The Influence of Music on Listening Comprehension Development in Colombian Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Music is the most meaningful resource that in-service teachers and pre-service teachers use to enhance listening comprehension in Colombia. This paper examines the impact of music on the development of listening comprehension among secondary school students, more specifically, teens, to compare methodologies, identifying more effective and common music genres, and providing pre-service teachers with more training. The systematic literature review was done using PRISMA Protocol to select the articles and systematic reviews, and the NotebookLM (a data analysis tool) was used to analyse meaningful commonalities and important differences among the corpus of articles. The results show that music is a magnificent resource to the listening comprehension development and there is a specific genre which makes students feel less stressed. This paper is focused on developing tools for teachers and producing articles primarily based on using music and audiovisual resources for English language listening comprehension development in Colombian Secondary Schools, with Colombia having the most authors. In conclusion, this systematic literature review found that the influence of music is a good tool for listening comprehension development in secondary schools.

Keywords: Influence of Music, Listening Comprehension Development, Secondary Schools.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Throughout the history of education, there have been many strategies for English Learning, such as TPR (Nelson, 2025), but a new strategy has emerged: learning English with music (H *et al.,* 2024). Carranza *et al.* (2023) declared that using music as a strategy for learning and teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) can yield positive results to students and foster a relaxed learning environment. Lam *et al.* (2o23) expressed that a lack of specific training can negatively influence English learning. Finally, it is crucial to note that each article presented in this systematic review is fragmented: diversity of approaches, variety of contexts, and different educational levels.

This paper aims to identify the influence of music on the development of listening skills among secondary school students learning a foreign language and to apply that impact in a classroom. Given that Castro *et al.* (2023) found that teachers lack sufficient training to use music as a tool, this systematic review will compare music methodologies with traditional listening methods. Finally, it is well known that teenagers listen to many musical genres; thus, this article will determine which musical genres are most effective for enhancing listening skills. It is

widely acknowledged that there is a wide range of music; accordingly, in articles, books, and thesis desire to know which types of music are more common and how they influence listening skill development.

As it was mentioned before, the principal population is young learners, specifically students' secondary school with different contexts, and evidently, different geographical scopes as Colombia, Spain, and Vietnam. It was decided to focus on secondary school students because it is demonstrated thanks to Franco (2024). They made a survey to one thousand three hundred students in secondary school in Turkey and they found that foreign music was the most popular. Following this reasoning, this review will determine why music is meaningful in listening comprehension development in a secondary school and why it is easier to work with foreign music in teenagers. Finally, the research will train teachers who want to apply music methodologies in a secondary school making the classroom environment more comfortable for students and teachers.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Diversity of Music

Music has a wide variety of meaning, but the main ones focus on emotions, cognition, cultural and didactic resources. Deeply H *et al.* (2024) stated, "music is a great stimulant for students' involvement exactly because it speaks directly to their emotions while also enabling them to utilize their minds, and it is more if the teachers are teaching to teenages. The use of music that draws the attention of students makes the class more enjoyable and makes students develop listening skills. Teachers also benefit from employing songs in their teaching and learning activities" (p. 20). Through songs, teachers can teach students vocabulary, language, culture, social habits, and other aspects of the language. Students are seemingly pleased since they are listening to something new. They should not always listen to their teacher's voice, which may be limited or even uninteresting (G *et al.,* 2024). In the case of didactic music, Carranza *et al.* (2023a) concluded that music is one of the most effective didactic tools. Therefore, using music as a strategy to learn and teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) will bring positive results in students, as stated by Fonseca (Carranza *et al.,* 2023a). Also, it is important to note that music reflects a country's cultural identity and is significant for education (Mailawati & Anita, 2022). Mailawati & Anita (2022) stated that music is one of the most exciting and culturally rich elements that can be used in education.

In conclusion, H *et al.* (2024), Carranza *et al.* (2023a), and Mailawati & Anita (2022) are focused on how music can connect with students emotionally. Secondly, each of declarations showed the music as pedagogical tool: H *et al.* (2024) emphasized in teaching vocabulary, Carranza *et al.* (2023a) focused on how music is the one of the most effective didactic strategy, and Mailawati & Anita (2022) mentioned that music can be used in education. On the other hand, there are some differences between those authors. H *et al. (2024) is focused on cognition, Carranza et al.* (2023a) is focused on music's cultural richness.

2.2 Listening skills

Listening skills are one of the four skills of English, and, according to H *et al.* (2024), they are the capability of recognizing and understanding what people are saying. Also, they mention that it is important to take into account accent, dialect, grammar and vocabulary, this means that it is not only identifying sounds, it is also understanding the meanings (semantic and pragmatic). Mailawati & Anita (2022) declared that listening is a receptive skill because the student accepts and understands the listening language without producing it. On the other hand, Arenas Palomares (2024) uttered that this skill is a process that requires the listener to discriminate between sounds, understand vocabulary and grammatical structures, interpreted pronunciation and intonation, retained and interpreted an information, all those things in a sociocultural context; thus, she concluded that listening is a complex process and it is undefined. Concluding the meaning of listening skills, H *et al.* (2024) declared that listening skill is so important to improve other skills in foreign languages, and they declared that students use more listening skills than others skills; thus, using that skill can be a great strategy for teaching.

Finally, three utterances agreed that listening skills are more than just hearing sounds; they require understanding language and context. Also, these utterances not only focus on "identifying a sound", but they also highlight the

mental process. And ultimately, they emphasized the relevance of listening skills in language learning. However, there are some differences between those statements: H *et al.* (2024) was centered on semantic and pragmatic understanding. Mailawati & Anita (2022) was aimed at passive reception of language, and finally, Arenas Palomares (2024) was focused on a complex and undefined process involving discrimination, interpretation, retention, and sociocultural awareness.

III. METHODOLOGY

2.3 Object of the study

- To identify the influence of music on learning skills for foreign language secondary school students.

- To compare music methodologies with traditional listening methods in developing specific listening competencies.

- To determine which musical genres are most effective for enhancing listening skills development in foreign language secondary school students.

As is well known, this systematic literature review focuses on the influence of music on listening comprehension on the development of secondary school students, i.e., in young learners. Thus, this paper will examine the influence of music on the development of listening skills among adolescent foreign language learners. As pre-service teachers, it is important to consider the different tools at hand. In addition, it is meaningful to compare music methodologies with traditional listening methods in developing specific listening skills. Observations indicate that most English teachers still use audiolingual strategies, such as drilling and repetition. In this way, comparison can help future teachers to develop innovative methodologies. Finally, given that the majority of students are teens, they generally use music to express their emotions. It is meaningful to determine which musical genres are most effective for enhancing listening comprehension in the development of EFL in a secondary school.

RQ1: How does music influence listening skills development in a foreign language?

RQ2: What type of music is more commonly used for listening skills development?

With these research questions, the aims will be achieved, and there will emerge new methodologies for EFL teaching.

2.4 Sample

The articles were selected from, ensuring academic quality and relevance to the research questions. The raw results were organised by the PRISMA Protocol (see Figure 1: PRISMA Flowchart). The majority of articles were ruled out because their articles' topics were not related to the topic selected: music, listening comprehension, and secondary school.

This is the final selection of scientific publication: Redalyc: 11; Dialnet: 3; Doaj: 1; using the following criteria:

Thematic: Publications focused on the influence of music on listening skills development in a secondary school or young learners.

Area of knowledge: Education

Publication dates: 2025 publication date in Dialnet; 2025 and 2025 publication date in Redalyc and Doaj.

Languages: English

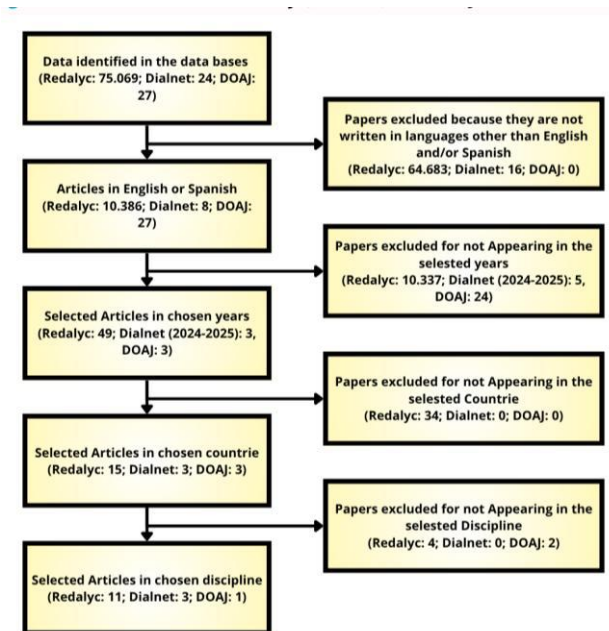*Databases:* Redalyc, Dialnet, and Doaj.

Fig. 1: Selected Article in Redalyc, Dialnet, and DOAJ Prisma Flowchart

2.5 Analysis Criteria

After identifying the concepts, the articles were refined using the established inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the PRISMA flowchart guided the process. Firstly, all publications were retrieved from Redalyc, Dialnet, and DOAJ, they were filtered to include only publications in English. Next to that, articles were excluded if they did not fall within the selected publication year (2025), but in the case of Dialnet, the selected publication years were 2024 and 2025 because when the researchers selected 2025, any article that appeared. Another exclusion criterion was the country: Colombia. Finally, publications were screened according to the specific discipline relevant to the scope of this systematic review: Education.

On the other hand the classification of articles was conducted considering the two research questions and the purpose of the models described in the articles. Group 1 includes the music in the classroom, and group 2 includes how listening skills and listening comprehension can be influenced by the music (Table 1).

Table 1. Classification of the articles from Redalyc, Dialnet, DOAJ

Redalyc			
#	Authors	Key ideas	Classifications
1	Frontiers in Education (2025)	Music reduces anxiety, boosts motivation, and improves memory in language learning.	Group 1 RQ1
2	MIT News (2025)	Piano lessons enhance pitch discrimination and spoken word recognition.	Group 1 RQ1
3	Pearson Languages	Songs help with vocabulary retention, pronunciation, and cultural understanding.	Group 1 RQ1
4	ERIC (2025)	Pop songs are most commonly used; selected for clarity, moderate tempo, and cultural relevance.	Group 2 RQ2
5	EFLCafe.net (2025)	Repetitive songs with everyday vocabulary are preferred to improve listening fluency.	Group 2 RQ2

6	CLIL Journal (2025)	The MOVIC approach uses music and movement to enhance listening and comprehension in young learners.	Group 2 RQ2
7	Rodríguez-Fuentes & Concu (2025)	Corpus use in ELT is limited in Colombia; more training and resources are needed.	Group 2 RQ1
8	Lopera & Sierra (2025)	Students show agency toward language policy; some accept, others reject or ignore it.	Group 2 RQ1
9	Castro Mosqueda (2025)	Emotions influence teacher agency; empathy and ethics strengthen student relationships.	Group 2 RQ1
10	Marsee & Pineda Hoyos (2025)	COIL experiences improve intercultural awareness and tolerance.	Group 2 RQ1
11	Girald & Yan (2025)	Online assessment courses improve teachers' assessment literacy; integrated skills are valued.	Group 2 RQ1
DOAJ			
1	Robby Ferdian, Hengki Armez Hidayat, Ayuthia Mayang Sari, Irdhan Epria Darma Putra, Ressy Fritia, Fakhri Fauzi, Malikhatul Lailiyah (2025)	Gen Z values sound design for its emotional impact and audio quality but lacks deep technical understanding.	Group 1, 2 RQ 1, 2
Dialnet			
1	Shelsia Adelaida Cordero Correa & Marlon Richard Armijos Ramirez (2024)	Audiovisual resources like music videos and audiobooks significantly improved students' listening comprehension and motivation.	Group 2 RQ1
2	Verónica Alexandra Laica-Ambuzha & Tammy Fajardo-Dack (2024)	Music based activities boosted elementary students' listening skills and triggered positive perceptions toward English learning.	Group 1, 2 RQ1
3	Fernández de Cañete García, Pineda, & Waddell (2022)	The MMI approach outperformed gamification in improving oral production and listening comprehension, especially for musically trained students.	Group 1, 2 RQ 1, 2

IV. RESULTS

4.1 General Results

The research equation was initially entered into Scopus yielding no results, indicating that the topic has not been extensively studied in the academic literature. As a result, new searches were conducted in Redalyc, Dialnet, and

DOAJ. From the results in Figure 1, it is important to note that the selected country was Colombia. According to the filters applied, all articles were produced in Colombia; thus, the tables on the country's production over time cannot be elaborated.

On the other hand, analysing the main information in the database yields meaningful results. It is important to mention that in all databases, the sources were only articles; hence, anything was added in that section. In addition, it was necessary to extend the timespan because if 2025 is just applied, any article would be shown. It can be demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Main information data

Dialnet			Redalyc			DOAJ		
Description	Results		Description	Results		Description	Results	
Main Info Data			*Main Info Data*			*Main Info Data*		
Timespan	2024-2025		Timespan	2025		Timespan	2025	
Sources	-		Sources	-		Sources	-	
Documents	3		Documents	11		Documents	1	
Annual Growth Rate -50%	-50%		Annual Growth Rate -6.53%	0		Annual Growth Rate	0%	
Documents Average Age	1		Documents Average Age	0		Documents Average Age	0	
Average citations per doc	2.3		Average citations per doc	1.6		Average citations per doc	0	
References	123		References	517		References	56	
Document contents			*Document contents*			*Document contents*		
Author's Keywords	12		Author's Keywords	51		Author's Keywords	5	
Authors			*Authors*			*Authors*		
Authors	7		Authors	24		Authors	7	
Authors of single-authored docs	0		Authors of single-authored docs	3		Authors of single-authored docs	0	
Authors collaboration			*Authors collaboration*			*Authors collaboration*		
single-Authors per Doc	0		single-Authors per Doc	3		single-Authors per Doc	0	
Co-authors per Doc	2.3		Co-authors per Doc	2.18		Co-authors per Doc	7	
International co-autorships %	0.3%		International co-autorships %	2.7%		International co-autorships %	1	
Document Types			*Document Types*			*Document Types*		
Articles	3		Articles	11		Articles	1	

The authors in the articles focus on the application of music, songs, and audiovisual resources in the development of listening/comprehension in foreign language learning (EFL). It is important to mention that the databases are mixed in Figure 2. Each country is associated with each article, and Figure 2 shows that the authors from Ecuador published the articles in 2024. Finally, the country with the most authors is Colombia. From the DOAJ database, Myanmar is the only country; from the Dialnet database, Ecuador and Spain are the countries of origin; ultimately, from the Redalyc database, there are authors from India, Colombia, Bhutan, Mexico, Brazil, Chile, and Vietnam.
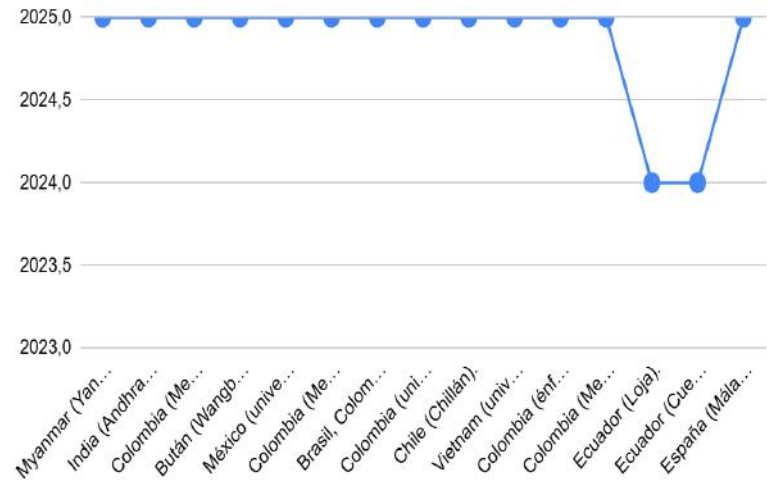

Fig. 2: Country Production Over Time

Specific Results

The findings in the article about the use of music and listening resources in the development of listening

comprehension reveal meaningful coincidences:

- The most important is about **the quantifiable improvement in listening comprehension** using music resources, and Correa & Ramirez (2024) described in a tenth grade students in a pre-test, they got a 57% of 100% in listening comprehension that includes specific sub-skills such as listening for predicting, listening for gist, and listening for specific information; after implementing the music, they increased to 82% of 100% demonstrating that the music is a meaningful resource.

- De Cañete Garcia *et al.* (2022) made a comparison between two groups. Gamification and Music; and they likewise made pre-test and post-test, and predictables, after the post-test, the music's group got an meaningful increase (3.92 to 8.51) more than Gamification's group (4.23 to 7.60) clarifying that music is a magnificent resource to the listening comprehension development.

4.2 Research Gaps

Future research on the Music as a Medium of Instruction (MMI) approach (De Cañete Garcia *et al.,* 2022) should address methodological limitations and expand its scope. It is necessary to shift toward a true-experimental framework utilizing larger and randomized samples that include balanced groups based on factors such as gender and musical experience [MMI recommendations]. Further investigation is needed to study the long-term impacts of the MMI approach (De Cañete Garcia *et al.*, 2022) on students' language proficiency [MMI recommendations], and to determine its effectiveness with older learners and students with higher musical proficiency, including adults [MMI recommendations, 656]. Researchers suggest exploring a combined approach, such as MMI (De Cañete Garcia *et al.* 2022) and Famification, could potentially amplify the positive results [MMI recommendations, 656, 657]. Furthermore, the specific link between pre-existing musical ability and second language acquisition (SLA) remains unclear because prior studies with short musical trajectories showed improvements primarily in the native language, not the second language [MMI recommendations, 654]. Finally, the applicability of MMI (De Cañete Garcia *et al.*, 2022) should be tested in any foreign language classroom, moving beyond the English Language Teaching (ELT) context [MMI recommendations, 657].

RQ1: "How does music influence listening comprehension development in a foreign language in Colombia?"

The influence of music on listening comprehension in the Colombian context, according to sources, is supported by previous research (Ferdian *et al.*, 2025) cited:

- **Music is suitables authentic material:** Songs are the most suitable type of authentication material for developing listening comprehension in EFL classes.

- **Increased participation:** The integration of music into lessons in this context are increased student attendance and active participation (Ferdian *et al.*, 2025).

- **Contextual Relevance:** The effectiveness of music is especially strong when the age and social context of the students match the type of music selected for in-class use.

- **General approach:** Although there is no recent study in the sources that measures the direct impact of music on listening comprehension in Colombia with a pre-posttest design, results in nearby regions such as Ecuador (Correa & Ramirez, 2024a) and the MMI study (De Cañete Garcia *et al.*, 2022) in Spain, which reported a significant increase in listening comprehension and motivation through musical/audiovisual resources, suggest a generally positive influence on the development of listening skills.

RQ2: "What type of music is more commonly used for listening comprehension development?"

The most commonly used and explicitly mentioned musical or sound-based resources in the context of the development of listening comprehension in foreign languages, according to the sources, are:

1. Music as a Medium of Instruction (MMI): The MMI approach was found to be a superior training method compared to a Gamification approach for developing listening comprehension skills in young learners. MMI employs strategies such as using children's rhymes to facilitate the learning of new vocabulary and linguistics via familiar melodies.

2. Music Videos: They are considered a valid pedagogical resource because of their short duration, simple syntax, and colloquial language. Music videos create a multi-dimensional, immersive experience by combining auditory (music, lyrics) and visual (moving images) elements. They also often provide information about the culture and history of the artist's country of origin.

3. Audiobooks: When used alongside music videos, audiobooks offer the opportunity to focus on the story's theme, conflict, setting, and characters, thereby helping students develop critical thinking skills.

4. Student motivation: Songs are examples of authentic resources that serve as useful tools for language learning without putting undue academic pressure on students. Students report feeling more motivated, interested, and less tense when practicing listening skills with music, such as **rap music**.

This evidence suggests that integrating these resources creates a motivating, stimulating, and enjoyable learning environment that effectively improves students' listening comprehension.

V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Discussion

This systematic review of the literature concerning the application of musical resources in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, primarily sourced from Redalyc, Dialnet, and DOAJ, revealed distinct strengths in the evidence while simultaneously highlighting significant limitations in the extant research and the review's methodology. The core strength lies in the compelling quantitative evidence supporting the pedagogical value of music. This is demonstrated by an outstanding improvement in student listening comprehension scores (e.g., 57% to 82%), which specifically addressed sub-skills like predicting and finding specific information. Crucially, the Music group outperformed the Gamification group, confirming music's efficacy. However, the research body exhibits clear limitations. The initial Scopus search yielded no results, indicating that the topic lacks extensive publication in high-impact, globally indexed literature, suggesting a gap in large-scale validation studies. This reliance is needed on open-access platforms, creating a geographical and database bias, primarily focusing on Latin American contexts.

This paper revealed that there are 10 000 articles with the key words proposed, but there were just fifteen articles which dealt with the positive influence on the development of listening comprehension among secondary school students learning the English language. Across multiple studies (Carranza *et al.*, 2023; Correa & Ramirez, 2024; De Cañete García *et al.*, 2022), music was found to have enhanced students' motivation, engagement, and vocabulary retention, as well as to have reduced anxiety during listening activities. Moreover, musical strategies, particularly those using pop songs, music videos, and the Music as a Medium of Instruction (MMI) approach consistently led to measurable improvements in listening comprehension performance.

In contrast, in this paper, it was demonstrated that traditional methods based on repetitions do not show a high level of interest in students' and a significant learning process (Castro *et al.*, 2023). There are a certain amount of articles which talked about music, but there are others which did not talk about that:

- Firstly, the researchers will demonstrate which articles are not related with this review and why: Rodríguez-Fuentes & Cocu (2025) divulged about corpus applications in ELT in Colombia, it means that the skills applied were reading and writing. It is important to remember that this systematic review treats the influence of music in **listening comprehension**; thus, the article written by Rodríguez-Fuentes & Concu (2025) made a contrast with the results of this paper. Lopera & Sierra (2025) and Vega-Abarzúa *et al.* (2025) were respectively focused on superior education and pre-service teachers, in this way, it does not word because this paper is focused on **secondary school students**. Cruz-Arcila *et al.* (2025b), Mosqueda (2025), Pinninti (2025), and Wangdi & Rigel (2025) supported information about teachers and gave materials to teachers, when it is well known that this paper is focused on **students**. Finally, Marsee & Hoyos (2025) showed a useful tool which is a way to learn collaboratively with international students; despite music being international, there is **no** collaboration between people directly.

- Secondly, there are four articles which mentioned a few about the results of this paper: Cong-Lem (2025) talked about the translanguaging in his article, but the section which is important to emphasize is **the reduce of anxiety** using translanguaging, because it was demonstrated in this review that the environment of the class is better when the teacher used music. Finally, Ferdian *et al.* (2025) emphasized on the influence of music in emotions, but **did not mention** anything about English.

- Thirdly and finally, there are only two articles which are related to the results showed in this paper: Correa & Ramírez (2024a) applied pre-test and post-test demonstrating that the influence of music is positively related to listening comprehension and how was mentioned before, the motivation in a class using music is high. Finally, De Cañete García *et al.* (2022) not only agreed with the results of this paper but also made a comparison between gamification group and music group, demonstrating that music is a better way to learn English.

The researchers analyse that after filtered more than 50 000 articles, only fifteen articles passed the filters, but it is really meaningful to mention that almost all of these fifteen articles were not apt to use for this systematic literature review. It demonstrated that there are a few articles that talk about the influence of music in **listening comprehension**. Close to all articles talked about listening skills, but no comprehension, demonstrating that teachers are more concerned with the listening subskills and not exactly the listening comprehension (Correa & Ramírez, 2024a) (Mercedes, 2024) (De Cañete García *et al.*, 2022). Finally, it is important to mention that the results of articles and of this paper demonstrate that the influence of music in listening comprehension in secondary school students is a good strategy to apply having to take into account that with music, teachers can understand students' feelings, thoughts, and emotions; additionally, it creates a motivation in them to learn English in different way learning vocabulary and becoming the traditional lessons in communicative lessons.

5.2 Implications

The literature review found that teaching students through music is meaningful. It is not only for improving the classroom performance and environment, but also for increased listening comprehension. Gilakjani & Sabouri (2016) mentioned that listening is usually difficult to learn because when teachers use audios where English speakers speak really fast at the risk of sounding redundant. Additionally, English speakers use unfamiliar accents (British, Indian, or Australian), reduced forms ("gonna", "lemme", "wanna"); and teachers do not use listening strategies. Finally, those articles showed different musical strategies as a Music as a Medium of Instruction (MMI) (De Cañete García *et al.*, 2022), audiovisual resources (Correa & Ramirez, 2024a), use of music in other contexts (Ferdial *et al.*, 2025). Adding to that, it is considered meaningful because for pre-service teachers, it is important to teach in different ways using music as a resource. Music is a way to reveal to students that English can be learned in didactic ways considering the thoughts and emotions of them, and it is a great stimulant for students because music treats emotions directly to emotions; thus, it draws the attention of the students (H *et al.*, 2024).

In education, music can be applied as a linguistic tool. Cruz-Arcila *et al.* (2025) mentioned that the music acts as a catalyst in acquisition of languages through methodologies including audiovisual resources and for social transformation because music helps students to express themselves. Finally, some unanswered aspects were how music can influence the mind of teenagers with mental disorders. It is well-known that they acquire language in a different way depending on the mental disorder. Thus, how do students with mental disorders acquire English language through music?

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, music is a meaningful tool to teach English in a secondary school in listening comprehension development. The influence of music is positive according to MMI strategy (De Cañete García *et al.*, 2022). It has demonstrated that the use of music in a classroom for developing listening comprehension increases. Adding to that, music helps to create a good environment inside the classroom helping students feel more comfortable and confident when they come to participating.

In addition, rap music and pop music are the most selected musical genres by students acquiring vocabulary, listening for prediction, and listening for gist. Also music acts as a stimulant for social transformation helping students express themselves.

In the case of teachers, musical methodologies help in-service teachers and pre-service teachers to innovate their methodologies and change traditional methodologies as repetition to original strategies using music.

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