

## ENHANCING STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION SKILLS THROUGH THE USE OF ENGLISH SONGS AT A PUBLIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN BATANG HARI

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### Abstract

This study aims to enhance students' pronunciation skills through the integration of English songs as a learning medium. The research employed Classroom Action Research (CAR), which was implemented in two cycles, each consisting of four stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. The participants were third-grade students of a public senior high school in Batang Hari. Data were collected using pronunciation tests, classroom observations, and documentation. The pronunciation tests measured students' progress, while observations were conducted to monitor the teaching learning process and students' engagement. Documentation supported the analysis by providing additional information about classroom activities and materials. The findings revealed that the use of English songs significantly improved students' pronunciation performance and fostered active participation in learning activities. The improvement was reflected in the increase of students' average scores from 61.81 in the pre-test, to 68.24 in post-test 1, and 76.42 in post-test 2. These results indicate a steady and meaningful enhancement in pronunciation ability throughout the research cycles. In conclusion, the incorporation of English songs into classroom activities proved to be an effective and enjoyable method for improving students' pronunciation skills while promoting a more dynamic and motivating learning atmosphere.

**Keywords:** Classroom Action Research, English Songs, Learning Media, Pronunciation, Speaking Skill

### INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is one of the foremost aspects of speaking skills and plays a crucial role in effective communication within a foreign language context. As Farmand and Pourgharib state, pronunciation is the accepted or generally understood manner in which we articulate a word. Therefore, students who master pronunciation are able to articulate words correctly, clearly, and understandably. Despite its importance, the current state of English achievement in pronunciation among third-grade students in Batang Hari necessitates a strategic intervention. Students require the introduction of effective and engaging learning media to foster greater interest and motivation in practicing pronunciation skills. This need for a more

appealing instructional approach is crucial for overcoming existing learning barriers and ultimately improving the students' overall performance in English articulation.

The efficacy of using songs as an instructional medium is well-established in academic literature. First, a quantitative study by Arnita Annisa Belly, using a one- group pre-test and post-test design with ten high school students, found that English songs were an efficient medium for teaching pronunciation, resulting in a significant improvement in students' ability to pronounce English words. Second, further quantitative analysis by Erno Sumantri demonstrated that the teaching and learning process was more effective when utilizing songs, strongly indicating that this medium can significantly improve pronunciation abilities. Third, action research conducted by Kartika Indah revealed that songs fostered student motivation and provided a new learning nuance, which helped students avoid boredom and improve their pronunciation and fluency through practice. Finally, research by Henny Ratnasari confirmed that songs were effective in improving students' achievement in pronouncing English words, noting that students found the learning environment more relaxed and less threatened by theory, thus increasing their motivation.

Building upon these findings, the purpose of this study is to investigate and demonstrate that the use of English songs can enhance the pronunciation skills of third-grade students in Batang Hari. This research is expected to benefit various parties: it can be used to increase students' interest and enjoyment in the English learning process; it provides information and suggestions for readers, especially students and lecturers in the English Department; it fulfills one of the requirements for the researcher to obtain a Bachelor Degree; it offers English teachers a considered approach for their teaching practices; it enhances the school's educational quality; and it serves as a reference for the institution regarding research in pronunciation.

### METHODS

This research uses the classroom action research method. According to Hopkins, as cited in Mills, action research is a systematic process carried out by teachers or researchers by collecting information about how they work and teach, in order to obtain, understand, develop, practice, and reflect, aiming to have a positive impact on the educational environment in general and to improve student learning outcomes. In addition, John W. Creswell explained in his book that action research is the most widely applied and practical design. Action researchers explore practical problems with the aim of developing solutions to these problems.

The subjects of this research were the third-grade students of MIPA 2 at Senior High School in Batang Hari. The researcher chose this class because the students needed to enhance their pronunciation skills through English song media in order to increase their interest in pronunciation. A test is a valuable measuring instrument for educational research. It is a set of stimuli presented to individuals in order to obtain responses, based on which numerical scores can be assigned. The test is divided into two parts: the pre-test and the post-test. The pre-test is used to gather information about the students' achievement before they receive treatment. In this stage, the researcher gave the students a test to evaluate their pronunciation skills, which involved mentioning examples of English captions. The post-test is conducted after the students receive their treatment, where the researcher gave the students tasks containing bold words; they performed these tasks orally and also mentioned examples of English captions, similar to the pre-test.

In this research, the researcher analyzed data by calculating the average scores of the pre-test and post-test to measure students' improvement. If students did not meet the success criteria in Cycle 1, which consisted of three meetings, a Cycle 2 with the same duration was conducted to further improve their abilities. The mean score ( $M = \sum x/N$ ) was used to determine achievement, with 75 as the minimum passing score. Once the mean score

reached 75 or higher, the research stopped. The researcher also calculated the class percentage of students passing the minimum score ( $P = (F/N) \times 100\%$ ). Based on these results, it was concluded that using English songs effectively improved students' pronunciation skills.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of the classroom action research conducted at SMAN Batang Hari, it can be concluded that the implementation of English songs as a learning media positively impacted the students' scores, participation, and interest in the English subject. The data showed an improvement in the students' average scores from the pre-test to the post-tests: the pre-test average was 61.81, the average in post-test 1 was 68.24, and post-test 2 reached 76.42. This indicates a significant increase in students' performance, with a difference of 6.44 between the pre-test and post-test 1, 8.17 between post-test 1 and post-test 2, and a total increase of 14.61 from the pre- test to post-test 2. Additionally, observations of student activity during both cycles showed that the students were more active and engaged in the learning process. Therefore, it is clear that using English songs as a teaching medium effectively enhanced students' pronunciation skills, as evidenced by their higher scores and increased enthusiasm during the learning activities.

**Table 1.** Comparison of Pre-Test, Post-Test 1, and Post-Test 2 Results

Aspect	Pre-Test	Post-Test 1 (Cycle 1)	Post-Test 2 (Cycle 2)	Difference
Average Score	61.81	68.24	76.42	Pre-test → Post-test 1: 6.44 Post-test 1 → Post-test 2: 8.17 Pre-test → Post-test 2: 14.61
Students' Participation and Activity	Low/Moderate	Increased	More active and engaged	Increased student activity during learning
Students' Interest in the Subject	Low/Average	Increased	Further increased	Significant improvement in students' interest

The table shows a significant improvement in students' learning outcomes, participation, and interest throughout the learning cycles. The average score increased from 61.81 in the pre-test to 68.24 in post-test 1 and 76.42 in post-test 2, indicating continuous progress in students' understanding. Students' participation also developed from low or moderate during the pre- test to more active and engaged in the second cycle, reflecting greater involvement in learning activities. Similarly, students' interest in the subject improved from low or average to significantly higher after the second cycle. Overall, these results demonstrate that the implemented teaching strategies effectively enhanced students' academic performance, active participation, and enthusiasm for learning.

The findings indicate that the learning process produced a steady and meaningful improvement in students' academic achievement, engagement, and motivation. The consistent rise in test scores across the two cycles suggests that the applied teaching strategies were effective in strengthening students' comprehension and learning outcomes. Moreover, the noticeable increase in participation and interest shows that students became more active, attentive, and motivated to learn. This overall development highlights that the instructional approach not only improved students' performance but also fostered a more interactive and

enthusiastic learning atmosphere, contributing to a more positive and effective educational experience.

Several previous studies have investigated the use of English songs to improve students' pronunciation skills, both in local and international contexts. In Indonesia, for instance, a study conducted by Rahmawati (2022) at a junior high school revealed that students' pronunciation scores increased significantly after being taught through English songs, showing that music can enhance learners' articulation and phonological awareness. Similarly, Putri and Santoso (2021) found that using songs in the classroom helped students practice stress, rhythm, and intonation more naturally, leading to better pronunciation fluency. On a global scale, research by Fonseca-Mora et al. (2017) in Spain demonstrated that incorporating songs into English lessons positively affected learners' pronunciation accuracy and listening discrimination. Another study in Ecuador by Vera (2020) also confirmed that English songs motivated students and improved their pronunciation of difficult sounds. These findings, both locally and globally, indicate that integrating songs into language learning can effectively strengthen students' pronunciation abilities, although the level of improvement may vary depending on learners' proficiency, song selection, and classroom context.

The problem underlying this study arises from the observation that many students at the senior high school level still face significant difficulties in producing English sounds accurately, particularly in aspects such as stress, rhythm, and intonation. Despite having learned English for several years, many learners tend to pronounce words based on their native language sound system, resulting in unclear articulation and misunderstanding in communication. This issue may be caused by limited exposure to authentic English pronunciation models, monotonous teaching methods, and the lack of engaging learning media that stimulate students' interest and practice. In this context, the use of English songs is seen as a potential solution because songs naturally provide repetition, rhythm, and authentic pronunciation patterns that can help students internalize correct sounds. However, not all students respond equally to this method some may be motivated and improve significantly, while others may still struggle due to differences in musical preference, learning style, or confidence level. Therefore, this study seeks to analyze how far English songs can effectively enhance pronunciation skills, addressing both the pedagogical challenge of pronunciation teaching and the motivational factors that influence students' learning outcomes.

This study offers a practical and innovative solution to overcome students' difficulties in learning English pronunciation by integrating English songs into the teaching process. The novelty of this research lies in its use of music not only as a motivational tool but also as an effective linguistic medium that exposes students to authentic pronunciation, rhythm, and intonation in a natural and enjoyable way. By combining auditory learning with emotional engagement, this approach helps students internalize correct pronunciation patterns more effectively than through traditional drills. Furthermore, the study contributes to the field of English language teaching by demonstrating that incorporating culturally relevant and interest-based materials, such as songs, can enhance both learning outcomes and classroom atmosphere. This pedagogical innovation can serve as a model for teachers seeking creative, student-centered strategies to improve pronunciation skills and overall language proficiency in EFL contexts.

### CONCLUSION

The findings of this study strongly reaffirm the initial research problem, which centered on students' low achievement, limited participation, and lack of interest in learning English. The steady increase in average scores from 61.81 in the pre-test to 76.42 in the final post-test provides concrete evidence that the instructional strategy implemented successfully

addressed these issues. The notable improvement in student engagement and enthusiasm further supports the effectiveness of the intervention in creating a more dynamic and motivating learning environment. From a theoretical perspective, these results align with “constructivist learning theory”, which emphasizes that students learn best through active participation and meaningful interaction with learning materials. Additionally, “Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis” suggests that enjoyable and low-anxiety activities, such as those integrated in this approach, can lower students’ emotional barriers and promote better language acquisition. Thus, the improvements observed not only validate the practical impact of the teaching strategy but also provide theoretical support for the importance of affective and participatory learning in enhancing students’ academic outcomes.

The findings of this study carry important implications for English language teaching, particularly in enhancing students’ pronunciation and overall engagement in learning. The significant improvement in students’ performance and motivation suggests that incorporating interactive and enjoyable methods such as using English songs can effectively support language acquisition in classroom settings. This implies that teachers should move beyond traditional, teacher-centered approaches and adopt more student-centered strategies that stimulate interest, lower anxiety, and foster active participation. Practically, the results can serve as a reference for educators and curriculum developers to integrate music-based or creative media into English teaching, making learning more meaningful and accessible for diverse learners. On a broader level, the study contributes to the field of EFL pedagogy by highlighting the value of affective and experiential learning, demonstrating that emotional engagement and contextualized practice are essential for developing students’ linguistic competence and confidence in using English.

Despite the positive outcomes, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged to provide a balanced interpretation of the findings and guide future research. First, the study was conducted within a limited context one public senior high school so the results may not be fully generalizable to other schools with different student characteristics or learning environments. Second, the duration of the intervention was relatively short, which may not capture the long-term effects of using English songs on pronunciation and overall language proficiency. Additionally, factors such as students’ musical preferences, prior exposure to English, and individual learning styles might have influenced the outcomes but were not explored in depth. Recognizing these limitations is essential, as it allows readers to assess the “validity and reliability” of the study while also identifying potential areas for improvement. Future research could expand the sample size, extend the implementation period, and include comparative studies across different educational contexts to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how music-based approaches contribute to English language learning effectiveness.

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