Improving The Students' Pronunciation Mastery by Using Pop Songs on The Youtube Music Application

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Abstract

One of the ways to avoid miscommunication is to pronounce the words correctly. Unfortunately, pronunciation is one of the English aspects that are difficult to learn and teach. The research's objectives are to know and analyze how the YouTube Music application could improve the eighth grade students' pronunciation mastery at SMP Negeri 56 Palembang and to find out the causes of the students' pronunciation problems. It was Classroom Action Research (CAR) with 3 ways of collecting data i.e. test, observation, and questionnaire. It was conducted for class 8.5 at SMP Negeri 56 Palembang. The research reached the successful criteria in the third cycle i.e. 80% of the students reached the KKM. The results showed that by doing the drilling technique, asking the students to sing the song together in some groups, and choosing the appropriate songs e.g. the songs that are viral or happening in the pronunciation classroom activities, the student's enthusiasm and pronunciation mastery got higher. The lack of exposure to English, the lack of motivation to study English pronunciation, and some English sounds that are hard to pronounce because students do not find them in their native, are the three causes of the students' pronunciation problems.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of learning a language is to be able to communicate in the language both orally and written. To achieve that, a student should learn the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Besides, to strengthen the four language skills, a student should also learn the language aspects like vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation.

Pronunciation is how a word is spoken or pronounced and the way a person speaks a word in a language (Ivančič and Fabijanić 2017). (Derwing and Munro 2015) stated that pronunciation means producing or creating speech using human articulators. Nevertheless, according to (Levis 2018), pronunciation is important because it has the biggest effect on speech understandability, significantly impacting a language learner's capacity to comprehend and make their speech understood.

Making students sound like native English speakers is not the aim of teaching pronunciation. The more reasonable and modest aim is to make the ability of learners to move above the threshold level, as it ensures that the issues of pronunciation will not hinder communication. In fact, in the history of language teaching, grammar and vocabulary have been studied by linguists for much longer than pronunciation. This is one of the reasons why language teachers have a much better understanding of grammar and vocabulary rather than pronunciation, which systematically began to be examined only just before the twentieth century (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin 2010).

Unfortunately, the researcher found that pronunciation was the language aspect that was difficult for her students of SMP Negeri 56 Palembang to learn which is why it needs to be treated. the English pronunciation models, in this case, were the teachers occasionally felt inappropriate and not maximum because all English teachers at SMP Negeri 56 Palembang and most English teachers in Indonesia were non-native English speakers. And most of them also achieved local educational background. Then, innovative and creative learning media are required in this situation.

In EFL/ESL classes nowadays, English pronunciation is still ignored in many parts of the world which is why it has been referred to as the "Cinderella" of English Language Teaching (ELT) (Saldiraner and Cinkara 2021). Not many English pronunciation teaching techniques are available to teachers in the classroom, which is one of the reasons it is disregarded. That was also the reason why many English teachers at SMP Negeri 56 Palembang were not quite concerned with teaching pronunciation in the classroom.

Here, the researcher would like to improve the English teaching technique at SMP Negeri 56 Palembang from a highly focused technique like drilling (it is one of the ways of practicing pronunciation in the classroom by simply involving a teacher in saying a word and getting the students to repeat it (Kelly 2001) into wider teaching activities such as getting students to notice (look out for) pronunciation features within listening text like songs' lyrics. The researcher chose the technique of using songs in the YouTube Music application in her classroom because she strongly believed in a theory stating that songs were a very highly motivational device for learning a foreign language (Lenka 2011).

The development of teaching and learning media should always keep up with the development of technology at this time i.e. internet era. There are some media or applications that are available for teachers to find in gadgets that are related to their lessons. Teachers can play or find the songs to teach pronunciation in familiar music applications available in the Play Store or Google Play. Music applications such as YouTube Music, Joox, Spotify, or Resso can be downloaded for free. They prepare many kinds of songs including children, teenagers, and adult songs. One of the most common applications accessed by students is YouTube.

One example of New Media is YouTube, a free website for sharing videos that has grown in popularity quickly as a means of uploading, sharing, watching, and commenting on videos. With over 65,000 videos produced every day and over 100 million daily visitors, the website offers instructors a wealth of visual resources to engage students in the net generation. YouTube Music is an application of music streaming service improved by Google. The users are allowed to browse through songs and music videos on this application according to playlist, gender, and recommendation (Durand 2023).

The YouTube Music app was introduced in October 2015 and made available the following month. Its introduction followed that of YouTube Premium (formerly known as YouTube Red), a more comprehensive subscription service that includes the full YouTube platform, including the Music app. The app is made for people who primarily use YouTube to access music, even though it duplicates Google's current Google Play Music All Access subscription service (Rachmawati and Cahyani 2020).

YouTube can be used as an effective medium, especially for audio and audio-visual learners. The more accessible nature of new media platforms like YouTube, according to (Duffy 2008), offers opportunities for including students in a new "Learning Ecology." a setting where spaces for collaboration and (co)creation are growing to involve students in the production, evaluation, and customization of "New Media" that can be utilized in educational settings.

Here the researcher preferred to use the YouTube Music application for some reason. First, because it is so familiar. Almost everybody knows and has this application on their gadget. Second, it is friendly used. It is easy to operate even for somebody who uses it for the first time. Third, it is a more interesting application than others because YouTube Music can play both audio and video. Thus, students can both listen to and watch video clips of the songs. Fourth, it has more complete collections. And last, it has fewer ads. YouTube viewers can use video content as alternative media to make the teaching and learning process more interesting and varied.

Based on the problems of the research above, the objectives of this research are (1) To know and analyze how the YouTube Music application could improve the eighth grade students' pronunciation mastery at SMP Negeri 56 Palembang, and (2) To find out the causes of the students' pronunciation problems. The technique used in this study hopefully could improve the students' pronunciation mastery, especially in pronouncing English consonant sounds.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was Classroom Action Research (CAR) (Hyun 2014) stated that action research is carried out by one or more individuals or organizations to solve a problem or gather data to guide local practice. Action research can be conducted by a teacher, principal, administrator, or other educational professional. Action research that is conducted by a teacher is called classroom action research. It was conducted at SMP Negeri 56 Palembang which was

located at Jalan D.I Panjaitan Gang Lama, Plaju, Palembang and the subject of the research was the eighth grade students of class VIII.5 with a total number of 31 students (17 girl students and 14 boy students). The CAR was done in three cycles and each cycle consisted of three meetings. This cycle was stopped in the third cycle because it had reached the successful criteria i.e. 80% of students reached the Minimum Completeness Criteria - Kriteria Ketuntasan Minimum (KKM) i.e. 75. The cycle consisted of 4 steps: studying and planning, taking action, collecting and analyzing evidence, and reflecting (Mertler 2024).

Studying and Planning

The first step in this research was studying and planning. After knowing that the students had problems with English pronunciation and studying the description of students' initial abilities in pronunciation. First, the researcher prepared and designed lesson plans, questionnaires, and observation sheets for each meeting and each cycle. She also prepared the materials and teaching media like the songs, in focus, speaker, and laptop.

Taking Action

After doing the planning, the next step was taking action. The action was a step where the researcher implemented the media in the classroom activities that had been planned in the teaching module before. There were three activities in the action step: initial, main and closing activities. After doing the initial class activities like greeting, praying, and checking the attendance list, the researcher continued to the main activity. In the main activity, she played the song in YouTube Music App on her laptop and the students were asked to just listen and watch the video on the in-focus screen once. Next, she asked the students to not only listen to but also look at the lyrics of the song twice. Then, the students and she discussed some difficult words to pronounce in the song. The researcher then wrote down the difficult words on the whiteboard and taught the students how to pronounce them correctly. After that, she asked the students to repeat the words (drilling) for about 10-15 minutes. After that, the students and she again listened to the song while trying to sing it together three times. Then, the researcher asked the students to do the assessment and discuss the answers together. In the closing activity, the researcher summarized the lesson and asked the students to keep listening and practicing the song at home. The researcher repeated the same procedures in the teaching module (RPP) and the same song for all three meetings in cycle 1.

Collecting and Analyzing Evidenc

After doing the planning and taking action, the next step was collecting and analyzing evidence. This step was done by analyzing the data that had been collected in observation sheets, pronunciation tests, and questionnaires that had been prepared before.

Reflecting

This stage was intended to review thoroughly the actions that had been done, based on the data that had been taken, and then evaluated to improve actions in the next one. Reflection refers to the process of examining the outcome and considering the facts gathered to choose the next course of action for the subsequent cycle. The researcher watched the actions that led to any process, the development that took place, as well as the positive and negative aspects. In this step, the researcher observed whether some aspects needed more attention, what progress happened, and what were the weaknesses and strengths during the implementation of the media. Some steps would be revised if the students' behaviour in the class indicated some difficulties. By reflecting, the researcher would be informed whether the results met the target that had been set.

These procedures were repeated for the second and the third or the last cycle with some revisions after finishing the last step i.e. reflections. The result of the previous cycle would be a reference to the next cycle, and so on. The researcher collected the data in 3 ways: test, observation, and questionnaire. The researcher prepared a pronunciation test for the evaluation. The test consisted of 67 words that contained 24 English consonant sounds. They were 48 numbers of voiced and voiceless pairs (/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/) and 19 numbers of voiced (/l/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /h/, /r/, /j/, w/). The sounds ((/p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /tʃ/, /dʒ/, /l/, /m/, /n/) come at the initial, medial, and final positions except the sounds /ŋ/, /h/, /r/, /j/, and /w/ which occur at two positions, and /ʒ/ in only medial position. The test was done orally. Each student had to pronounce the words one by one, and the researcher recorded the answers. The data obtained from the pronunciation test were analyzed by counting the correct answers and by using the Index of Difficulty (ID). The formula is as follows (Brown 2017).

$$ID = \frac{Ncorrect}{Ntotal}$$

Where:

ID	= Index of Difficulty
Ncorrect	= Number of correct answers
Ntotal	= Number of total students

The researcher prepared a questionnaire to find out the causes of the students' difficulties in English pronunciation. It consisted of 10 questions with yes and no answers. The Data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed by using percentage analysis. The formula is as follows (Mania 2008).

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Where:

     P   = Percentage of the students' responses
     f   = The number of frequencies of each student's answer
     N   = Number of students

The researcher conducted the observation and was helped by a collaborator who was also an English teacher to make the result of the research valid. The sheet used in the observation uses a Likert scale in checklist form (Sugiyono 2016).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Implementation
Studying and Planning

In this phase, the researcher designed the instruments that were used during the implementation of the YouTube Music Application to improve the students' English pronunciation such as preparing teaching modules, assessments, teaching aids, and materials in the form of songs students' attendance lists, scoring lists, the observation sheets and pronunciation test.

Doing Actions

Here are the procedures:

1. Opening

In the opening section, the researcher did several things like greeting, praying, and checking the attendance list. And then she delivered learning objectives and the topic of the day's activity.

2. Main Activity

In this step, the researcher began the lesson by asking the students to watch the video of a song entitled "I Love You Daddy" by Ricardo and friends in cycle 1, "My First Love" in cycle 2, and "Cupid" in cycle 3 which were played through the YouTube Music app and displayed in focus three times. The students and the researcher then discussed some of the hard-to-pronounce vocabularies in the song. The researcher taught how to pronounce the words by introducing the students to phonetics symbols and pronunciations (Aliffia and Arifani 2024).

Then she asked them to repeat the pronunciation of the words correctly (drilling). Then, the researcher would play the song again twice while singing the song together for the whole class. Then in cycle 2 the researcher modified the step by dividing the students into some groups and asked them to sing the song in front of the class to boost their confidence and enthusiasm. In cycle 3 the researcher tried to find and use the song that was happening for the students to make them more active and interested in the classroom activities. After that, the researcher asked them to do the

assessment that had been prepared. The students and the researcher then discussed the answers together.

3. Closing

In this step, the researcher and the students summarized the lesson together. The researcher also did not forget to ask the students to repeat listening to the songs at home.

Observing and Analyzing Evidence

The summary of the comparison of each cycle's observations improvement can be seen in the following figure and table.

Figure 3.1 Summary of the Observation Results Chart

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Part 1	97%	98%	100%
Part 2	72%	87%	100%
Part 3	87%	90%	100%
Average	85%	91%	100%
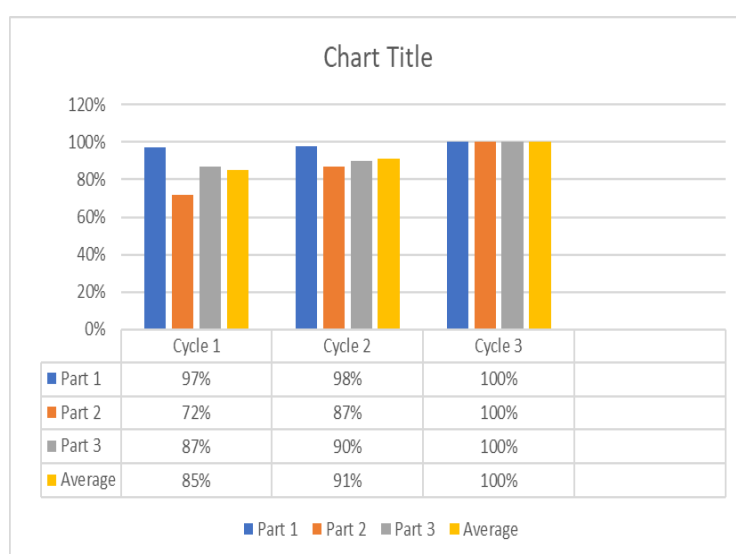
From Figure 3.1, we can see the average improvement in each cycle. From cycle 1 (85%) to cycle 2 (91%) there was a 6% improvement, and from cycle 2 (91%) to cycle 3 (100%) there was a 9% improvement.

Table 3.1 The Summary of Difficulty Indices of the Pronunciation Tests

Cycle	Category		
	Difficult	Mediocre	Easy
Cycle 1	3 items /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ʤ/	7 items /v/, /θ/, /ð/, /ʧ/, /n/, /h/, /r/	14 items /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /f/, /s/, /z/, /l/, /m/, /ŋ/, /j/, /w/
Cycle 2	-	9 items /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ʧ/,/ʤ/,	15 items /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/,

		/n/, /h/, /r/	/f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /l/, /m/, /ŋ/, /j/, /w/
Cycle 3	-	9 items /θ/, /ð/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /ʧ/,/ʤ/, /n/, /h/, /r/	15 items /p/, /b/, /t/, /d/, /k/, /g/, /f/, /v/, /s/, /z/, /l/, /m/, /ŋ/, /j/, /w/

From Table 3.1, we can see that the difficult sounds decreased from 3 items in cycle 1 to 0 items in cycles 2 and 3. The 3 difficult sounds became mediocre sounds in cycles 2 and 3. So, there were no more difficult sounds in these two cycles. The mediocre sounds increased from 7 items in cycle 1 to 9 items in cycle 2 and 3. And the easy sounds also increased from 14 items in cycle 1 to 15 items in cycle 2 and 3.

Table 3.2 The Summary of the Pronunciation Tests

Data	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Highest Score	89,6	98,5	98,5
Lowest Score	43,3	43,3	44,8
Total Scores	2160	2315	2370
Passing Grade Students	15	22	26
Non-Passing Grade Students	16	9	5
Median	70	75	76
Successful Percentage	**48%**	**71%**	**83%**

From Table 2, it can be concluded that there was a 23% improvement from cycle 1 (48%) to cycle 2 (71%) and a 12 % improvement from cycle 2 (71%) to cycle 3 (83%).

Reflecting

After doing the observations and analyzing the results of the pronunciation test in 3 cycles, the researcher did the reflections and pointed out one thing i.e. the researcher did the reflections and pointed out some things. 1) The researcher must focus more on teaching sounds in very difficult categories. 2) The researcher attracted more students' attention by asking them to sing the song in groups, and 3) Song selection can also influence the level of enthusiasm of students which could increase their motivation to get more actively involved in the classroom activities and get maximum test results. In the first and the

second cycles, she chose old songs that were unfamiliar for them to listen to, but in the last cycle she chose a song that was happening and familiar for them to listen to on their social media, so they looked more enthusiast and active in the classroom activities.

CONCLUSION

The research's main goal was to find out how YouTube music can improve the eighth-grade students' pronunciation mastery at SMP Negeri 56 Palembang and to find out the causes of the students' difficulties. Three cycles of the research were carried out, with three meetings in offline classrooms for each cycle. As part of CAR, the researcher administered a test at the end of each cycle to see whether or not English songs were effective at teaching English pronunciation. According to the results, the students' pronunciation mastery had significantly improved. The data indicated that in cycle 2 students' scores were higher than those in cycle 1. In comparison to cycle 2, cycle 3's scores were greater. Thus, it can be inferred from the description that by using the media of the YouTube Music application, choosing appropriate songs, and doing the right drilling techniques in the classroom activities in the research, students' performance and mastery of pronunciation, in summary, improved.

The familiarity with the use of this YouTube Music application and its exposure to entertainment through songs is an effective media of teaching particularly in improving students' pronunciation mastery was proven by many theories, one of them is by Lenka in her book The Use of Pop Songs in the EFL Classroom. This is also proven by the success of this application being used in the researcher's CAR. From the data from the questionnaire, the researcher concludes that 3 causes of the students' difficulties in English pronunciation; 1) The lack of exposure to English. 2) The lack of motivation to study English pronunciation. 3) Many English sounds/words are hard to pronounce that they do not find in their native.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The first writer HFW conducted the classroom action research analyzed data, and wrote the manuscript. The second and third writers, MF and HY contributed to providing critical insights into the research design and

contributed to the interpretation of results. All authors read and approved the final version of the writing.

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