

**The Influence of English Songs on Students' Pronunciation Skills at UPT SMP Negeri 3 Pangsid**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the influence of English songs on students' pronunciation skills at UPT SMP Negeri 3 Pangsid. A quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control-group design was employed. The participants were 27 seventh-grade students, consisting of 15 students in the experimental group and 12 students in the control group. The experimental group received pronunciation instruction through the English children's song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," whereas the control group was taught through conventional classroom activities. Data were collected using a pronunciation test assessing articulation, word stress, rhythm, and intonation. The data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, Shapiro–Wilk normality testing, Levene's homogeneity testing, and an independent-samples t-test. The experimental group's mean score increased from 42.33 in the pre-test to 72.00 in the post-test, while the control group increased only from 51.67 to 53.33. The post-test difference was statistically significant,  $t(25) = 3.784$ ,  $p < .001$ , with a mean difference of 18.667. These findings demonstrate that English songs significantly improve junior high school students' pronunciation by providing repeated, meaningful, and enjoyable exposure to English sounds and prosodic patterns. English songs are therefore recommended as an engaging instructional medium for pronunciation practice.

**Keywords:** English Songs; Pronunciation Skills; Quasi-Experimental Research; Articulation; Junior High School

## INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is a fundamental component of oral English because it determines whether a speaker's message can be understood accurately. Learners may possess adequate vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, yet communication can still fail when sounds, stress, rhythm, or intonation are produced inaccurately. At the junior high school level, pronunciation is especially important because students are beginning to use English more actively in classroom interaction, oral presentation, and everyday communication. A strong pronunciation foundation can increase intelligibility, confidence, and willingness to speak. In the Indonesian English-as-a-foreign-language context, students frequently experience difficulty producing English sounds that are absent or differently realized in their first language. Problems often appear in vowel length, consonant contrasts, final consonants, word stress, rhythm, and pitch movement. These difficulties may be intensified by limited exposure to authentic spoken English and by teaching practices that focus more heavily on vocabulary and grammar than on oral production. When pronunciation practice is restricted to mechanical repetition, students may become anxious, passive, or reluctant to speak.

Classroom observation and preliminary information at UPT SMP Negeri 3 Pangsid indicated that many students had difficulty pronouncing English words clearly and naturally. Their speech tended to be influenced by Indonesian sound patterns, while word stress and intonation were often flat or inconsistent. Conventional instruction provided only limited opportunities for students to hear and imitate repeated models of natural pronunciation. Consequently, an instructional medium was needed that could combine auditory input, repetition, motivation, and active oral practice. English songs offer these features in an integrated form. Songs provide repeated language input through melody, rhythm, and memorable lyrics. Their predictable patterns encourage learners to listen carefully, imitate, repeat, and eventually produce language with less fear of making mistakes. Songs also present pronunciation within meaningful phrases rather than as isolated sounds. Through singing, students can notice how syllables are stressed, how words are connected, and how pitch rises and falls across an utterance. Recent Indonesian studies similarly show that song-based and lyric-focused activities can improve pronunciation, listening sensitivity, and learner motivation (Majid et al., 2026; Idris et al., 2026).

Murphey (1990) explains that songs strongly activate repetition and make language memorable, while Harmer (2007) emphasizes that songs create an enjoyable classroom atmosphere and increase learner participation. In pronunciation instruction, these characteristics are valuable because improvement requires repeated exposure and repeated physical practice. Students must hear the target sounds, compare them with their own production, and coordinate the articulatory movements necessary to reproduce them. Songs allow this cycle to occur naturally and frequently. The use of

songs is also supported by broader language-learning theories. Brown's view of language learning highlights the interaction of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor processes. Songs stimulate cognitive processing through lyrics and sound patterns, affective engagement through enjoyment, and psychomotor practice through singing. Krashen's Input and Affective Filter hypotheses suggest that meaningful comprehensible input is more readily acquired when anxiety is low. Song-based activities can lower anxiety and make pronunciation input more accessible. Bandura's Social Learning Theory further explains that learners acquire behavior by observing and imitating a model, which in this case is the singer's pronunciation.

Previous studies have generally reported positive effects of songs on pronunciation, motivation, and confidence. However, the effectiveness of a particular song-based intervention depends on the students, context, song selection, and assessment criteria. There was limited empirical evidence concerning the use of an English children's song to improve articulation, word stress, rhythm, and intonation among students at UPT SMP Negeri 3 Pangsid. A context-specific investigation was therefore necessary. Related local research also reports that digital and audio-based English learning media strengthen students' engagement, listening, speaking, and pronunciation practice (Purnama et al., 2026; Kencana et al., 2026; Sufrianti et al., 2026). This study aimed to determine whether English songs significantly influenced students' pronunciation skills at UPT SMP Negeri 3 Pangsid. The independent variable was instruction through the song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," while the dependent variable was students' pronunciation performance measured through articulation, word stress, rhythm, and intonation. The research question was: Does the use of English songs significantly influence students' pronunciation skills? It was hypothesized that students taught through English songs would achieve significantly higher pronunciation scores than students taught through conventional instruction.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **English Songs as Language-Learning Media**

Songs are authentic or semi-authentic language resources that combine verbal text with melody and rhythm. In language education, they can be used to teach listening, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and cultural awareness. Their value lies not only in entertainment but also in the way they organize language into repeatable and memorable chunks. Repetition is embedded in choruses, rhyme, and melodic patterns, so learners receive multiple exposures without experiencing the activity as monotonous drilling. Millington (2011) argues that songs can integrate listening and speaking practice in a motivating manner. When learners listen to lyrics, they attend to sound distinctions and connected speech; when they sing, they attempt to reproduce these features. The combination supports auditory discrimination and oral production. A carefully selected song should have clear pronunciation, suitable speed,

age-appropriate content, manageable vocabulary, and repeated target features. This pedagogical role is supported by recent findings that song lyrics and streamed audio materials provide repeated, meaningful listening input for EFL learners (Idris et al., 2026; Kencana et al., 2026). The song “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” was selected in this study because its lyrics are short, familiar, repetitive, and phonetically accessible to young learners. Words such as *twinkle*, *little*, *star*, *wonder*, *world*, *high*, and *diamond* provide opportunities to practice consonants, vowels, syllable stress, linking, and intonation. Its steady melody also helps learners maintain timing and rhythm while producing complete phrases.

### **Pronunciation Skills**

Pronunciation refers to the production of speech sounds and prosodic features in a way that enables effective communication. Kelly (2000) and Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010) distinguish segmental and suprasegmental dimensions. Segmental features include individual vowels and consonants, while suprasegmental features include stress, rhythm, and intonation. Both dimensions contribute to intelligibility. Articulation concerns the accurate physical production of vowels and consonants. Indonesian learners may have difficulty with English contrasts such as /i:/ and /ɪ/, /f/ and /v/, or final consonants. Word stress refers to the prominence assigned to one syllable in a word. Incorrect stress can make a familiar word difficult to recognize. Rhythm concerns the timing of stressed and unstressed syllables and the flow of connected speech. Intonation refers to pitch movement that signals sentence type, completeness, attitude, and emphasis. In this study, pronunciation was operationalized through four equally weighted aspects: articulation, word stress, rhythm, and intonation. Each aspect was scored from one to five. The total score was converted to a scale of 100. This multidimensional assessment was chosen because improvement in pronunciation should not be judged only from isolated sounds; it should also reflect the naturalness and comprehensibility of spoken phrases.

### **Theoretical Foundation and Previous Studies**

Brown (2001) views language learning as an interaction among cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Song-based pronunciation practice activates all three. Learners cognitively notice sound patterns, affectively engage with enjoyable material, and psychomotorically coordinate the tongue, lips, jaw, and breath. This integrated practice may be more effective than explanation alone. Krashen’s Input Hypothesis proposes that acquisition occurs when learners receive comprehensible input slightly beyond their current competence. Songs provide contextual cues through melody, repetition, and predictable phrases. The Affective Filter Hypothesis adds that anxiety can prevent input from being processed efficiently. Singing together may reduce embarrassment and create a safer environment for oral experimentation.

Bandura's Social Learning Theory emphasizes observation, imitation, feedback, and repeated performance. Students first listen to a pronunciation model, then imitate it, receive correction, and repeat the performance. Gordon's concept of audiation is also relevant because learners may mentally rehearse sounds and melodic phrases even when the audio is not playing. Such internal rehearsal supports retention of stress, rhythm, and intonation patterns. Empirical studies have reported that songs can improve pronunciation accuracy, oral confidence, and participation. Fransischa and Syafei (2017) found that song-based practice encouraged learners to pronounce words more confidently. Hasanah et al. (2024), Jun Hui and Jamaludin (2024), and Misa (2024) similarly reported positive relationships between songs, motivation, and pronunciation outcomes. The present study extended this evidence by using an experimental-control comparison and a four-component pronunciation rubric in a junior high school context. In the Indonesian EFL context, Majid et al. (2026) found that English songs enhanced pronunciation clarity and learning motivation, while Purnama et al. (2026) highlighted the value of focused pronunciation tools for repeated corrective practice.

## **METHOD**

### **Design and Sample**

This research employed a quantitative approach with a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test control-group design. Two groups completed the same pre-test and post-test, but only the experimental group received the song-based treatment. The design was selected because the school setting did not permit full random assignment of individual students. The population comprised seventh-grade students at UPT SMP Negeri 3 Pangsid in the 2025/2026 academic year. The sample consisted of 27 students selected purposively in consultation with the English teacher. Fifteen students were assigned to the experimental group and twelve to the control group. Both groups participated in all testing sessions.

### **Instrument and Procedures**

The principal instrument was a pronunciation test administered before and after the intervention. Students read words and sentences related to the selected song and performed the song individually. Their voices were recorded and evaluated using a rubric covering articulation, word stress, rhythm, and intonation. Each aspect received a score from one (very poor) to five (excellent). The total raw score was converted to a percentage score. Articulation was judged from the clarity and accuracy of consonant and vowel production. Word stress was judged from the placement and strength of stress in multisyllabic words. Rhythm was judged from timing, continuity, and connected speech. Intonation was judged from the

appropriateness of rising and falling pitch patterns. Using the same instrument and rubric in both tests supported consistency of measurement.

The research procedures were conducted in three main meetings. In the first meeting, the researcher explained the study and administered the pre-test. Each student performed individually, and the performance was recorded. In the second meeting, the experimental group listened to “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” several times, identified target words, repeated words and phrases, practiced difficult sounds, and sang along with attention to stress, rhythm, and intonation. Immediate corrective feedback was provided. The control group received ordinary English instruction without song-based pronunciation activities. In the third meeting, both groups completed the post-test using the same task and scoring procedure.

### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to summarize minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation. The Shapiro–Wilk test was used to examine normality because each group contained fewer than 50 participants. Levene’s test was used to examine homogeneity of variance. After the assumptions were satisfied, an independent-samples t-test compared the post-test means at the .05 significance level.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Results

The experimental group demonstrated substantial improvement after the song-based intervention. Its mean increased from 42.33 in the pre-test to 72.00 in the post-test, an improvement of 29.67 points. The minimum score increased from 20 to 55, and the maximum increased from 65 to 90. The standard deviation decreased slightly from 13.35 to 12.22, indicating that students’ achievement became somewhat more consistent after treatment. In contrast, the control group’s mean increased only from 51.67 to 53.33, a gain of 1.66 points. Its minimum and maximum scores remained 40 and 80.

*Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Of Pronunciation Scores*

| Group        | Test      | N  | Minimum | Maximum | Mean  | SD    |
|--------------|-----------|----|---------|---------|-------|-------|
| Experimental | Pre-test  | 15 | 20      | 65      | 42.33 | 13.35 |
| Experimental | Post-test | 15 | 55      | 90      | 72.00 | 12.22 |
| Control      | Pre-test  | 12 | 40      | 80      | 51.67 | 12.31 |
| Control      | Post-test | 12 | 40      | 80      | 53.33 | 13.37 |

The difference in gain patterns indicates that the improvement was associated with the treatment rather than with testing alone. Students in the experimental group repeatedly heard and imitated a consistent pronunciation model. The lyrics gave them a limited and manageable set of sounds and phrases that could be practiced many times. Melody supported memory, while the steady beat supported timing. Students also received immediate correction when errors occurred.

### Assumption Testing and Hypothesis Test

The Shapiro–Wilk significance values were .075 for the experimental group and .071 for the control group. Both values exceeded .05, indicating that the post-test scores were normally distributed. Levene’s test produced  $F = 0.146$  and  $p = .706$ , indicating homogeneous variances. Therefore, the assumptions for the independent-samples t-test were met.

*Table 2. Assumption Tests and Independent-Samples T-Test*

| Analysis           | Experimental Group   | Control Group / Result | Interpretation         |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Shapiro–Wilk       | $p = .075$           | $p = .071$             | Normal distribution    |
| Levene's test      | $F = 0.146$          | $p = .706$             | Homogeneous variance   |
| Independent t-test | $t = 3.784; df = 25$ | $p < .001$             | Significant difference |

The independent-samples t-test showed that the experimental group ( $M = 72.00$ ,  $SD = 12.22$ ) significantly outperformed the control group ( $M = 53.33$ ,  $SD = 13.37$ ),  $t(25) = 3.784$ ,  $p < .001$ . The mean difference was 18.667 points. Since the probability value was below .05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. Thus, English songs had a statistically significant influence on students’ pronunciation skills.

The findings confirm that an English song can function as more than supplementary entertainment. It can be a structured pronunciation-learning medium when the teacher selects target words, directs attention to relevant features, organizes repetition, and provides feedback. Improvement occurred because the treatment combined exposure, imitation, practice, and correction. The students did not merely listen passively; they repeatedly produced the lyrics and adjusted their pronunciation. The result supports Murphey’s (1990) claim that songs activate repetition and strengthen memory. Repetition occurred naturally because the lyrics and melody recur. Unlike isolated drills, the song maintained students’ attention and gave each repetition a meaningful

musical context. The increase of nearly 30 points in the experimental group suggests that this repeated exposure was pedagogically productive.

The result also supports Harmer's (2007) view that songs increase motivation and participation. During group singing, students could practice without feeling that every individual error was immediately exposed to classmates. This lower-pressure environment encouraged participation. When students later performed individually, they had already rehearsed the sounds many times, which likely increased confidence and accuracy. This interpretation is consistent with research showing that interactive media and performance-based activities can increase learners' motivation, engagement, and willingness to speak (Saleh et al., 2026; Apriyani et al., 2026). From Krashen's perspective, the song supplied comprehensible input and reduced the affective filter. The lyrics were short and supported by melody, making them easier to process. The activity was familiar and enjoyable, which reduced anxiety. Once anxiety was lowered, learners were more willing to attend to the pronunciation model and attempt difficult sounds. This interaction between accessible input and emotional readiness helps explain the experimental group's performance.

The findings are also consistent with Bandura's Social Learning Theory. The recording or teacher model served as a pronunciation model. Students observed how words were articulated and how pitch and timing were organized, then imitated the model. Corrective feedback helped them compare their output with the target. Repeated modeling is particularly important in pronunciation because learners need an audible reference for speech movements that cannot be understood fully through written explanation. Similar modeling and repetition processes have been reported in technology-supported speaking instruction, where learners improve through exposure, imitation, and guided performance (Arif et al., 2026). In terms of pronunciation components, song-based practice potentially supported articulation by repeating target vowels and consonants; word stress by aligning prominent syllables with musical beats; rhythm by guiding timing across phrases; and intonation by providing noticeable pitch contours. Although the study reported a total pronunciation score rather than separate inferential tests for each component, classroom performance indicated that the four features developed together during practice.

The findings agree with previous research reporting that songs improve pronunciation and confidence. The present study contributes a clear experimental-control comparison. The control group began with a higher pre-test mean than the experimental group, yet its post-test mean remained much lower. This pattern strengthens the conclusion that the treatment had a meaningful influence. Nevertheless, the modest sample and short intervention require cautious generalization. It also aligns with recent studies on English songs, missing-lyrics activities, audio streaming, and digital listening media that report gains in pronunciation, listening, motivation, and oral participation (Majid et al., 2026; Idris et



al., 2026; Kencana et al., 2026; Sufrianti et al., 2026). Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample contained only 27 students from one school. Second, the intervention used one children's song and was implemented over a short period. Third, the same core material was used in the assessment and treatment, which may have favored improvement on practiced items. Fourth, the study did not calculate separate effect sizes or inter-rater reliability. Future studies should include larger samples, multiple songs, longer treatment, delayed post-tests, and independent raters.

Despite these limitations, the practical implications are strong. Teachers can select songs with clear vocals, moderate tempo, appropriate vocabulary, and repeated target sounds. Instruction should include pre-listening, focused listening, sound identification, choral repetition, individual practice, feedback, and reflection. Teachers should also avoid relying on singing alone; explicit attention to articulation, stress, rhythm, and intonation is necessary to transform a song into an effective learning activity. Teachers should also consider students' confidence and affective readiness because speaking confidence influences participation in oral English activities (Nasruddin et al., 2026).

*Table 3. Suggested Classroom Sequence for Song-Based Pronunciation Instruction*

| Stage             | Teacher Activity                                                    | Pronunciation Focus         |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Pre-listening     | Introduce lyrics and model difficult words                          | Articulation and meaning    |
| Focused listening | Play selected lines and ask students to identify stressed syllables | Word stress                 |
| Imitation         | Use choral and individual repetition                                | Sound accuracy              |
| Singing practice  | Sing with the recording and keep the beat                           | Rhythm and connected speech |
| Feedback          | Correct selected errors and replay the model                        | All four components         |
| Post-practice     | Record individual performance and reflect                           | Self-monitoring             |

## CONCLUSION

The use of the English children's song "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" significantly improved students' pronunciation skills at UPT SMP Negeri 3 Pangsid. The experimental group increased from a pre-test mean of 42.33 to a post-test mean of 72.00, whereas the control group increased only from 51.67 to 53.33. The independent-samples t-test confirmed a significant post-test difference,  $t(25) = 3.784$ ,

$p < .001$ . English songs are effective because they provide repeated pronunciation models, memorable linguistic input, rhythmic guidance, enjoyable practice, and opportunities for imitation. These elements support articulation, word stress, rhythm, and intonation while increasing motivation and confidence. English teachers are encouraged to use carefully selected songs as a structured component of pronunciation instruction. Future research should employ larger samples, longer interventions, varied songs, delayed testing, and component-specific analysis to strengthen and extend the findings.

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