

## IMPROVING PRONUNCIATION SKILLS THROUGH ENGLISH SONGS FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### Abstract

The purposes of this study were: 1) To know how English songs improve speaking skills of SMP Negeri Oenenu's students. 2) To know the problems faced by the students in using English songs to improve their speaking skills. The method used is qualitative research focusing on Classroom Action Research (CAR). The instruments of collecting data were oral test, an observation, and interview. The findings of this research were: 1). The score of students' oral test improved in every test; the mean score of the test in cycle I was 72 and the mean score of the tests in cycle II was 79. 2). Based on observation sheet, it was found that teaching learning process ran well. After giving the treatment by listening to English songs, the students' English Pronunciation in pronouncing English words improved. It was concluded that listening to English songs can improve the students' English Pronunciation.

**Keywords:** Improving, Speaking, English, Songs

## INTRODUCTION

Speaking enables people to communicate one another. As a part of language skills, speaking plays an important role for the success of language. In classroom context, it is significant to be able to be communicative. This can be accomplished by integrating speaking skills in classrooms. Rao (2019) emphasized that speaking skill is the most important aspect to be learned compared to other skills. This study also suggested to include classroom as an ideal place to learn communication skills, speaking. Teachers need to understand issues encountered by English language learners in classrooms and work on variety of teaching media that could facilitate their students' speaking skills. Another work (Manigandan, Santha Kumar, & Devi, 2017) focused on how crucial the role of English in modern era. This research was conducted as an attempt to assist students not to ignore speaking skills at beginner level since it would help them when they pursued higher degree of education. Thus, learners should be trained on how to improve their speaking skills from the very beginning.

Students at SMP Negeri Oenenu mention that English is difficult and very complicated because the materials used are less interesting and the materials is also difficult to be understood. Hence, when they produce English during learning, only a little of them are able to do it. Moreover, their knowledge is limited only to vocabulary, grammar, on the other

hand, speaking is one of the important elements in learning English. Therefore, the students need to be able to speak English. To support them to speak in English the students need to be equipped with appropriate teaching medias.

There are many kinds of teaching media in teaching speaking (Muakhiroh & Saadatuddaroini, 2020; Waloyo & Fatekha, 2022). The study of Muakhiroh and Saadatuddaorini (2020) figured out how video can be implemented to improve MTS students' speaking skills. Despite obstacles such as time, less conducive class and technology, this study recommended to use video as it is simple and can trigger the students to become active speakers. The result of this study was supported by adding more information that students can understand material easily and they become interested in learning (Waloyo & Fatekha, 2022).

One of the media used for teaching speaking is by using English songs (Wahyuni, Qamariah, & Syahputra, 2018; Wijaya, 2018). The result of their studies mention that the use of songs can improve the students' speaking ability. The study of Wijaya pinpointed that there is a significant difference of scores between students who practice speaking facilitated by songs and without songs. Thus, they provide recommendation to further investigate English songs to enhance other skills.

There have been studies focusing on improving students' speaking ability by the use of English songs. The study of Wahyuni, Qamariah, and Syahputra (2018) found out that the use of English songs can improve students' speaking skills. The participants of the study were coming from English study program at the second semester. Another study (Hasibuan, Wandira, & Nasution, 2023) focused on the positive aspect of English songs to activate elementary students' speaking skills. Pandey, Hampp, and Andries (2022) scrutinized the perception of Senior High School students on the use of English songs to help them speak. The finding suggested that their responses were positive as they can access English songs easier. However, there is a lack of study on the use of English songs conducted for Junior high school students. Therefore, the present study was carried out to address that gap. The present study were undertaken to examine whether the use of English songs 'I have a dream' and 'Mother, how are you today?' can improve speaking skills of Junior High School students in SMP negeri Oenu.

## **METHOD**

The design of this study is Classroom Action Research (CAR). There are four main parts in CAR mentioned as planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. In the planning stage, teachers plan the actions to improve the learning situation. The action stage involves implementing the planned action. The observation stage involves collecting data on the results of the action. While the reflection stage involves data analysis, reflection on learning practices, and adjustments based on the findings (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). The researcher applied collaborative CAR because the researcher directly worked together with English teacher at the school to conduct the research. In addition, Arikunto & Suhardjono (2017) explains that the specific characteristic of classroom action research is the real action. This action done in real situation and it is intended to solve practical problem. This research

applied mixed methods, which combines qualitative and quantitative elements in the research process (Creswell, 2012).

### **Respondents**

The population of this research was students in class 8A and 8B with a total number of 59 students. The sample for this research was class 8B, totaling 25 students. Grade 8B was chosen based on purposive sampling, since based on the researcher's prior observation, pronunciation ability of this class is still low, thus effort is needed to overcome the pronunciation issue.

### **Instruments**

#### **1. Oral Test**

A test was conducted after the end of cycle one. After giving the test, the researcher noted that the result of the test was unsatisfying. Thus, the researcher proceed to the second cycle and also gave test in the second cycle. The tests were in an oral form where the teacher invited students to sing an English song together with the title "I Have A Dream" in the first cycle, the song was played twice or more so that students were able to catch the pronunciation in the song and in the second cycle, the researcher used the song "Mother How Are You Today?". After listening to the song, the researcher wrote some vocabulary in the song after which students was asked to listen and repeat.

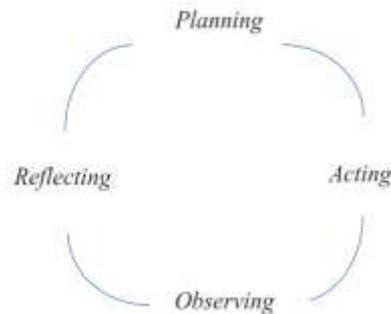
#### **2. Observation**

The researcher observed the students' performance in the classroom and collected data with the English teacher who will become the research collaborator. The data consist of students' speaking results in the classroom which were described in the assessment table in three cycles, and the teaching and learning process of learning which will described in the field note table and checklist table. The data were analyzed by the researcher to find out whether the results will be satisfying or not.

### **Procedures**

This research was conducted as a Classroom Action Research with the aim of testing the results of a method to improve students' speaking skills. Classroom Action Research is a method to find out what works best in our own classroom so that teachers can improve student learning.

In classroom action research there are quantitative methods. The research method that researchers use is mixed method by taking class action research. The classroom action research process consists of four important moments, namely: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. The data collection techniques in this study were observation and oral test. Observation was used to see the activities of students and teachers at several stages in the use of English songs to improve speaking skills. Tests were used to find out the learning outcomes of students and teachers in the use of English songs to improve speaking. Furthermore, tests were used to determine the completeness of learning at the end of each cycle by assessing speaking skills.



*Figure 1. The Action Research Planner (Kurt Lewin as Cited in Arikunto, 2006).*

### **Data analysis**

The researcher collected all the data obtained during the research activities. Quantitative data was collected during the class action research. The quantitative data provided information about the test results taken by the students in each cycle. The researchers used observation and oral tests in analyzing the data. The results of this study showed that during the application English song in the learning, there was an increase in the students' pronunciation, on how they produce English words without causing misunderstanding for listeners. This research was conducted in two cycles consisting of planning, action, observation, and reflection stages. Based on the results of the research implementation in the cycle, it can be seen that students' abilities in learning have increased through the use of English songs. The improvement of students' abilities can be seen from the test results. The tests data were assessed using a rubric suggested by Harris (1977). The researchers only focus on the pronunciation part

*Table 1 Assessment Rubric*

<b>Rated</b>	<b>Points</b>	<b>Behavioral Statements</b>
Pronunciation	5	Pronunciation is consistently clear and accurate, closely resembling native speaker pronunciation, with correct stress, intonation, and enunciation throughout the song.
	4	Pronunciation is mostly clear and accurate, with occasional minor errors in stress or intonation that do not hinder overall understanding.
	3	Pronunciation is generally clear, with noticeable errors in stress or intonation that occasionally affect understanding but do not detract significantly from communication.
	2	Pronunciation is somewhat unclear, with frequent errors in stress or intonation that interfere with understanding.
	1	Pronunciation is difficult to understand, with consistent errors in stress, intonation, and enunciation, making communication challenging.
Comprehension	5	Demonstrates a thorough understanding of the song lyrics, accurately interpreting and responding to questions or prompts related to the content and meaning of the song.
	4	Shows a solid understanding of the song lyrics, providing accurate and coherent responses that address key points and themes presented in the song.
	3	Displays a satisfactory understanding of the song lyrics, with generally accurate responses and occasional gaps or inconsistencies in comprehension.
	2	Exhibits a limited understanding of the song lyrics, providing incomplete or superficial responses that lack depth or clarity.
	1	Demonstrates little to no understanding of the song lyrics, providing irrelevant or incorrect responses that do not reflect an understanding of the song's content or meaning.
Fluency	5	Demonstrates fluent and natural speech rhythm, maintaining a consistent pace and flow of speech throughout the song, with minimal pauses or hesitations.
	4	Speaks fairly fluently, with occasional minor pauses or hesitations that do not disrupt the overall flow of the song or impede comprehension.
	3	Speaks with moderate fluency, with noticeable pauses or hesitations that occasionally affect the flow of the song but do not hinder overall understanding.
	2	Speaks with some difficulty, with frequent pauses or hesitations that disrupt the flow of the song and may lead to confusion or misunderstanding.
	1	Speaks haltingly, with significant pauses or hesitations that make it difficult to follow the song or understand the lyrics.

In the process of analyzing the data, the researcher completed the numerical data. It is conducted to obtain the average of students' speaking score before the implementation of English songs in every cycle in order to know how well it was implemented in the classroom.

It is the formula taken from Subana et al. (2015).

$$X = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

Explanation:

X : Mean

$\sum x$  : Individual Score

N : Number of Students

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

Preliminary study mentioned that the participants had a very low ability in pronouncing English words. The researcher conducted an oral test and found out that the students' average score was only 59. This score does not reach the MCC (Minimum Criteria Competence) used in that school. Thus, the following section provided information with respect to how each cycle was organized to show the participants' progress in English pronunciation. The progress was arranged based on the two research questions that have been previously formulated.

#### *How English songs technique improves the students' speaking skill?*

The purpose of this study was to determine whether students' speaking skills improved as a result of using English songs. There were 25 eighth grade students who participated in the research. The researcher assessed the students' pronunciation ability based on the rubric. The table below provides the students'

oral test result in cycle 1.

**Table 2**  
**The Students' oral test result in cycle 1**

No	Name	Score	Category
1	AK	64	Incomplete
2	AFK	60	Incomplete
3	BNT	64	Incomplete
4	DU	74	Complete
5	FAS	60	Incomplete
6	FN	70	Complete
7	HDS	80	Complete
8	INK	80	Complete
9	LO	72	Complete
10	MGM	76	Complete
11	MFS	72	Complete
12	MS	64	Incomplete
13	PVK	64	Incomplete
14	RT	82	Complete
15	RYN	64	Incomplete
16	TAN	78	Complete
17	VN	76	Complete
18	WT	72	Complete
19	YMT	82	Complete
20	YVB	72	Complete
21	YN	72	Complete
22	YT	82	Complete
23	OS	72	Complete
24	YT	80	Complete
25	IB	76	Complete
	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>1.808</b>	
	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>72</b>	
	<b>Highest Score</b>	<b>82</b>	
	<b>Lowest Score</b>	<b>60</b>	

The result of this calculation shows that the mean score of the students' pronunciation in cycle 1 test was improved if compared to the preliminary study done by the researcher. However, this result was not the researcher's target. The researcher's target is that the average score reached 75. Thus, the researcher continued the treatment in cycle II with similar steps. The results of the cycle II test are illustrated in the following table.

Table 3  
The result of the Students' oral test in cycle 2

No	Name	Score	Category
1	AK	80	Complete
2	AFK	68	Incomplete
3	BNT	70	Complete
4	DU	80	Complete
5	FAS	68	Incomplete
6	FN	76	Complete
7	HDS	90	Complete
8	INK	85	Complete
9	LO	76	Complete
10	MGM	80	Complete
11	MFS	76	Complete
12	MS	78	Complete
13	PVK	66	Incomplete
14	RT	90	Complete
15	RYN	66	Incomplete
16	TAN	82	Complete
17	VN	80	Complete
18	WT	78	Complete
19	YMT	88	Complete
20	YVB	86	Complete
21	YN	82	Complete
22	YT	88	Complete
23	OS	78	Complete
24	YT	86	Complete
25	IB	80	Complete
	<b>Total Score</b>	<b>1.977</b>	
	<b>Average Score</b>	<b>79</b>	
	<b>Highest Score</b>	<b>90</b>	
	<b>Lowest Score</b>	<b>66</b>	

Refer to the table above, it is obvious that the target had been accomplished. Hence, the researcher stopped in the second cycle. In addition, based on the results of observations made by the researcher, it was found out that students have good motivation by the use of English songs. Almost all students seemed to enjoy the process of using English songs in facilitating them pronouncing English words.

### Discussion

In this case, the total of students who are able to achieve the MMC in their speaking skill was 22 students or 88%. There is a progress average score from cycle 1 test was 72 and become 79 in cycle 2 test. It can be seen that there was an improvement on the average score and total of the students who passed the test from cycle 1 and cycle II tests. This finding is in line with the finding from Sayow and Marsevani (2024) which indicated an improvement of students' speaking skill by implementing classroom action research. There was an improvement of oral test score from cycle 1 to cycle 2, from 67,85 to 73. In addition, the progress seen in terms of learning activities shows that students are progressing in terms of their attention to the student's pay attention of teacher's explanation (67%), the students ask



and answer question (63%), the students are active in class (76%), the students are able to do task (100%) and the students follow teacher's instruction (100%).

Furthermore, this research was supported by the study of Parmawati and Inayah (2019) and Samad, Bustari and Ahmad (2017) that song media was found very helpful and effective to teach pronunciation skill. In addition, English songs may be used in any topic, depending on the students' level and needs. Regularly listening to songs can improve overall listening comprehension. Learners become better at picking out individual words and phrases, even in fast or colloquial speech.

Likewise, Li (2022) demonstrated that integrating music in English teaching can significantly improve students' pronunciation and pronunciation abilities. Repeatedly listening to songs can help learners get accustomed to the natural rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation of English. Singing along can mimic these patterns, improving the learner's own pronunciation and reducing their accent. Once their understanding and usage of these words and phrases. It can be determined that employing an English song is useful in boosting students' pronunciation skills, particularly among eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri Oenenu.

In addition, English song can also be implemented in all subjects but it depends on students' level and needs. It can be concluded that using English song is effective in improving students' speaking skill specifically on pronunciation, especially for eight grade students of SMP Negeri Oenenu.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **Conclusion**

Based on the result of the classroom action research, it is acknowledged that English song can improve both the students' speaking skill particularly on pronunciation, as well as students' active engagement in the teaching and learning activity. The data indicated that the students' average score in the first cycle is 72,32 and 79,48 in the second cycle. It can be inferred then that there was an improvement on the students' score from cycle I test to cycle II test.

### **Suggestion**

Refer to the research results previously presented, the researcher would like to suggest two main points. To begin with, teachers should be more creative to improve students' pronunciation ability by using authentic material such as English songs sung by native speakers of English. Secondly, the choice of songs should also consider level of students in which they are in beginner, elementary, or intermediate levels. Thus, research in the future should examine how English songs are used for different level of learners to promote correct pronunciation of English words.

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