
Language Learning: Enhancing Students' Pronunciation through English Songs

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Abstract : This study examines how well English songs may be used as a teaching technique to improve eighth-grade students' pronunciation. The study aims to provide evidence-based insights applicable to English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts and future teaching practices by methodically examining the effects of incorporating English songs into the instructional process to improve pronunciation using a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design. A methodical framework for using English songs as a teaching tool for pronunciation enhancement is created during the planning stage. Data is collected throughout the observation period to evaluate the overall efficacy of the intervention as well as the pronunciation development of the pupils. Throughout iterative cycles, this data becomes the basis for evaluating and improving instructional tactics. Results and debates regarding using songs to teach pronunciation are presented in the study. Songs improve pronunciation and make learning more enjoyable and pleasurable when used as an instructional technique. This method is a valuable supplement to language teaching approaches since it may increase students' motivation and self-assurance in their English-speaking skills.

Key Words: Language learning, Enhancing Pronunciation, English Song.

1. INTRODUCTION

An essential part of learning English is pronunciation, which significantly influences a learner's capacity for communication. It includes the ability to make understandable language sounds and the correct use of stress, intonation, and rhythm. Accurate pronunciation can be complex for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, especially in non-English speaking areas, because of limited exposure to native speakers and practice opportunities. These difficulties frequently result in a loss of confidence and obstruct clear communication.

The significance of pronunciation in communication has been extensively studied in linguistics. Poor pronunciation can lead to misconceptions, impede meaningful discourse, and harm a speaker's confidence, according to Tsunemoto (2023) to (Tsunemoto et al., 2023). Strong pronunciation abilities can help students comprehend themselves, which hinders language acquisition and lowers their desire to speak English outside of the classroom (Gilakjani, A. P., & Sabouri, N. B. (201). In conventional classroom settings, where grammar and vocabulary are prioritized, pronunciation frequently needs to be given greater attention despite its critical significance. Many educators notice that pupils are reluctant to use English in class because they are self-conscious about pronouncing the language. This underscores the need for creative and engaging teaching strategies to solve this problem.

Songs and music have gained popularity as helpful teaching aids for languages in recent years. Songs provide students with a memorable and entertaining way to experience the rhythm

and sounds of natural language. According to scholars, songs are beneficial for developing listening and pronunciation because they offer real-world examples of phonetic patterns, stress, and intonation (Zhang et al., 2021). EFL students can improve their pronunciation by singing along to English songs, which provides a fun and relaxed environment for them to practice the language's sounds and patterns (Nur et al., 2022).

The natural approach to language acquisition principles, which emphasizes meaningful and pleasurable exposure to the target language, aligns with music in language training. Krashen's affective filter—psychological obstacles that obstruct language acquisition, such as fear, a lack of drive, or low self-esteem—has been demonstrated to be lowered by music (Wulandari et al., 2017). Fun educational resources, such as well-known English songs, frequently boost motivation and engagement among students and help them internalize phonetic elements. This method benefits younger students who might be less responsive to conventional, textbook-focused approaches.

Several studies demonstrate how effective songs are at improving pronunciation. Young students who received song-based teaching significantly improved their ability to identify and pronounce English sounds and imitate natural intonation patterns, according to Afriyuninda (2019). Similarly, (Zhang et al., 2021) discovered that singing facilitates language learning by assisting students in internalizing and practicing spoken English's rhythm, emphasis, and flow. Adrien (2020) also found that EFL students showed increased engagement and improved phonetic skill retention when music was incorporated into classes. English songs offer eighth-grade pupils a fun and helpful way to enhance their pronunciation while boosting their interest and enjoyment of language study.

Drills and repetition exercises, two common traditional ways of teaching speech, can be tedious and uninteresting for students. Furthermore, these approaches might not give pupils the real phonetic input they need to learn sounds missing from their native tongues. Songs, on the other hand, provide a rich and dynamic stream of phonetic information that allows students to listen to and entertainingly practice accurate English pronunciation. Students can develop more native-like pronunciation by singing and listening to English songs, exposing them to the language's natural flow, rhythm, and emphasis (Sihvonen et al., 2020).

The difficulties Indonesian students have pronouncing words correctly in English make the case for using music in EFL lessons strong. Mastering the "th" sounds in words like think and that, as well as vowel sounds that are very different from those in their native tongue, are common challenges. Teachers can help students overcome these difficulties by choosing songs highlighting problematic phonemes, allowing them to practice these sounds in context. This

makes pronunciation practice less daunting and increases its efficacy because students are more likely to remember sounds and patterns they hear in song lyrics than in

This study examines the effectiveness of using English songs to improve pronunciation skills, providing evidence-based insights to inform teaching practices in similar EFL contexts. As many students have limited exposure to English daily, songs offer a valuable way to introduce English's natural sounds, rhythm, and intonation. Including English songs in the EFL curriculum offers a promising strategy for improving pronunciation skills among eighth-grade students. Teachers can create a rich, authentic, enjoyable language-learning environment that fosters phonetic awareness and enhances pronunciation.

According to Cakir (2023), incorporating songs into English language teaching (ELT) creates a favorable learning environment that encourages students to engage deeply with pronunciation features like intonation, rhythm, and stress. Songs also provide students a memorable and enjoyable medium for mimicking native pronunciation models and improving fluency (Horwitz, 2020). The importance of music in language acquisition has been widely recognized, with research highlighting its potential to improve students' pronunciation skills (Sihvonen et al., 2020).

Rosová (2021) found that songs reduce learners' pronunciation anxiety, fostering greater confidence in speaking English. Songs help learners recognize and produce accurate sounds by providing repetitive phonetic patterns and natural contexts (Lazem & Hamzah, 2024). They also expose students to the nuances of connected speech and authentic language use, which enhances their understanding of how sounds blend into natural English (Boustani & Al Abdwani, 2023). This exposure is significant for junior high school students who need reinforcement of foundational pronunciation skills.

Incorporating music into the eighth-grade curriculum is further supported by its cognitive and emotional benefits: Schön et al. (2023) found that music improves auditory processing and memory retention, both of which are critical for pronunciation practice; music also increases classroom motivation because students view songs as a welcome diversion from traditional drills, which increases their willingness to participate (Baills et al., 2021) and learning pronunciation through music improves listening.

To sum up, using English songs to enhance pronunciation has many linguistic and affective benefits, making it a valuable teaching tool for junior high school students. By implementing this strategy, teachers can create a safe and stimulating learning environment where eighth-grade students can practice their pronunciation in fun and meaningful ways.

2. METHOD

Research Design

Burns (2020) defines Classroom Action Research (CAR) as a reflective process in which teachers systematically observe, evaluate, and adapt their instructional practices based on collected data to improve student learning outcomes. This iterative approach is especially well-suited for the current study, as it allows for continuous monitoring and improvement of students' pronunciation skills through English songs. This study uses a CAR design, a practical framework for examining and improving students' pronunciation skills in a classroom context.

To achieve quantifiable improvements in students' pronunciation at SMP Negeri Oenenu, CAR is usually implemented in cycles, each consisting of four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The study focuses on two eighth-grade classes, VIII/A and VIII/B, with 59 students; 25 students from Class VIII/B were chosen as the sample for this study.

This study adheres to Mertler (2024) CAR model, which delineates four main stages within each cycle:

Planning

A systematic and structured foundation for using English songs to improve pronunciation is established during the planning phase, which includes making detailed preparations to incorporate English songs into pronunciation lessons, including choosing songs that are appropriate for the student's language proficiency and cultural context, incorporating manageable vocabulary and clear pronunciation patterns, and creating instructional materials, lesson plans, and assessment tools to assess pronunciation skills in terms of stress, intonation, and articulation.

Action

The planned activities occur in the classroom during the action phase, where students listen to and repeat lines from the chosen songs. They concentrate on mimicking the pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation of native English speakers using activities like choral reading, shadowing, and sing-alongs to make the learning process dynamic and engaging. The teacher offers direction and corrective feedback, assisting students in recognizing and correcting pronunciation errors in real time.

Observation

During the observation phase, the teacher records students' engagement, ability to replicate sounds accurately, and any persistent pronunciation difficulties. Data collection tools, including field notes, audio recordings, and observation checklists, systematically document

changes in pronunciation skills. This phase serves as a foundation for analyzing how English songs affect pronunciation and pinpointing areas that need more work.

Reflection

A crucial part of CAR is reflection, which enables the assessment of the intervention's efficacy and planning subsequent cycles. In this study, the researcher examines observation data to pinpoint areas that require improvement and additional attention. Reflections inform modifications to instructional strategies, like changing the songs, introducing a variety of pronunciation exercises, or improving feedback methods. These insights improve the effectiveness of the intervention in subsequent cycles, guaranteeing ongoing progress in student pronunciation.

Data Collection Techniques

The study uses qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to assess pronunciation accuracy directly in the intervention context. The former is obtained through observation notes and audio recordings of students' pronunciation. In contrast, the latter is obtained through pre- and post-tests at each cycle's start and finish. The test items are derived from the vocabulary and phrases featured in the chosen songs.

As suggested by Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2011), the study uses triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. This entails using multiple data sources—audio recordings, test scores, and field notes—to corroborate the results. Iterative adjustments and regular reflection across cycles ensure that the interventions align with the research objectives and that using English songs is responsible for improved pronunciation skills.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data triangulation is accomplished by examining field notes from classroom activities, interview transcripts, expert theories, and supporting documents like lesson plans and records of student progress, accomplishments, and mistakes during the learning process. The study integrates input from the researcher, the English teacher, and the eighth-grade students.

Interviews are conducted to learn how students feel about classroom activities and to obtain their opinions, thoughts, and suggestions about interventions. Field notes capture classroom activities and keep track of documents such as lesson plans and student work.

When students' pronunciation skills show a discernible improvement, the study is over; if no discernible change is seen, more cycles are carried out until sufficient development is made.

3. RESULT

After each session, a pronunciation test was given based on the results, and the research on teaching pronunciation using English songs was discussed. This section presents the pronunciation test results, observations, and field notes documenting the students' participation in the pronunciation teaching process, along with figures that show each student's progress.

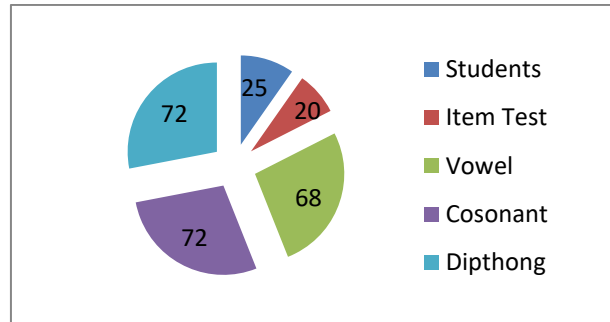


Figure 1. Students result of Second Meeting I

According to the data in the table, the vowel aspect was the one in which students struggled with pronunciation the most (17 students, or 68%). In comparison, the consonant and diphthong aspects had slightly higher percentages of difficulty 18 students, or 72%). Overall, only one student met the minimum completeness criteria of 70%, which would have placed them in the "complete" category, and 24 students were in the "incomplete" category, indicating that the overall level of mastery among students could have been better.

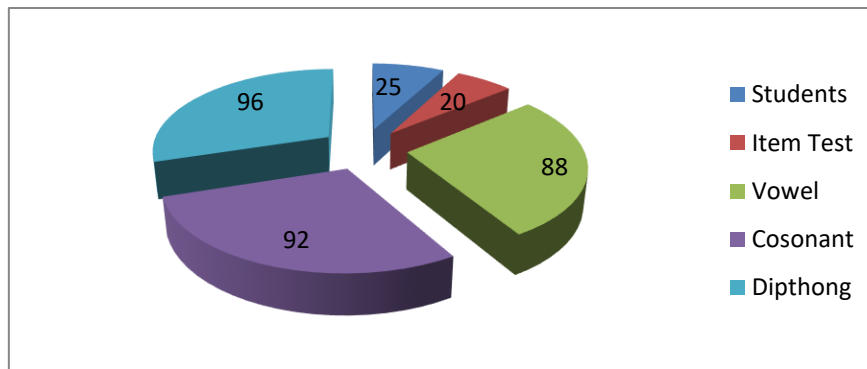


Figure 1. Students result of Second Meeting II

While only four students (92%) fell into the "incomplete" category on the second test, 21 students (96%) achieved the "complete" category, indicating that the student's performance improved between the first and second tests, indicating the success of the learning process. Additionally, the student's mastery of pronunciation improved. These results show that the student made significant progress during the learning process.

Two meetings were held during Cycle I. The topics covered included asking and giving opinions and expressions and an introduction to phonetic symbols. While many students

enjoyed the learning activities and paid close attention to the researcher's explanations, others needed to be more active and contribute to the classroom noise.

The average scores increased between the first and second tests administered through singing activities, indicating that songs significantly improved students' pronunciation skills. Songs also motivated students and boosted their confidence in learning.

These findings are further supported by observation data, which shows that student engagement increased from the first to the second meeting. Only one student performed satisfactorily during the first meeting, whereas 24 students could have performed better; by the second meeting, however, 25 students had performed excellently, demonstrating a clear improvement in the learning process, bolstered by increased student participation and activity during the lessons.

Using English songs as a learning medium of eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri Oenenu improved their pronunciation skills throughout one cycle. The average score went from 53.6 in the first test to 71.6 in the second, representing an 18-point gain. This improvement shows that students can improve their pronunciation skills with engaging media and explicit instruction.

English songs proved an effective medium for teaching pronunciation, as repeated practice with song lyrics allowed students to become more accustomed to and proficient in English pronunciation. The learning process can be considered successful even though the improvement may not be highly significant, as 84% of the students achieved a minimum passing score of 70. Additionally, there was a noticeable increase in student engagement between the first and second meetings.

4. CONCLUSION

This study, using a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, this study methodically investigates how English songs can improve eighth-grade students' pronunciation abilities at SMP Negeri Oenenu. The cyclical process of planning, action, observation, and reflection allowed for the ongoing development of instructional strategies adapted to the student's needs.

This approach highlights the potential of innovative and interactive teaching methods in supporting language acquisition. It shows that English songs are an effective tool for fostering linguistic competence and a positive attitude towards learning. Using English songs as a teaching medium helped students improve their pronunciation and made learning more engaging, increasing their motivation and confidence in speaking English.

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