Songs as a Media in Teaching English Pronunciation to Elementary School Students

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Abstract— This research investigates the utilization of songs as a medium in teaching English pronunciation to elementary school students. The background of the study lies in the challenges young learners face in acquiring accurate English pronunciation due to differences in phonological systems between their first language and English. The study aims to explore how songs can aid in improving students' pronunciation skills in a fun and engaging way. A qualitative method was employed, using classroom observations and interviews with English teachers and students in an elementary school setting. The results revealed that songs help students recognize English sounds more easily, improve their intonation, rhythm, and stress patterns, and increase their motivation to learn pronunciation. In conclusion, the use of songs in English language teaching, particularly in pronunciation practice, has a positive impact on young learners and can be an effective strategy to support pronunciation acquisition in elementary classrooms.

Keywords— Songs, English pronunciation, elementary school students, language teaching, qualitative research

abstrak— Penelitian ini mengkaji pemanfaatan lagu sebagai media dalam pengajaran pengucapan bahasa Inggris kepada siswa sekolah dasar. Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah tantangan yang dihadapi oleh pembelajar muda dalam memperoleh pengucapan bahasa Inggris yang tepat akibat perbedaan sistem fonologis antara bahasa pertama mereka dan bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana lagu dapat membantu meningkatkan keterampilan pengucapan siswa dengan cara yang menyenangkan dan menarik. Metode yang digunakan adalah metode kualitatif dengan melakukan observasi kelas dan wawancara dengan guru serta siswa di lingkungan sekolah dasar. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa lagu membantu siswa lebih mudah mengenali bunyi-bunyi dalam bahasa Inggris, meningkatkan intonasi, ritme, dan pola tekanan kata, serta meningkatkan motivasi mereka dalam belajar pengucapan. Kesimpulannya, penggunaan lagu dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris, khususnya dalam latihan pengucapan, memberikan dampak positif bagi pembelajar muda dan dapat menjadi strategi yang efektif dalam mendukung perolehan pengucapan di kelas sekolah dasar.

Kata kunci— Lagu, pengucapan bahasa Inggris, siswa sekolah dasar, pengajaran bahasa, penelitian kualitatif

INTRODUCTION

In language education, especially at the primary school level, pronunciation is a very important aspect to facilitate effective communication. However, young learners often experience difficulties in pronunciation due to the presence of unfamiliar phonemes and stress patterns in English. Traditional teaching methods tend to be considered a rigid and limited approach in introducing English pronunciation to students. These techniques often focus on formal teaching and directly measurable results, but often lack interest and fun for students, especially children in primary schools. This approach may not fully address the challenge, as it can feel monotonous and unable to capture students' interest. Therefore, there is a need to integrate innovative strategies that include new approaches or methods in teaching English pronunciation to primary school students. These techniques do not only follow traditional methods, but also involve more interesting and effective ways, so that students can learn in a fun way and absorb the pronunciation material more easily. One way to optimise these strategies is by utilising media in pronunciation learning, one of which is through the use of songs.

Songs have become a valuable tool in language teaching, providing a creative and fun approach to learning pronunciation. Music, with its rhythm, melody and repetition, provides a natural framework for teaching new language sounds and patterns. Since language is seen as a tool, it is very important to adapt the way we teach to suit the specific needs of each student, so that they will be more interested and motivated to learn (Matin, 2022). This approach not only supports phonetic practice, but also creates an engaging and interactive classroom atmosphere. Through singing, students are exposed to the correct pronunciation of sounds and natural intonation, making pronunciation practice more effective and memorable (Hermansyah, 2018).

In addition, the use of songs is well suited to the cognitive and emotional needs of young students. Music attracts their natural attention to play and curiosity, creating a positive learning atmosphere. It also helps to reduce anxiety, which often inhibits participation and language acquisition. Research shows that when students engage with songs, they tend to more actively practice pronunciation and more easily remember the language features they encounter (Palupi, 2022).

The integration of songs in pronunciation teaching addresses both linguistic and emotional aspects of learning. It encourages students to actively participate and simultaneously strengthens their phonological skills. By offering a platform for natural and engaging language practice, songs become an effective medium in enhancing pronunciation learning in primary school classrooms (Manurung and Yana, 2018). In brief, knowing grammar is important because it is a means to achieve linguistic accuracy The more accurately a message is conveyed, the less chance there is of misunderstanding in communication (Rahmawati Oktha Ika, 2024).

In addition, songs provide frequent exposure to spoken English in a fun format. The repetition of lyrics and conformity to natural speech patterns allow learners to internalise the nuances of pronunciation, including emphasis, rhythm and connectedness in speech. Therefore, children practice pronunciation less in English because it is more difficult. Many students are thus unfamiliar with what the speaker is saying (Lepi, 2021). For example, students can learn together. Research on the use of songs shows that students who learn pronunciation through songs show better phonetic accuracy and greater confidence when speaking in English (Rais's, 2020).

Ultimately, integrating songs into English pronunciation lessons transforms the classroom atmosphere into a dynamic, interactive and supportive learning environment. This approach not only improves language skills, but also fosters students' motivation, creativity and enthusiasm in learning English. Since songs combine entertainment with education, the language acquisition process becomes more fun and impactful. Teachers who implement this strategy can reveal students' full potential, helping them develop a lifelong appreciation of language learning. As such, songs become a versatile and powerful tool to support all-round language development for students at the primary level.

Songs provide a more fun and interactive approach to learning compared to traditional methods which are usually monotonous. The use of music and melody in songs can make it easier for students to remember new English vocabulary and phrases, while also making pronunciation teaching more interesting. Songs with clear and easy-to-follow lyrics allow students to practice pronouncing words and sentences in a more natural way. In addition, repetition in songs, where words or phrases are repeated frequently with a pleasant rhythm, helps students strengthen their memory of correct pronunciation.

This research aims to explore in depth how the use of songs can be implemented in teaching English pronunciation to Grade 4 primary school students. At this age, students are usually just beginning their exposure to English, where teaching is often limited to basic vocabulary and simple sentence structures. However, English pronunciation is often a challenge, given the significant differences between Indonesian and English phonological systems.

In the context of basic education, especially in grade 4 elementary school, the condition of English learning is greatly influenced by various factors. Some of them are limited learning time, lack of facilities or varied learning media, and limited methods used by teachers. Teachers often face the challenge of developing teaching methods that are not only effective but also engaging for young students. In addition, English language teaching at the primary level tends to focus more on cognitive aspects, such as vocabulary comprehension and sentence structure, while aspects of speaking skills and pronunciation are often neglected or not taught in depth (Harmer, 2007).

English learning conditions in primary schools are often affected by the lack of hands-on practice in pronunciation. Teachers often face difficulties to provide enough time for students to practice speaking or listening to correct pronunciation. In this case, songs can be an effective solution by providing a repetitive context for pronunciation. Through songs, students can more easily imitate pronunciation as they learn through natural hearing and repetition.

To conclude, the use of songs in teaching English pronunciation to primary school students proves to be a highly effective and engaging teaching strategy, which suits the needs and unique learning styles of young learners. Songs offer a fun, rhythmic and immersive medium for language learning, creating a natural and enjoyable context for students to practice important pronunciation features, including emphasis, intonation and rhythm. This consistent practice not only improves their pronunciation accuracy but also builds fluency as well as fosters greater confidence in their speaking ability, thus creating a strong foundation for their overall language development. This study aims to delve deeper into how the use of songs can be applied in teaching English pronunciation in grade 4 of SDN Sranak 2.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the use of songs in teaching English pronunciation to primary school students of SDN Sranak 2. The main focus of this research is the strategies used by teachers as well as the challenges they face in integrating songs into the learning process. The research was conducted in an elementary school in SDN Sranak 2 Bojonegoro, East Java, involving English teachers who consistently use songs in their teaching. The data collection techniques used included classroom observations using checklists, semi-structured interviews and field notes. Observations aimed to capture the actual practice of using songs in learning, while interviews explored teachers' views and experiences in more depth. Field notes were used to record the learning context, non-verbal interactions, and researchers' reflections during the data collection process. Data were analysed through (Braun and Clarke's, 2006) thematic analysis approach, which includes the steps of reading the data thoroughly, initial coding, identifying and reviewing themes, and compiling a structured final report. To ensure the validity of the data, this study applied the triangulation technique, by comparing data from various sources and methods to increase the reliability and consistency of the findings. Through this approach, the research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of using songs in improving students' pronunciation skills and the implications for English language teaching at the primary level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of songs in teaching English pronunciation to fourth grade students at SDN Sranak 2. Information was collected through classroom observations, interviews with students and teachers, and field notes. Based on the observation checklist, all phases of the planned learning activities were well implemented. In the initial stage, the teacher introduced the song "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" by provoking students' interest through questions related to the topic and their previous experiences. The melody of the song was played without lyrics so that the students could naturally identify its pitch and sound patterns. A brief discussion on the theme of the song is held before moving on to the main activity. During the main phase, the teacher displays the song lyrics on the board, points out challenging words, and focuses on pronunciation elements such as word stress and intonation. The shadowing technique is used, which allows students to mimic the pronunciation from the teacher or audio source as soon as they hear it. In the closing stage, the students reflect on the activity. The instructor quizzes the students' understanding and gives feedback on their pronunciation while relating the lesson to real-world situations.

From the interview with the teacher, it was found that incorporating music greatly increased students' motivation and excitement. Songs help students naturally recognise English sounds. Simple, repetitive nursery rhymes such as "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" are considered very effective. Teachers noticed a gradual improvement in the accuracy of students' pronunciation, for example in the phrase "good morning" which was pronounced better over time. However, teachers also recognise constraints such as limited teaching resources, time constraints, and variations in students' abilities. To overcome this, teachers apply various techniques such as demonstrating pronunciation, visualising song lyrics, and practising at a slow speed before singing the song in full.

Meanwhile, the results of interviews with students show that 85% of the students stated that they enjoyed learning using songs because they are fun and easier to remember. Their favourite song is 'One and One I Love My Mother' due to its simple lyrics. Around 70% of students admitted that they faced difficulty in pronunciation, but 60% reported an improvemrnt in pronouncing specific words after several repetitions. One student (about 5%) mentioned confusion regarding the difference between English spelling and pronunciation in the songs. Despite this, more than 75% of students said they felt more confident and actively involved when learning with songs compared to traditional methods.

Field notes show that the classroom was organised to create a comfortable and supportive learning environment. The students were enthusiastic, showing smiles and clapping when the music played. They sang along, although some had difficulty with pronunciation in the beginning. The teacher uses visual aids and hand gestures

to emphasise intonation. Immediate feedback was given whenever students performed their pronunciation. With repeated practice, most students managed to maintain the correct rhythm and pronunciation. The most noticeable improvement in pronunciation was seen in words such as "star", "are", and "wonder", which were pronounced with more clarity and proper intonation. Students' confidence also increased, as seen from their more active engagement in the learning sessions. Some of the constraints noted include the limited time to repeat the songs and the different ability levels among students. However, with the right teaching approach, these obstacles can be overcome.

The results of this study show that the use of songs effectively helps in teaching English pronunciation to young learners. This finding supports by (Lonsdale's, 2006) research, where the shadowing technique allows students to imitate pronunciation easily. In addition, songs create a fun learning atmosphere, thus increasing student engagement (Millington, 2011). This finding is also consistent with (Krashen's, 1982) input hypothesis, which states that exposure to comprehensible language input in an engaging context can enhance language learning. Through songs, students receive repeated and contextualised exposure to language, which helps them understand sounds, rhythms and intonation patterns naturally. However, teachers still have to overcome challenges such as limited resources, time, and students' different ability levels with flexible teaching methods. The use of visual support, gradual repetition and immediate feedback greatly helps students in understanding and mastering pronunciation. Thus, the use of songs to teach pronunciation

CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the use of songs in teaching English pronunciation to fourth grade students at SDN Sranak 2. Based on the results of classroom observations, interviews, and field notes, it is concluded that songs are an effective medium to help young students learn pronunciation. The elements of melody, rhythm, and repetition in songs make it easier for students to understand aspects of pronunciation such as word stress, intonation, and articulation more naturally. In addition, learning using songs can increase students' motivation and participation. They look more active, enjoy the learning process, and are more confident in pronouncing English words. The strategies used by teachers, such as modelling, using visual media, kinesthetic support such as body movements, and shadowing techniques, proved effective in supporting the improvement of students' pronunciation skills. Although there are some obstacles such as limited tools, limited time, and differences in learning speed between students, these challenges can be overcome through adaptive teaching approaches and consistent practice. Overall, the integration of songs in learning English pronunciation not only provides linguistic benefits, but also creates a more dynamic and inclusive classroom atmosphere.

Based on the results of the study, some suggestions can be made. For English teachers, the use of songs as part of pronunciation teaching is an effective and fun strategy. Teachers are advised to choose songs that are simple, have repetition, and clear articulation, and utilise supporting media such as pictures or body movements to strengthen students' understanding. For schools and policy makers, it is recommended to provide adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as speakers, projectors, and lyric sheets, to support the implementation of music-based learning. For future researchers, it is recommended to explore the long-term impact of song use on other English language skills, such as listening, vocabulary acquisition and speaking fluency, and involve different age groups and more diverse school contexts. For students, engaging in English song activities outside the classroom can be a fun and pressure-free means of practising pronunciation, thus reinforcing classroom learning outcomes.

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