

PRACTICING PRONUNCIATION THROUGH ENGLISH SONGS FOR ENGLISH STUDENTS

Rafikah

Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FKIP, Universitas Alwashliyah, Medan
Email: fikahsy11@gmail.com

Indah Yunita Br. Sitorus

Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, FKIP, Universitas Alwashliyah, Medan
Email: indahsitorus427@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Some teachers may not proficient in teaching pronunciation. Mostly they tend to prioritize the reading, grammar, or writing over pronunciation practice. It results the students' ability to pronounce words are low and they struggle to pronounce the words provided by the teacher correctly. This article aims to assist teachers in pronunciation class by utilizing English songs as the media. English songs can be employed to all levels. It is hoped that by employing English songs in the teaching and learning process of pronunciation, the students will be able to enhance their pronunciation in enjoyable way.

Keywords: pronunciation, practice, English song

ABSTRAK

Beberapa guru tidak mahir dalam mengajarkan pelafalan. Kebanyakan mereka cenderung memprioritaskan membaca, tata bahasa, atau menulis daripada praktik pelafalan. Hal tersebut menghasilkan kemampuan siswa dalam melafalkan kata-kata menjadi rendah dan mereka kesulitan untuk melafalkan kata-kata yang diberikan oleh guru secara benar. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk membantu guru—guru dalam kelas pelafalan dengan menggunakan lagu-lagu Bahasa Inggris sebagai media. Lagu-lagu Bahasa Inggris dapat digunakan untuk seluruh level. Diharapkan dengan menggunakan lagu-lagu Bahasa Inggris dalam proses belajar mengajar pelafalan, siswa akan mampu meningkatkan pelafalan mereka dengan cara yang menyenangkan.

Keywords: pelafalan, praktik, lagu Bahasa Inggris

A. Introduction

Pronunciation is very important in learning English language. Without correct pronunciation, other people will not be able to understand what we are saying. As we know the fact that the written and the pronunciation of English words are quite different, this can lead trouble to students to pronounce words correctly. Mulatsih (2015) also write the same opinion that pronunciation is one of the most parts of English to communicate with others since there are differences between the symbol and its sounds. Therefore, pronunciation mastery is crucial for students of English.

Good pronunciation shall bring good communication with other people.

Learning English pronunciation is not only simply to pronounce the words, but the learners need to understand the articulation of the sounds and the words accurately. A mispronunciation is a fatal mistake in English because it can be another different word.

There are many researches talking about the way to assist educators in teaching pronunciation to their class. Quoted from Manik (2015), there are some media which can be used to improve students' pronunciation mastery such as photo, picture, song, etc. based on Arsyad's theory. Among those media, song is the

easiest media to be employed by any educators. As stated by Putri (2021) that using English songs as material in learning English can make learners easier to imitate and remember language than just spoken words. Thus, learning to pronounce English using songs will be liked by students because they feel easy to remember and memorize the words in the song.

B. Discussion

Song

Quoted from Putri (2021) song is a group of arrangements which consists of lyrics and elements of music like rhythm, melody, harmony and expressions. In its relation with learning media, Putri (2021) means English song is learning about the way of native speaker in pronouncing the words through songs because songs are authentic and easily accessible examples of spoken English. Hermansyah, Handayani, and Wulandari (2018) state that singing songs and listening to music are enjoyable for learners; they are more relaxed and attentive than usual and therefore more receptive to learning. Moreover, Manik (2015) elaborates that songs are a good resource for English teaching because songs are funny, songs can promote mimics, gestures, etc. that associated to the meaning, songs are good to introduce supra segmental phonetics, through songs, students can play a participative role, songs can be applied to comprehension stages (listening) or production (singing), songs are available for all levels and ages, and songs provide echoic memory that can be learned easily by students.

The reasons song can be very helpful as comprehensible input for students are because song enables students to understand the language better, acquire new rules, and motivate them to learn the language of the songs by creating a more relax feeling (Supeno, 2018). Motivation is needed by the students to encourage them learning foreign language, particularly English. The attention of foreign language learners can be motivated and captive by songs. Through songs, students' ability to

read, write, listen, and speak as well as pronunciation can be developed.

Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the way we pronounce a word, especially in a way that is accepted or generally understood (Farmand and Pourgharib, 2013). In addition, Manik (2015) concludes that pronunciation is the way in which a language is spoken that is refers to the production of sounds that someone uses to make meaning which involves two folds process: the recognition of sound and practice. Meanwhile according to Hermansyah, Handayani, and Wulandari (2018), pronunciation is the way we pronounce a word, especially in a way that is accepted or generally understood; the way we speak also conveys something about ourselves to the people around us.

Manik (2015) also mentions that the goal of teaching pronunciation are to pronounce correctly all the speech sounds of the language and all the combinations in their proper order not only isolated words, but also in sentences and to pronounce sentences fluently at the speed required by the situation with correct stresses, linking of sounds, rhythm, pauses and intonation. Indeed, there are elements that should be understood by learners in practicing pronunciation, namely segmental features including vowels and consonants and supra segmental features (musical aspects) including stress, pitch, length intonation, rhythm, and other features such as syllables, prominence, thought groups, and connected speech.

English Song as Media to Practice Pronunciation

In article entitled "Developing Pronunciation through Songs" (n.d.) there is an argument why the English words pronunciation is difficult. It says that students have to learn to 'physically' produce certain sounds previously unknown to them as languages differ in their range of sounds. It also tells that learners can find sounds difficult to pick out, and may not see the point in focusing on them.

Then how songs help to pronounce the words? The article explains the reasons. First, songs are authentic and easily accessible examples of spoken English; the rhymes in songs provide listeners with repetition of similar sounds. Second, students often choose to listen to songs time and again, indirectly exposing them to these sounds. It can be said that unconsciously, students actually pronounce the English words by singing the song without learning them technically. Through singing an English song, students can obtain new words and how to pronounce them. Therefore, teachers may employ English songs as media in the learning process.

According to Arsyad (2007) in Manik (2015), media can be divided into three kinds; they are visual media, audio media and audio visual media. Visual Media is the media which can be seen and touch such as picture, photo, regalia, map, miniature and flash card. While audio media is the media which is used to practice listening skill or the media which its content can be heard and recorded such as cassette, tape, radio and compact disk (CD). In addition, audio visual media is the media which can be heard and seen such as television and film.

There are several advantages of using songs as a practical media to practice pronunciation for English students as elaborated below.

1. Immerse Emotions of Learners
Practicing pronunciation using song may immerse the emotion of learners, create a more enjoyable and memorable learning experience. Celce-Murcia, Brinton, and Goodwin (2010) emphasize that emotional engagement helps learners internalize pronunciation patterns, rhythm, and intonation of the language.
2. Give Natural Examples of Native Pronunciation
Listening to the songs may give learners to experience authentic native pronunciation by the original singer which can help learners to develop better sense of the language's sounds and patterns.

3. Raise Phonemic Awareness
Phonemic awareness is crucial in pronunciation and songs can help learners raising their phonemic awareness. Murphy (2014) explains that songs contain repetitive patterns, rhymes, and clear enunciation of words, allowing students to identify and differentiate specific sounds, consonant clusters, and vowel pronunciations.
4. Strengthen Vocabulary and Grammar
Putting songs into language learning can strengthen learners' vocabulary and grammar. As stated by Levis and Levis (2006) that song lyrics expose a wide range of vocabulary and idiomatic expressions to students, help them understand the meaning and usage of words more effectively. In addition, songs often follow grammatical structures that can assist learners in recognizing grammar rules and patterns.
5. Increase Rhythm, Intonation, and Stress Patterns
Naturally, songs highlight the rhythm, intonation, and stress patterns. When learners listen to and sing along with songs, they naturally develop aevolve the sense of flow and stress in English sentences.
6. Foster Cultural Understanding
The culture and history of English-speaking countries are reflected through songs. It fosters cultural understanding by exploring different genres and singers by learners to diverse accents, regional variations, and cultural nuances. Manik (2015) states that a song is like a magic that can hypnotize everyone. Therefore, whenever someone hears a song they like, they will be immersed into the songs and this not only can improve someone's pronunciation but also develop cultural sensitivity and appreciation.

In addition, Orlova (2003) lists some advantages for working in class with songs as follow.

1. Practicing the rhythm, stress and the intonation patterns of the English language.

2. Teaching vocabulary, especially in the vocabulary reinforcement stage.
3. Teaching grammar. In this respect, songs are especially favored by teachers while investigating the use of the tenses.
4. Teaching speaking. For this purpose, songs and mainly their lyrics are employed as a stimulus for class discussions.
5. Teaching listening. Music can be helpful for comprehension.
6. Developing writing skills. For this purpose, a song can be used in a variety of ways; for example, speculation as to what could happen to the characters in the future, writing a letter to the main character, etc.

How to Practice Pronunciation Using English Songs

Yusmita and Angraini (2017) describe the concept of using songs as one of listening materials in English language learners. When the students are listening to the music or song, they will learn many things such as new words and the meaning of the words as well as grammar and pronunciation. While listening to the songs, the students may follow to sing the songs which can train their pronunciation during the listening time (Ratnasari, 2007, in Yusmita and Angraini, 2017). Therefore, it is believed that songs can be used in language learning to practice students' pronunciation.

Teachers are required to be active when utilizing English songs in English Classroom in order to keep students' interest. Teachers also need to prepare creative activities to use songs in teaching learning. As an example, students are given some pieces of cards to choose and guess missing parts in song lyrics or cross-words are given to students who do not listen to the song carefully, or give a punishment to students when they are not know the answers, for example the students sing a song in the classroom (Yusmita and Angraini, 2017).

C. Conclusion and Suggestion

Teaching English pronunciation is an important aspect in language learning. Therefore, it is important for educators to find a way that can employ students actively during pronunciation class. Indeed, English song can be integrated in the learning media and it is very useful to be used in teaching. Songs are a wonderful way to learn English pronunciation in the classroom. Everyone likes listening to music and they like to sing along. Thus, English song can be fun for students to practice pronunciation.

Integrating English songs into teaching learning material as the media can be an effective way to practice pronunciation. English songs definitely can be reliable and valuable tool for students to learn the language. There is involvement of emotional engagement, exposure to native pronunciation, phonemic awareness improvement, reinforcement of vocabulary and grammar, rhythm and stress patterns enhancement, and promotion of cultural understanding. Through these, students can enhance their pronunciation skills by immersing themselves in the musical traditions of English-speaking countries while enjoying listening to the song.

Thus, it can be concluded that by integrating English song in the pronunciation practice material is highly recommended. However, the educators who employ English songs should consider the limitations of using English song as learning media besides the benefits of using the songs.

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