



Singing Your Way to Clarity: The Power of English Songs in Enhancing Pronunciation and Motivation among EFL Learners

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui efektivitas penggunaan lagu berbahasa Inggris dalam meningkatkan keterampilan pengucapan serta meningkatkan motivasi belajar pada pembelajar EFL. Penelitian dilaksanakan dengan pendekatan metode campuran (mixed methods) di SMPN 1 Panca Rijang pada tahun ajaran 2024/2025. Sebanyak 22 siswa kelas IX terlibat sebagai partisipan. Data kuantitatif diperoleh melalui tes pengucapan pra-tes dan pasca-tes, sedangkan data kualitatif dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan lima siswa yang memperoleh skor pasca-tes tertinggi. Analisis kuantitatif dilakukan menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan uji t berpasangan (paired sample t-test). Hasil menunjukkan adanya peningkatan yang signifikan dalam skor pengucapan siswa, dengan skor rata-rata meningkat dari 8,18 pada pra-tes menjadi 12,91 pada pasca-tes (selisih rata-rata = 4,727, $t(21) = 18,44$, $p = 1,89 \times 10^{-14}$). Karena nilai p jauh di bawah tingkat signifikansi 0,05, hipotesis nol ditolak dan hipotesis alternatif diterima, yang menegaskan bahwa penggunaan lagu berbahasa Inggris secara signifikan meningkatkan performa pengucapan siswa. Temuan kualitatif menunjukkan respons positif yang kuat dan motivasi belajar yang tinggi dari siswa. Para partisipan menyatakan bahwa pembelajaran pengucapan melalui lagu lebih menyenangkan, mudah diikuti, dan sangat memotivasi. Mereka juga menyebutkan bahwa irama dan pengulangan dalam lagu membantu mereka meniru pengucapan seperti penutur asli dengan lebih percaya diri serta mengurangi kecemasan. Sebagai kesimpulan, lagu berbahasa Inggris merupakan media pembelajaran yang powerful, menarik, dan efektif yang dapat meningkatkan akurasi pengucapan sekaligus meningkatkan motivasi siswa dalam pembelajaran EFL. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pengintegrasian lagu sebagai strategi inovatif dalam pengajaran pengucapan.

Kata Kunci: lagu berbahasa Inggris, keterampilan pengucapan, motivasi belajar, pembelajar EFL, metode campuran

Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the effectiveness of English songs in enhancing pronunciation skills and boosting learning motivation among EFL learners. 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. Quantitative data were obtained through pronunciation pre-test and post-test assessments, while qualitative data were collected from semi-structured interviews with five students who achieved the highest post-test scores.

The quantitative analysis was performed using descriptive statistics and a paired-sample t-test. The results showed a significant improvement in students' pronunciation performance, with the mean score increasing from 8.18 in the pre-test to 12.91 in the post-test (mean difference = 4.727, $t(21) = 18.44$, $p = 1.89 \times 10^{-14}$). Since the p-value was far below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that English songs significantly enhanced students' pronunciation skills. Qualitative findings revealed strong positive responses and high motivation among the students. Participants stated that learning pronunciation through songs was more enjoyable, easier to follow, and highly motivating. They also mentioned that the rhythm and repetition in the songs helped them imitate native-like pronunciation with greater confidence and reduced anxiety. In conclusion, English songs serve as a powerful, engaging, and effective pedagogical tool that simultaneously improves pronunciation accuracy and increases students' motivation in EFL classrooms. This study recommends the integration of songs as an innovative strategy for pronunciation instruction.

Keywords: English songs, pronunciation skills, learning motivation, EFL learners, mixed-methods

Introduction

This research investigates how English songs can be utilized as an innovative and engaging medium to improve EFL learners' pronunciation skills and learning motivation. This chapter presents the background of the research, problem statement, objectives of the research, significance of the research, and the scope of the research.

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), pronunciation is a fundamental element of communicative competence. Clear and accurate pronunciation enables learners to convey meaning effectively, reduces misunderstandings, and builds confidence in real-life interactions. Without proper pronunciation, even grammatically correct sentences may fail to achieve their communicative purpose.

However, EFL learners often face considerable difficulties in mastering English pronunciation. Differences between the phonetic systems of their native language and English, along with complex features such as stress, intonation, rhythm, and connected speech, create persistent challenges. These obstacles frequently lead to frustration, low self-confidence, and reluctance to speak in English.

Traditional pronunciation teaching methods, which typically rely on repetition drills and isolated sound practice, often fail to engage students. Learners tend to find such approaches monotonous and demotivating, resulting in limited improvement and minimal retention of correct pronunciation patterns.

In recent years, the integration of music, particularly English songs, has gained recognition as a powerful pedagogical tool in language learning. Songs provide a natural, rhythmic, and memorable context that exposes learners to authentic pronunciation, intonation, and connected speech in an enjoyable way.

The melodic and repetitive nature of English songs offers significant advantages for pronunciation development. Through listening and singing along, students can internalize correct sound production, improve their rhythm and stress patterns, and imitate native-like pronunciation more confidently and accurately.

Beyond pronunciation improvement, English songs also have a strong positive impact on learners' motivation. The fun, relaxing, and emotionally engaging quality of songs reduces anxiety, increases interest, and creates a positive attitude toward learning pronunciation, making the process feel less like a task and more like an enjoyable experience.

Despite the promising potential of songs in language classrooms, research specifically examining their combined effect on both pronunciation skills and learner motivation in EFL settings remains limited. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by exploring the effectiveness of English songs in enhancing pronunciation accuracy while simultaneously boosting students' motivation. Based on the researcher's teaching experience and observations of persistent pronunciation problems among students, this research is entitled "**Singing Your Way to Clarity: The Power of English Songs in Enhancing Pronunciation and Motivation Among EFL Learners.**"

B. Problem Statement

Based on the background above, the problems of this study are formulated as follows:

1. Is the use of English songs effective in enhancing students' pronunciation skills?
2. Are students interested and motivated in learning pronunciation through English songs?

Objective of the Research

The objectives of this research are:

1. To find out the effectiveness of English songs in enhancing students' pronunciation skills.
2. To investigate students' interest and motivation in learning pronunciation through English songs.

Significance of the Research

This research has theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of English songs in improving pronunciation and motivation in EFL contexts. Practically, the findings are expected to help teachers, students, and future researchers implement more engaging

and effective pronunciation teaching strategies using songs.

The Scope of the Research

This study focuses on the use of English songs to enhance pronunciation skills and motivation among ninth-grade EFL learners at SMPN 1 Panca Rijang. The pronunciation aspects covered include sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation. The research activities include pre-test, treatment using selected English songs, post-test, and interviews.

Method

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to investigate the effectiveness of English songs in enhancing pronunciation skills and motivation among EFL learners. The quantitative approach was used to measure the improvement in students' pronunciation performance through pre-test and post-test scores, while the qualitative approach explored students' perceptions, interest, and motivation toward the song-based learning activities. This combination allowed the researcher to obtain both numerical evidence of effectiveness and rich descriptive insights into the learning experience.

The research was conducted at SMPN 1 Panca Rijang, Sidenreng Rappang Regency, during the 2024/2025 academic year. The population of the study consisted of all ninth-grade students at the school. A sample of 22 students from one intact class was selected through purposive sampling, as they represented typical EFL learners who faced pronunciation challenges and required targeted intervention.

Quantitative data were collected using pronunciation pre-test and post-test instruments. The tests assessed students' ability in producing English sounds, word stress, rhythm, and intonation. A validated scoring rubric focusing on accuracy, intelligibility, and fluency was applied to ensure objective and reliable evaluation of pronunciation performance.

The treatment phase integrated selected English songs into classroom activities over several meetings. Students participated in active listening, singing along,

lyric analysis, and focused pronunciation practice of difficult words and phrases. These song-based tasks were designed to create an enjoyable, low-anxiety learning environment that simultaneously targeted pronunciation improvement and increased student motivation.

Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with five students who achieved the highest post-test scores. The interviews explored their experiences, feelings, challenges, and level of motivation when learning pronunciation through English songs. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for in-depth analysis.

The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean scores) and inferential statistics through a paired-sample t-test to determine the significance of improvement. Meanwhile, the qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and students' perceptions regarding the use of songs in pronunciation learning.

Result and Discussion

The quantitative findings of this study were obtained from pronunciation pre-test and post-test administered to 22 ninth-grade EFL learners at SMPN 1 Panca Rijang. The pre-test was conducted before the treatment using English songs, while the post-test was given after a series of song-based pronunciation activities. Both tests used the same validated scoring rubric focusing on accuracy of sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation.

In the pre-test, the students' pronunciation performance was generally low. The mean score was 8.18, indicating that most participants still struggled with English phonemes, word stress, and natural rhythm. Many students produced sounds that were heavily influenced by their native language, resulting in limited intelligibility.

After the treatment phase, the post-test results showed a marked improvement. The mean score increased to 12.91, reflecting better control over pronunciation features and greater confidence in producing English sounds. Students demonstrated clearer

articulation and more natural intonation patterns.

The following table presents a summary of the descriptive statistics for both tests:

Table 4.1 Mean Scores of Pre-Test and Post-Test Pronunciation Performance

Test	Mean Score	Mean Difference
Pre-Test	8.18	4.727
Post-Test	12.91	

A paired-sample t-test was conducted to determine whether the improvement was statistically significant. The analysis yielded a t-value of 18.44 and a p-value of 1.89×10^{-14} . Since the p-value was far below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis was rejected, confirming that the use of English songs produced a highly significant enhancement in students' pronunciation skills.

Qualitative data collected through semi-structured interviews with five high-achieving students provided rich insights into their learning experiences. All interviewees expressed strong positive attitudes toward the song-based activities. They repeatedly mentioned that learning pronunciation through songs felt completely different from traditional classroom drills.

Students highlighted that the rhythm and repetition in English songs made it much easier to remember and imitate correct pronunciation. One participant stated that singing along helped them "feel" the natural flow of English rather than just memorizing rules. They also reported reduced anxiety when practicing speaking.

Finally, the interviews revealed a clear increase in motivation. Students described the activities as fun, enjoyable, and engaging. They felt more confident to speak English and were eager to continue using songs outside the classroom. These findings demonstrate that English songs not only improved pronunciation accuracy but also boosted learners' interest and motivation.

Discussion

The significant improvement from a pre-test mean of 8.18 to a post-test mean of 12.91 clearly indicates that English songs are highly effective for enhancing pronunciation

skills among EFL learners. The large mean difference of 4.727 and the extremely low p-value confirm that the observed gains were not due to chance but resulted directly from the song-based treatment.

These quantitative results align with previous studies that highlight the benefits of music in language learning. The rhythmic and melodic elements of songs provide repeated exposure to authentic pronunciation models, allowing students to internalize sounds, stress, and intonation more naturally than through conventional drills.

The qualitative findings further strengthen this conclusion. Students' reports of greater confidence and reduced anxiety support Lynch's (2005) argument that songs lower affective barriers and create a relaxed learning atmosphere. The enjoyment factor played a key role in sustaining student engagement throughout the treatment.

Rhythm and repetition emerged as the most frequently mentioned advantages. As noted by Griffiee (1992) and Lems (2001), the repetitive structure of songs facilitates muscle memory and helps learners mimic native-like pronunciation with greater ease. This study confirms that these musical features directly contribute to pronunciation mastery.

Beyond pronunciation, the integration of English songs significantly boosted students' motivation. The positive emotional response reported in the interviews demonstrates that songs transform pronunciation practice from a tedious task into an enjoyable experience, which is consistent with the affective advantages discussed by Hendriani et al. (2020) and Florencia Putri (2023).

The combined quantitative and qualitative evidence shows that songs serve as a powerful dual-purpose tool: they improve linguistic accuracy while simultaneously increasing learners' willingness to practice speaking. This dual benefit addresses two major challenges in EFL pronunciation teaching—lack of progress and low motivation.

Practically, these findings suggest that English teachers should incorporate songs regularly into pronunciation lessons, especially for junior high school students who often find traditional methods demotivating. Simple activities such as listening, singing along, and lyric analysis

can be easily adapted to any classroom setting.

In conclusion, the results of this study provide strong empirical support for the title “Singing Your Way to Clarity.” English songs offer an innovative, effective, and highly motivating approach to pronunciation instruction. Future research could explore the long-term retention of these skills and their application across different age groups and proficiency levels.

Conclusion

This study has clearly demonstrated that English songs are highly effective in enhancing pronunciation skills among ninth-grade EFL learners at SMPN 1 Panca Rijang. The quantitative results showed a significant improvement in pronunciation performance, with the mean score rising from 8.18 in the pre-test to 12.91 in the post-test. The paired-sample t-test confirmed this enhancement was statistically significant ($t(21) = 18.44, p = 1.89 \times 10^{-14}$), indicating that the use of songs produced a substantial and meaningful impact on students’ ability to produce accurate sounds, stress, rhythm, and intonation.

Beyond measurable gains in pronunciation accuracy, the qualitative findings revealed that English songs also dramatically increased students’ motivation and interest in learning pronunciation. Participants consistently reported that the rhythmic, repetitive, and enjoyable nature of songs made the learning process feel less intimidating and more engaging. They experienced greater confidence, reduced anxiety, and a stronger desire to practice speaking English both inside and outside the classroom.

In conclusion, this research confirms that English songs serve as a powerful, innovative, and dual-purpose pedagogical tool. By integrating songs into pronunciation instruction, teachers can simultaneously improve learners’ linguistic accuracy and foster genuine motivation — allowing EFL students to truly “sing their way to clarity.” The findings strongly support the adoption of song-based activities as an effective strategy for pronunciation teaching in EFL contexts.

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