Next, the researcher reduced unimportant data from the interview. Then, researchers validated the results of teacher interviews. Finally, the researcher draws conclusions based on the data results that has been analyzed.

## **RESULTS**

This part presented the opinions of two novice teachers and one senior teacher perceptions regarding the use of English child-friendly songs when teaching English to pupils. The result of interviews with participants are quoted to strengthen the results of this research.

### **The benefits of using English child-friendly songs in teaching English to young learners**

The research result showed that English teachers to young learners informed positive views of using English child-friendly songs when teaching English to young learners. The benefits were helping young learners increase their vocabulary, and increasing young learners' memory, and increase young learners' overall enjoyment of learning English. The researcher examined the results for each category within the following subsections.

#### **Enhancing Young Learners' Vocabulary**

Based on the interview, novice teacher 1 and novice teacher 2 shared that English child-friendly songs enhance pupils' English vocabulary mastery. The following statements are the results of the structured interviews that describe their perceptions.

Novice teacher 1 said that English child-friendly songs typically feature repetitive lyrics that aid in helping young learners learn specific vocabulary and eventually comprehend new English words. Similarly, teacher 2 also said that because young learners have only recently begun to acclimate to English, their growth in English vocabulary mastery is the most noticeable change in comparison to other skill improvements. She felt that the song's rhythm contributed to the song's effectiveness in helping the young learners recall the lyrics.

According to teacher 1, young learners' vocabulary can grow by singing English child-friendly songs repeatedly, which helps them become more accustomed to the language. This helps the vocabulary stick in the young learners' memories over time. In a similar vein, teacher 2 claimed that the songs could help students' vocabulary grow because they encourage repeating new words, which is akin to having English class vocabulary repeated to the accompaniment of music.

In summary, English child-friendly songs were beneficial to enhancing pupils' English vocabulary mastery due to the rhythm in them can help young learners remember vocabulary better.

#### **Increasing young learners' memory**

Based on the interview, senior teacher shared her experience when she taught English by using English child-friendly songs at elementary school. The teacher said that songs help increase young learners' memory. Through easy-to-remember melodies and simple lyrics, children can quickly memorize vocabulary in English. The statements that follow are the findings from interviews that express how their views.

As mentioned by senior teacher, many pupils have strong memory skills when they listen to songs of child-friendly in English. The teacher shared "when explained the "family members" material using songs, young learners were very enthusiastic about learning the material. After the learning process ended, there are several young learners sang the song." In addition, the novice teacher 1 also shared her experience regarding the applying of the English songs in teaching English in elementary schools. She said "when introducing songs to her young learners, on the first day, many of them still sang while following the teacher who was singing because they had not memorized the song. On the second meeting, almost "everyone can sing the song with the right lyrics." In addition, novice teacher 2 saw that "some young learners were able to remember the song they were practicing only once they heard it because the song lyrics used simple vocabulary so it was easy for them to remember, for example the song about color"

In conclusion, English child-friendly songs can increase the young learners' memory because the songs is related with young learners' life; the song lyrics is easy to remember by young learners; using simple vocabularies in the song lyrics.

#### **Improving Young learners' overall enjoyment of learning English**

English child-friendly songs are beneficial in making learning English more enjoyable, according to novice teacher 2 said that the songs help the pupils enjoy learning English without getting bored in class and they also make them happy and interested in participating in class activities. teacher perceptions are described in the statements that follow, which are the outcome of interviews.

as mentioned by novice teacher 1, English child-friendly songs could make young learners happy, which kept them engaged and enjoying learning English in classroom. Additionally, pupils did not feel bored quickly by using the songs so they were more interested in the learning process in the classroom. Teacher 2 mentioned that young learners have become more engaged in their learning. Initially, they were quiet and hesitant due to their unfamiliarity with English lessons. However, as they became more accustomed to the subject, their confidence grew. They expressed that using media made learning English songs more enjoyable and less intimidating. novice teacher said that the young learners showed great enthusiasm in learning English by using English child-friendly songs due to they were not only singing but were also encouraged to move in sync with the song's lyrics. Occasionally, at the beginning of the lesson, a student would be chosen to lead the singing, which contributed to the students' increased motivation to learn English. Likewise, the senior teacher observed that the students exhibited increased enthusiasm and didn't become easily bored during their learning sessions. This was attributed to the fact that the teaching approach wasn't as monotonous as it typically was but instead incorporated songs that infused a lively atmosphere into the classroom.

In summary, the implementation of child-friendly English songs was effective in increasing children' enthusiasm in learning the language. Kids responded favorably to the utilization of songs in the classroom and enjoyed singing. This approach helped to make the classroom feel less intimidating by fostering a laid-back and informal atmosphere.

## **DISCUSSION**

This research aims to explore English teachers' views in applying English child-friendly songs in teaching English to pupils at district of Rumbia, Bombana Regency. Based on the result from interview, the researcher found that the teachers consider that English child-friendly songs can be used as an effective teaching medium because of having several benefits. Namely; first, English child-friendly songs can help young learners improve their English vocabulary, because song lyrics are always repeated. in line with previous research by Millington (2011) said that songs that have lyrics that are repeated many times can make it easier for young learners to retain the vocabulary they learn from songs. In addition, teachers have to encourage their pupils to sing along because repeating songs several times to reinforce vocabulary learning. according to Fitriani (2023) said that repetition helps vocabulary retention and increases young learners' confidence in using new words.

Secondly, English child-friendly songs can increase young learners' memory. In line with Ranuntu & Tulung (2018) stated that learning English through songs can be an effective means to enhance students' memory and language learning abilities. This is proven by how easily young learners follow and remember songs. Additionally, a English song can be a speech tool that will indirectly be remembered in the brain's memory of the young learners (Aguirre et al. 2016).

Lastly, the songs increase young learners' overall enjoyment of learning English. Songs play a crucial role in enhancing the enjoyment of young learners in learning English because they present learning materials in an enjoyable way and encourage active engagement of young learners in learning English inside the classroom. Nguyen & Nguyen (2020) found that the use of songs can create a fun learning space and motivate young learners to learn English. In this situation, English teachers should arrange a comfortable environment for the young learners so they can learn comfy. they are active learners they easily get bored if they do not like the materials. Mardasari (2020) mentioned that using songs, teachers can create some good ways to deliver English. Through these activities, the young learners can enhance their English skills.

## **CONCLUSION**

English child-friendly songs as effective teaching media in teaching English to young learners because it has many benefits in teaching and learning process in the classroom. In this research, the researcher has been conducted the research about using English child-friendly songs that focus on the teachers' perceptions. So, based on the results of interviews conducted with three teachers from different primary schools in the Rumbia district, Bombana regency, a brief conclusion can be drawn from this research. the research finds that English teachers have

positive perception regarding the use of English child-friendly songs in teaching English to young learners. Incorporating the songs into English classes for young learners can provide several benefits namely; firstly, the use of songs helps young learners enhance their vocabulary mastery as they can learn new words from the lyrics and memorize these words by listening repeatedly and singing the song. Second, these songs have been proven to improve young learners' memory as the lyrics revolve around daily life, making them easy to remember and utilizing simple vocabulary in the songs' lyrics. Lastly, child-friendly English songs can enhance the overall enjoyment of learning English for pupils because they love singing and have a positive reaction to apply of songs in the classroom.

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