

Utilizing English Songs to Enhance Pronunciation Skills in EFL Learners

A. Yuliana

andiyuliana2808@gmail.com

Sam Hermansyah

sam.hermansyah82@gmail.com

Isumarni

isumarni@gmail.com

Nurul Faradillah

nurul.faradillah@gmail.com

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidenreng Rappang

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of utilizing English songs to enhance pronunciation skills and to examine students interest in learning pronunciation through English songs. The research was conducted using a mixed methods approach at SMPN 1 Panca Rijang in the academic year 2024/2025. A total of 22 ninth-grade students participated in the study. The quantitative data were obtained through pre-test and post-test pronunciation assessments, while the qualitative data were collected from interviews with five students who achieved the highest post-test scores. The quantitative analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and a paired sample t-test. The result revealed a significant enhancement in students pronunciation scores, with the mean score increasing from 8.18 in the pre-test to 12.91 in the post-test. The mean difference was 4.727, and the t-test analysis produced a t-value of 18.44 and a p-value of 1.89×10^{-14} . Since the p-value was far below the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted, confirming that the use of English songs significantly enhanced students pronunciation performance. The qualitative findings indicated that showed strong interest and positive responses toward learning pronunciation through songs. They expressed that songs made learning more enjoyable, easier to follow, and more motivating. Some students also mentioned that the rhythm and repetition in songs helped them imitate native like pronunciation more confidently. The findings demonstrate that using English songs in the classroom can both enhance pronunciation skills and foster student interest in pronunciation learning. This suggests that songs can serve as an effective and engaging medium in EFL instruction.

Keywords: English Songs; Pronunciation Interest; EFL Learners

INTRODUCTION

In the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, pronunciation is a crucial aspect of mastering effective communication. It plays a fundamental role in ensuring that learners can articulate words clearly, thereby enhancing mutual understanding. However, achieving accurate pronunciation is often a daunting task for EFL learners due to various challenges such as differences in phonetic systems between their native languages and English. English pronunciation is characterized by distinct sounds, stress patterns, intonation, and rhythm, all of which require focused practice and attention.

Traditionally, pronunciation instruction in EFL classrooms has relied on repetitive drills and formal exercises. While these methods aim to address the technical aspects of pronunciation, they often fail to engage students or foster long-term retention. This challenge has prompted educators to seek alternative, more dynamic approaches to pronunciation instruction. One such method that has gained attention in recent years is the integration of music—specifically, English songs—into the learning process. The use of songs in language learning offers an engaging and enjoyable way for students to practice pronunciation. Songs inherently possess rhythmic and repetitive qualities, making it easier for learners to internalize pronunciation patterns. By mimicking the melody, rhythm, and intonation of native speakers in songs, students can improve their auditory discrimination and muscle memory, leading to better pronunciation. Furthermore, songs expose learners to authentic language use, providing them with real-life examples of how English sounds are used in context.

Incorporating English songs into pronunciation practice presents several potential benefits. Not only does it enhance learners' pronunciation skills, but it also fosters motivation and engagement. Many students find learning through music more enjoyable, and less intimidating compared to traditional pronunciation drills. This approach taps into the natural connection between music and language acquisition, enabling students to absorb phonetic elements in a more relaxed and fun environment. Despite the growing interest in using songs as a pedagogical tool, there is limited research specifically focusing on how English songs can effectively enhance pronunciation skills. While several studies have explored the role of music in language learning, there is a need for further investigation into its impact on the specific aspect of pronunciation. This research seeks to fill this gap by exploring the effectiveness of English songs in improving pronunciation skills among EFL learners.

This study was conducted at SMPN 1 Panca Rijang in the 2024/2025 academic year, with the aim of assessing the effectiveness of using English songs to improve the pronunciation skills of ninth-grade students. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from pre- and post-test assessments with qualitative data from student interviews to provide a comprehensive analysis of the impact of English songs on pronunciation learning. By examining both the

students' pronunciation improvement and their attitudes toward learning pronunciation through songs, this research aims to provide valuable insights for EFL teachers seeking innovative and engaging methods to enhance pronunciation instruction.

The problem addressed by this research is whether English songs can effectively enhance students' pronunciation skills and whether students show interest in learning pronunciation through this medium. The objectives of this study are to determine the effectiveness of English songs in improving students' pronunciation skills and to gauge students' interest in this learning approach. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the body of knowledge on language learning strategies and offer practical recommendations for EFL teachers. Through this research, we aim to demonstrate how integrating music, specifically English songs, into pronunciation practice can provide a more engaging, enjoyable, and effective approach to language learning. This study will explore the role of music in enhancing pronunciation, as well as the broader implications for improving EFL instruction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pronunciation is a pivotal component of language learning, yet it often receives less focus compared to other aspects such as grammar or vocabulary. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, mastering pronunciation can be challenging due to the vast differences between their native language sounds and those in English. Research has shown that mispronunciations can lead to communication breakdowns, making accurate pronunciation essential for effective oral communication. According to Kelly (2000), pronunciation encompasses the production of speech sounds and the recognition of their systematic patterns within a language. It includes various elements such as phonemes, stress, intonation, and rhythm, which must be mastered to ensure intelligibility in spoken English.

Several studies have emphasized the importance of pronunciation in language acquisition. Richards and Schmidt (2002) defined pronunciation as the manner in which specific sounds are articulated. Phonetic features such as stress and intonation are integral to fluency and comprehension. If learners do not master these elements, even grammatically correct sentences can be misinterpreted. Harmer (2001) further argued that pronunciation instruction should be prioritized, as it is the first aspect of language that native speakers notice during communication. Clear pronunciation, therefore, directly impacts both the speaker's comprehensibility and their confidence in communication.

One approach that has gained traction in recent years is the use of music—especially songs—as a tool for enhancing pronunciation skills. Research by Lems (2001) highlighted the potential of songs to improve language learning by providing repetitive exposure to pronunciation patterns in an engaging and memorable format. Songs often incorporate phonetic elements such as stress patterns, rhythm, and

intonation, which are essential components of pronunciation. By listening to and mimicking songs, learners become more attuned to the nuances of the language, which aids in mastering these complex aspects of pronunciation.

In addition to its phonetic benefits, music plays a significant role in engaging learners and enhancing their motivation. According to Lynch (2005), music can reduce anxiety and encourage participation, especially in pronunciation practice. For many EFL learners, the pressure to speak “perfectly” can hinder progress, but singing along with songs provides a more relaxed environment. The repetition inherent in songs, combined with their rhythm, allows students to internalize pronunciation patterns without feeling overwhelmed. Songs thus serve as a motivating tool that encourages active participation in language learning, fostering a positive attitude toward speaking and improving students’ pronunciation skills in the process.

Moreover, songs expose learners to authentic language use, providing examples of real-life speech patterns and pronunciation models. As Griffiee (1992) noted, songs offer an opportunity to hear how native speakers pronounce words in various contexts, providing learners with a richer understanding of how sounds are produced in everyday communication. This authentic exposure can be especially beneficial for learners who may lack opportunities to interact with native speakers outside the classroom. Furthermore, songs often incorporate colloquial expressions, regional accents, and varied speech tempos, giving learners a broader understanding of how pronunciation varies across different contexts.

The benefits of using songs for pronunciation practice go beyond merely improving phonetic skills; they also foster a deeper connection with the language. According to Florencia Putri (2023), listening to songs allows learners to subconsciously absorb the language, improving both their pronunciation and vocabulary. By singing along, students practice articulation in an enjoyable and natural manner, without the pressure of formal drills. This organic learning process helps reinforce correct pronunciation while simultaneously expanding their language knowledge. Additionally, songs can enhance auditory discrimination, a skill that is essential for recognizing subtle pronunciation differences that could otherwise go unnoticed in regular language use.

The integration of music in language instruction is not a new concept, but its application to pronunciation instruction has been less explored. Previous studies, such as Kusnandar & Nurhasanah (2021), have demonstrated that English songs can effectively improve students’ pronunciation skills. These studies have found that students who participated in pronunciation practice through songs showed significant improvement in areas like clarity, accuracy, and fluency. The use of music in language classrooms not only enhances pronunciation but also contributes to a more engaging and enjoyable learning environment. This approach allows learners to develop their skills in a dynamic and less intimidating way, ultimately improving their communicative competence.

While the effectiveness of songs in language learning is well-documented, there is a gap in research specifically focusing on pronunciation. Most studies have primarily examined the impact of songs on vocabulary acquisition or listening comprehension. However, few studies have investigated the direct relationship between music and pronunciation improvement. This research aims to address this gap by exploring how English songs can be utilized as an effective tool for enhancing pronunciation skills in EFL learners, providing both theoretical and practical insights for language educators seeking innovative methods for pronunciation instruction.

METHOD

Design and Sample

This research employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effectiveness of using English songs to enhance pronunciation skills in EFL learners. The study was conducted at SMPN 1 Panca Rijang, involving 22 ninth-grade students from class IX.2 in the 2024/2025 academic year. The participants were purposefully selected from a single class to ensure consistency in terms of educational background and English proficiency level. The research design was a pre-experimental one-group pretest-posttest method. In this design, the same group of students completed a pre-test, participated in treatment sessions using English songs, and then completed a post-test. This design allowed the researcher to measure changes in pronunciation skills within the same group.

Instrument and Procedures

The instruments used in this study included pronunciation tests and interview guidelines. The pre-test and post-test assessed the students' pronunciation abilities focusing on aspects such as clarity, accuracy, intonation, and fluency, using a standardized pronunciation rubric. For the treatment, the students engaged in various activities using selected English songs. The songs were chosen based on their suitability for the students' proficiency level, the clarity of the lyrics, and their relevance to the students' interests. Students listened to the songs repeatedly, followed the lyrics, and participated in group singing sessions to practice pronunciation. They also engaged in individual practice sessions where the researcher provided feedback to correct errors and improve articulation. To collect qualitative data, interviews were conducted with five students who achieved the highest post-test scores. The interviews explored the students' perceptions, levels of interest, and experiences related to learning pronunciation through songs.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from the pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize the students' performance and a paired sample t-test to determine whether there was a statistically significant improvement

in pronunciation skills after the treatment. For the qualitative data, the interview responses were analyzed using thematic analysis. Key responses were categorized to identify recurring themes related to the students' experiences, including their engagement, enjoyment, and perceived effectiveness of learning pronunciation through English songs. This combined analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of both the measurable outcomes and the students' subjective experiences in the pronunciation learning process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research aimed to examine the effectiveness of using English songs to enhance pronunciation skills in EFL learners. After implementing the pre-test, treatment with English songs, and post-test, the data were analyzed to evaluate any improvements in students' pronunciation performance. The pre-test and post-test results showed a clear enhancement in students' pronunciation across various parameters such as clarity, accuracy, intonation, and fluency.

The pre-test results revealed that many students had limited proficiency in pronunciation, with several scoring below the ideal level in aspects such as clarity and fluency. However, after the treatment, the majority of students showed significant improvement in their pronunciation scores. The post-test results indicated that the use of English songs helped students improve their articulation and pronunciation skills, especially in the areas of accuracy and fluency.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and paired sample t-test. The mean score of students in the pre-test was 8.18, while the mean score in the post-test increased to 12.91, showing an average improvement of 4.73 points. A paired sample t-test confirmed that this improvement was statistically significant, with a t-value of 18.44 and a p-value of 1.89×10^{-14} , indicating that the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores were not due to chance. This result supports the hypothesis that using English songs significantly enhances pronunciation skills in EFL learners.

Table 1: Pre-Test and Post-Test Results

No	Student Name	Pre-Test Score	Post-Test Score	Difference
1	Arimbi Triwijaya Putri	11	14	3
2	Muh. Ya Amirul Mu'min	9	15	6
3	Irwansyah	6	11	5
4	Rifki	6	10	4

5	Najwa Titah Fatiha	14	16	2
6	Andi. Devi Permatasari	5	9	4
7	Nurhidayah	6	11	5
8	Gian Ayu Mentari	8	13	5
9	Azizah	8	13	5
10	Ainun	7	13	6
11	Chadijah Maharani	8	11	3
12	Jihan Mayailah	12	16	4
13	Andi. Desi Ratna Sari	6	11	5
14	Hasra Ayu Rezki	6	13	7
15	Nurkhalidah Mutia	7	11	4
16	Ika Ramadhani	7	12	5
17	Aliyyah	8	14	6
18	Naura Indah	10	16	6
19	Nadine Cassandra	8	14	6
20	R.A Nur Adha	10	15	5
21	Tita Aulia	9	13	4
22	Putra Anugrah	9	13	4

The findings of this study support the hypothesis that the use of English songs significantly enhances the pronunciation skills of EFL learners. The data showed that students made substantial progress in their pronunciation, particularly in areas like clarity, accuracy, and fluency. This improvement is attributed to the repetitive nature of songs, which allowed students to internalize pronunciation patterns, stress, and rhythm more effectively. The statistical analysis further validated these results, with the paired sample t-test demonstrating that the observed improvements were statistically significant, indicating the effectiveness of the intervention.

One key factor contributing to the improvement was the engaging nature of songs, which made the learning process enjoyable and less intimidating. As noted by Lynch (2005), music reduces anxiety and fosters a more relaxed learning environment. This was evident in the responses from students, who expressed that they felt more motivated and confident when learning pronunciation through songs. The repetitive listening and singing along helped reinforce the correct articulation of sounds and allowed students to practice pronunciation in a context that felt more natural than traditional pronunciation drills.

Another factor that contributed to the students' progress was the exposure to

authentic language use. English songs provided a valuable opportunity for students to listen to native-like pronunciation in real-world contexts. The rhythm, melody, and stress patterns in the songs helped students better understand the natural flow of English speech. Griffie (1992) emphasized the role of songs in providing real-life examples of how English sounds are used in various contexts. By mimicking these patterns, students were able to refine their pronunciation and gain greater confidence in their speaking abilities.

Despite the overall positive results, there were variations in the level of improvement across students. Some students showed significant gains, while others demonstrated more modest progress. This variability may be attributed to differences in individual learning styles, prior knowledge, and engagement with the material. Students who were more engaged with the songs and practiced regularly showed more significant improvements in their pronunciation scores. This suggests that motivation and active participation are crucial for maximizing the benefits of this approach.

The findings also align with previous research, such as Kusnandar & Nurhasanah (2021), which demonstrated the effectiveness of English songs in improving pronunciation. Similar to the results in this study, their research found that songs positively impacted students' pronunciation, suggesting that this method can be a valuable tool for language teachers aiming to enhance pronunciation skills. Furthermore, the students' interest in learning pronunciation through songs reinforces the idea that music is an enjoyable and effective medium for language learning.

While the results of this study are promising, it is important to consider the limitations of the research. The study was conducted in a single school with a relatively small sample size, which may not fully represent the broader population of EFL learners. Additionally, the study relied on self-reported data from interviews, which may be subject to bias. Future research could explore the long-term effects of using songs in pronunciation instruction and involve a larger, more diverse sample to assess the generalizability of the findings. This study highlights the potential of English songs as a tool for enhancing pronunciation skills in EFL learners. The positive impact observed in students' pronunciation scores, combined with their enthusiasm for the method, suggests that songs can be an effective and engaging addition to pronunciation instruction. Teachers looking to improve their students' pronunciation should consider incorporating music into their lessons as a fun, motivating, and impactful strategy.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that utilizing English songs in EFL classrooms is an effective method for enhancing students' pronunciation skills. The quantitative data from pre- and post-test scores indicated a significant improvement in pronunciation, particularly in aspects like clarity, accuracy, intonation, and

fluency. The paired sample t-test confirmed that the observed enhancement was statistically significant, supporting the hypothesis that English songs can positively impact pronunciation.

Furthermore, the qualitative findings highlighted that students found learning pronunciation through songs to be enjoyable, engaging, and motivating. The repetitive nature of songs, along with exposure to authentic language use, allowed students to internalize pronunciation patterns more easily and with greater confidence. Students expressed that the songs helped reduce the anxiety associated with traditional pronunciation drills, creating a more relaxed and enjoyable learning environment. The findings suggest that English songs are not only an effective tool for improving pronunciation but also serve as a motivational resource for EFL learners. Given the positive impact observed in this study, it is recommended that educators incorporate songs into their pronunciation lessons to enhance students' speaking abilities and foster a more engaging language learning experience.

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