

## The Effectiveness of English Songs for Teaching English to Young Learners

Muhammad Syafa Hanif<sup>1</sup>, Rusiana<sup>2</sup>, Mutohhar<sup>3</sup>

*Universitas Muria Kudus, Indonesia.*

[Hanifsya08@gmail.com](mailto:Hanifsya08@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>, [rusiana@umk.ac.id](mailto:rusiana@umk.ac.id)<sup>2</sup>, [mutohhar@umk.ac.id](mailto:mutohhar@umk.ac.id)<sup>3</sup>

**Abstract:** This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of using song toward the students' vocabulary & pronunciation skill. These skills are mostly problems for the students while essentials for English acquisition. It is believed that mastering vocabulary and pronunciation would contribute to the success of learning English. Using songs is one of alternative media to teach children to master vocabulary & pronunciation. The nature of song facilitates students to learn English naturally and contextually with the target language. The participants in this study were 18 students of fourth-grade students at the public school, SD 2 Hadipolo, Central Java. The present research is pre-experimental. The typical test of pre-test and post-test was administered as the research instrument. It is revealed that the  $t_0$  is greater than the  $t$ -table, ( $10.238 > 2.110$ ), it means that  $H_0$  is rejected. The average score from pre-test was 53.3 and from the post-test was 78.88. It can be concluded that English songs are effective as a tool for teaching vocabulary and pronunciation to fourth-grade students at SD 2 Hadipolo. The researcher suggests the teacher to use songs that meet the materials. For future research, this research is expected to add the present body knowledge on this issue.

**Keywords:** vocabulary mastery, listening to songs, pronunciation, language skills, young learners.

### INTRODUCTION

In *Kurikulum Merdeka*, elementary school is the first place or level for students to learn English formally in Indonesia. In addition, students learn the necessary aspects of English, namely vocabulary. Vocabulary is very important to master first because it is an important means of communication. Furthermore, vocabulary mastery will help students to understand the language. Without vocabulary, nothing can be conveyed. Vocabulary is a basic element that contribute to English skills. For example, by mastering vocabulary, it is easier for students to understand the language. Knowing the meaning of vocabulary or text will increase students' interest in learning English, (Munir, 2016).

Another essential language aspects of English acquisition is pronunciation. English pronunciation involves too many complexities for learners to strive for a complete elimination of accent, but improving pronunciation will boost self-esteem, facilitate communication, and possibly lead to a better job or at least more respect in the workplace. So, good pronunciation skill can give one more self-confidence to speak in front of many people (Kobilova, 2022).

There are many ways that students can acquire and learn a foreign language, for example by using songs. Teaching both vocabulary and pronunciation earlier would be preferable. Starting from younger age, learners can recognize the way to pronounce accurately (Palupi et al., 2022). Teachers should use different techniques and strategies for teaching language aspect, especially pronunciation. With more techniques and strategies,

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Songs were believed can represent the current picture of the world through the eye of native speakers. they can reflect the aspirations, motivations, cultural trends as well as the fears, anxieties, joys, and opinions through the lyrics that help EFL learners to comprehend the culture of the targeted language (Kumar et al., 2022). Furthermore, songs provide young learners with apposite contexts to learn and practice vocabulary through songs as a potentially resourceful means (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2020).

Beside beneficial to vocabulary learning, (Rais et al., 2020) stated that Learning by using songs can provide many benefits, the song provides the learning material for improving pronunciation and self- confidence. Memorizing songs is believed not only to make students interested but songs can also to help them learn vocabulary and pronunciation more easily. One of the previous studies was conducted by Džanić & Pejić (2016). This study examines the extent to which visual and aural representations of language through songs affect voice acquisition in the second graders of the “Mejdan” Elementary School, in Tuzla. The results showed that songs had a positive effect on young learners' vocabulary retention. Regardless of the setting used, aural or aural/visual, the results prove that songs are suitable for different learning styles, they encourage positive learning experiences and increase knowledge. Moreover Afriyuninda & Oktaviani (2021) found that song could give experience to the students to practice good and correct pronunciation, and could learn new vocabulary by practicing listening to English songs to improve their skills.

In this research, the researcher introduced an alternative media which is song from YouTube channel for teaching English to elementary school students, particularly highlighting the vocabulary and pronunciation mastery. While, some previous researches promote the song in general, this research employed selected songs from YouTube channel to investigate whether there is a significant difference before and after students are taught by using English song and more specifically whether English song is effective for teaching vocabulary and pronunciation.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### ***Design of the Research***

This research employed pre-experimental by using one group pretest-post-test design at SD 2 Hadipolo. This research was conducted to investigate the significant difference of the vocabulary and pronunciation mastery of the fourth-grade students of SD 2 Hadipolo before and after being taught by using songs. Since the population of the fourth-grade students of SD 2 Hadipolo academic year 2022/2023 were 18, the researcher took all population as the sample. Pre-test and post-test were given to students to obtain the score before and after treatment. The pre-test was used to measure the student's reading ability before the treatment. The post-test was used to assess the

students' scores after they had been taught using English songs. There are 20 multiple choice test items of vocabulary and pronunciation. For the validity, the test was ensured to meet the content validity as it was designed based on the syllabus and the teaching materials and validated by the expert. And for the reliability, the test was tried out and it was found that it was low reliability.

For analysing the data, the researcher calculated the mean of the pre-test and post-test, then determined the variance of the data using standard deviation and finally using the *t-test* to calculate the standard deviation. The *t-test* result was compared with the *t-table* to determine whether there is a significant difference of the reading ability of the eighth-grade students before and after being taught by using English songs.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Result*

The following is the result of the pre-test obtained before the treatment.

Table 1. The pre-test score

No	Score	No	Score
1.	60	10.	60
2.	60	11.	50
3.	60	12.	50
4.	30	13.	75
5.	70	14.	80
6.	50	15.	45
7.	45	16.	30
8.	40	17.	50
9.	45	18.	60

From the table, it is indicated that the lowest score is 30 and the highest score is 80 before the treatment. In addition, the frequency distribution of vocabulary and pronunciation mastery is as follows.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of vocabulary and pronunciation mastery

SCORE	F	PERCENTAGE (%)
95-100	0	0%
91-95	0	0%
86-90	0	0%
81-85	0	0%
76-80	1	5,5%
71-75	0	0%
66-70	1	5,5%
61-65	0	0%
56-60	5	27,7%
51-55	0	0%
46-50	4	22,2%
41-45	3	16,6%
36-40	1	5,5%
31-35	0	0%
26-30	2	11%
21-25	1	5,5%
$\Sigma f$	18	100%

From the table, it is displayed that the mean is 53.3 which is categorized as low level and does not meet the Minimal Completeness Criteria (KKM) before the treatment. After the post test, the score is presented in the table as follows:

Table 3. The post-test score

No	Score	No	Score
1.	85	10.	90
2.	90	11.	70
3.	90	12.	70
4.	80	13.	85
5.	80	14.	95
6.	85	15.	80
7.	70	16.	70
8.	70	17.	70
9.	65	18.	85

After the post-test, the researcher found out that the highest score is 95 and the lowest score is 65. Overall, students' cumulative score after the treatment yielded a mean of 78.88. The frequency distribution is presented as follows:

Table 4. Frequency distribution of vocabulary and pronunciation mastery after treatment

SCORE	F	PERCENTAGE (%)
95-100	0	0%
91-95	1	5,5%
86-90	3	16,6%
81-85	4	22,2%
76-80	3	16,6%
71-75	0	0%
66-70	5	27,7%
61-65	1	5,5%
56-60	1	5,5%
$\Sigma f$	18	100%

According to the statistical calculation, the  $t_0$  is greater than the t-table, it means that  $H_0$  is rejected. It is concluded that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test.

### Discussion

Teaching English in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation to young learners of elementary level needs an appropriate resort that accommodates their learning styles. It is important for helping them to learn maximally and efficiently. Song which is believed to be a strategy fits to their age and level is utilized in this current research. Through song, the diverse learning styles of visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic are jointly covered. In SD 2 Hadipolo, the students have not achieved the Minimal Completeness Criteria and songs were used to see its effectiveness in terms of teaching vocabulary and pronunciation.

The researcher used a multiple-choice test to measure students' vocabulary and pronunciation skills according to the proposed pronunciation and vocabulary-building assessment methodology. In the pre-test, the student's average score was 53,3. Then in the post-test, the student's average score increased, it was 78,8. Moreover, this result is supported by the significant difference through the calculation of standard deviation and t-test. Because  $t_0$  is greater than the t-table, ( $10,238 > 2,110$ ), it means that  $H_0$  is rejected. Therefore, it can be stated that the implementation of English songs is effective for teaching vocabulary and pronunciation. Besides, almost all of the students reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria set by the school, and they also got a better experience of learning, especially in vocabulary and pronunciation skills.

Several problems mentioned in the research background including lack of vocabulary, strange pronunciation, and accents still exist. It is understandable since the length of the treatment was not able to be extended because of the time limitation.

Each song has advantages and disadvantages from the student's point of view because of its different genres and characteristics. The majority of students seemed excited to listen to the song. They seemed to enjoy the rhythm of the first song entitled Twinkle-twinkle little star from the *Dunia Lirik* YouTube channel, but they had a little difficulty identifying certain words from the lyrics listed. In the second song entitled Baby Shark the students looked more cheerful because the song was familiar to them and had a slow tempo which made the identification process a little easier. Griffie (1992) suggests

using short, calm songs with beginner students. Exercises involving crossword puzzles, drawings, or picture shows can be done with these songs. Long, frantic songs that tell a story should be used with students who have greater language ability. The music to be chosen should be understandable and have a clear sound; it should not have too many loudly tuned instruments.

Notable songs during the treatment were *Telling Time* and *Fruit from my Bibits* YouTube channel. The researcher started the treatment by asking students' favourite songs which were then played. Students were asked to briefly explain the meaning of the song. They were happy to know that for the first time, they finally understood the meaning of the songs they often played. After that, the researcher played the songs that the researcher had chosen as material for the next treatment. During this process, the selected songs are played repeatedly so students can identify the targeted vocabularies. Students take turns explaining the meaning of words found in the songs. This session increases students' interest toward the songs and stimulate them to listen more enthusiastically.

Repetition is one of the ways our brain processes information. In addition, repetition will create a relaxed atmosphere (Palupi et al., 2022). Therefore, during the teaching and learning process, the teacher applies this method with songs. The song will be played several times until students can join in singing the song. Then, when students are able to sing without assistance, the teacher asks students to sing together without audio. Moreover, the song was sung repeatedly by the students.

In the teaching and learning process using English songs makes the class atmosphere more fun and interactive. Brewster, J and Ellin (2002) state that songs, rhymes, and chants are considered fun for children and will make them view the target language positively. There are many challenges in teaching children, such as classroom management (Linse, 2005) although the number of the students is not too big. The teacher deals with the detail of the teaching steps from brainstorming, main teaching activities of employing songs, and the conclusion after the teaching activity ended.

This treatment can also increase the attraction of students to use English Songs in order to more enthusiasm learning for vocabulary and pronunciation. Millington (2011) claims that songs can help learners improve their listening skills and pronunciation; they can also be useful for teaching vocabulary and sentence structures. Moreover, learning vocabulary and pronunciation this time is done together in order to be more enjoyable. After doing the treatment, the researcher gives the post-test question to the students. The number and form of the question are exactly the same as the pre-test question. Post-test was conducted to find out if, after the treatment, the use of English songs could be used for teaching vocabulary and pronunciation to fourth-grade students of SD 2 Hadipolo.

In using songs, it is necessary to ensure that the songs used meet the requirements for teaching needs. Even though researchers cannot match songs to students' tastes as a whole, at least researchers can choose songs from across genres to make them more diverse, especially in experimental research in learning classes. When song is selected to meet the existing material, students will not only get new motivation to learn English but students are also ready for the next materials they will receive.

It is withdrawn that the use of English songs had a significant impact on fourth-grade students' vocabulary and pronunciation mastery. The class situation is very interactive and fun. This treatment can also increase the attraction of students to use English songs in order to be more enthusiasm for learning vocabulary and pronunciation.

## CONCLUSION

### *Conclusion*

The use of English songs has been effective to teach vocabulary and pronunciation to fourth-grade students of SD 2 Hadipolo. According to statistical calculation, the  $t_0$  is greater than the  $t$ -table, ( $10,238 > 2,110$ ), it means that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. The researcher concluded that there is a significant difference on the score of vocabulary and pronunciation between the pre-test and post-test. The students' improvement can be seen as their average score from 53.3 in the pre-test has increased to 78.88 in the post-test.

### *Suggestion*

Based on the research finding and conclusion above, it is suggested that the English teachers can apply English songs as a learning technique to improve students' vocabulary and pronunciation skills. The selection of the right song must also be considered. The selection of the right song in the sense that the song must be in accordance with the age criteria and the child's thinking ability. More importantly, songs must be in accordance with the material they are teaching. Moreover, English songs create interactive class activities and increases students' motivation in learning English. Lastly, the researcher suggests that next researchers can vary the English song, and equalize the number of instruments if indeed there are two different variables.

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