

Investigating the relationship between students' habit of singing English songs and their pronunciation ability in a senior high school in East Jakarta

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ABSTRACT

Pronunciation plays an important role in English proficiency and communication effectiveness. While previous research often focuses on listening to English songs, this study investigates the relationship between high school students' habit of singing English songs assessed through a questionnaire covering their singing frequency, song preferences, and perceived influence on pronunciation, and their pronunciation skills. This quantitative study utilized a correlational design involving 37 students from a high school in East Jakarta. Data were collected through a 20-item questionnaire measuring singing habits and a pronunciation test assessed in four aspects: articulation, intonation, fluency, and word stress. The pronunciation test was assessed by two English teachers using a standardized scoring rubric to ensure inter-rater reliability. Data were analyzed using the Shapiro-Wilk normality test, Pearson correlation test, and Spearman correlation test. The results of the Pearson analysis showed a statistically significant but low correlation between students' singing habits and their pronunciation skills ($r = 0.346$; $p = 0.036$). Meanwhile, the Spearman test results supported this finding by showing a significant positive correlation that was in the low to medium category ($r = 0.396$; $p = 0.016$). These findings suggest that singing English songs may contribute to improving pronunciation, although other factors may play a more dominant role in shaping such abilities. This study highlights the potential for integrating singing activities into pronunciation instruction as a motivating, interactive and fun learning tool. In addition, the results of this study are expected to provide valuable input for English educators and curriculum designers to develop more effective pronunciation learning strategies by utilizing musical media. In practical terms, teachers can incorporate structured singing tasks into speaking lessons to promote pronunciation awareness and provide repetitive yet engaging phonological input. The results may inform the design of music-based pronunciation strategies that are both pedagogically sound and appealing to students.

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INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is essential for both personal and academic success. One of the key components of successful communication is pronunciation, which ensures that the intended message is correctly understood by the listener. For non-native English learners, mastering pronunciation can be especially challenging due to the unique and unfamiliar phonetic features of the English language, such as vowel quality, consonant clusters, and stress patterns. Mispronunciations may lead to misunderstandings, reducing communication effectiveness and potentially impacting a student's academic and social confidence. Having good pronunciation is important in communication. The pronunciation of a given word is also a fundamental part of the structure of the word (Odden, 2013).

Pronunciation can be understood as the process of producing and perceiving meaningful sounds in a language, which includes not only segmental aspects such as phonemes but also suprasegmental aspects such as intonation, stress, and rhythm (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994; Kelly, 2000). These elements play an important role in effective communication because mastery of pronunciation involves not only the mechanical aspects of speaking but also the ability to convey and understand meaning in certain social and linguistic contexts. Students with good pronunciation are more likely to communicate fluently and confidently in English. However, many learners underestimate the importance of pronunciation, often prioritizing grammar or vocabulary. In reality, even slight mispronunciations—such as confusing *see* and *she* or *six* and *sick*—can alter meaning and hinder communication (Prashant, 2018).

Singing is a multidimensional form of expression that combines technical vocal skills such as voice mastery, pronunciation, and vocal colour with the ability to convey deep emotional meaning and cultural nuance through lyrics and melody (Hamady, 2009; Miller, 2005). As both an artistic and communication activity, singing demands not only mastery of vocal techniques but also an understanding of the emotional and cultural context of the language used in songs. Several studies suggest that music, especially singing, can support second language acquisition. Cook (2008) argues that singing promotes rhythm, intonation, and stress—essential features of effective pronunciation. Songs expose learners to natural speech patterns and allow them to practice pronunciation through repetition and melodic structure. Brown (2007) supports this by stating that music creates an enjoyable and low-stress learning environment that encourages repeated exposure to the target language. Marzuki

(2021) and Supeno (2018) reinforce the claim that singing English songs helps students improve pronunciation and develop awareness of intonation and rhythm.

From a theoretical perspective, music as a tool for language learning is supported by neurological and cognitive findings. According to Fonseca-Mora (2011), music and singing activate both the left and right hemispheres of the brain, enhancing memory, pattern recognition, and phonological processing all of which are essential for accurate pronunciation. Furthermore, rhythm and melody in songs naturally segment the flow of speech, making it easier for learners to perceive syllables and stress patterns. This aligns with the principles of prosody training, which is increasingly recognized as a vital component in pronunciation instruction. Using songs in English language learning has been proven effective in improving students' pronunciation skills. Zhang et al. (2023) showed that songs can help EFL students significantly improve their pronunciation of single vowels.

Clear (2018) and Duhigg (2012) emphasizes the emergence of habits follows a learning loop in which cues, routines, and rewards are combined with consciously chosen behaviours and gradual automation over time. Singing behavior of students may change due to fads, cliques, and exposure through new technologies such as social media. The proliferation of viral challenges, trends for English songs on TikTok, as well as YouTube karaoke video clips have made it not unusual for high school students to sing in English. Nevertheless, these informal educational experiences are seldom connected to formal classroom content. Repeated practices of these English songs; singing English songs while switching topics, for instance, can be a beneficial learning process, as it will help you with both your listening and pronunciation, along with learning vocabulary: Listening practice and singing English songs Style switching. By reciting and mimicking the words over and over, students can better their phonological awareness and spoken fluency. According to Kaswari et al. (2023), music provides an engaging and memorable context, thus significantly improving vocabulary acquisition, pronunciation accuracy and fluency in language learning. It has been pointed out that the practice of singing English songs by high school students has not been fully exploited to improve pronunciation, yet it has a great potential to aid better communication in English. To learn English, students need to recognize and practice the correct pronunciation to be hand easily understood when speaking. But a great potential of singing English songs has not been combined into formal English learning amidst this great English-songs-singing period. This results in students missing the opportunity to utilize this activity as a more effective method in improving their pronunciation.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in constructivist learning theory, which supports learning being constructed by the learner themselves and suggests that the active participation in learning is a focus. Piaget in his constructivist theory, asserts that learning occurs through direct interaction and real experiences (Steffe & Gale, 2012), while Vygotsky adds that social interaction plays an important role in shaping cognitive development. Singing activities that draw learners' attention repetition, observation and active participation are in accordance with the principles of constructivism, making it a relevant approach in supporting the acquisition of pronunciation skills in language learning. Furthermore, habit formation theory proposed by Duhigg (2012) and Clear (2018) explain that habits are developed as a sequence of cues, routines and rewards and result automatic behaviour. In the context of language learning, consistently performed habits, such as singing in English, can contribute to skill improvement, including pronunciation ability.

Several previous studies have investigated the use of English songs to enhance pronunciation. Dewi et al. (2020) focused on listening to English songs to improve pronunciation among university students. Rais et al. (2020) examined songs as media for teaching pronunciation in elementary classrooms. Ridhayatullah and Usman Kasim (2020) observed the effect of songs on pronunciation among junior high school students. Zhang et al. (2023) found that singing songs with familiar melodies significantly improved the pronunciation and vocabulary of adolescent ESL students, emphasizing the effectiveness of singing in second language learning.

However, these studies mostly emphasized listening or passive exposure to music, not active habits such as singing. Furthermore, few have focused specifically on high school students, who face more complex pronunciation challenges.

In contrast to those studies, the present research article emphasizes the significance of active singing behavior, including vocalizing and physical articulating, that could provide more direct practice of pronunciation than passive listening. Furthermore, whereas previous studies mainly addressed younger learners or college students, this study examines senior high school students, who are in a period of transition in their language learning and whose pronunciation skills should be further developed. By filling this gap, this study seeks to offer new insights into questions of how involving in habitual song-singing in English can impact learners' pronunciation.

This study aims to fill the gap in previous studies by analyzing the relationship between high school students' habit of singing English songs and their pronunciation

skills. While most prior research tends to emphasize the effect of listening to English songs, limited attention has been given to the active role of singing as a language production activity. Singing involves not just exposure to language input but also the repetition and articulation of sounds, which may have a more direct influence on pronunciation development. Additionally, existing studies have often focused on university or elementary students, leaving senior high school students underexplored, despite their unique position in mastering spoken English for academic and professional readiness.

Rather than relying solely on theoretical approaches, this study presents empirical evidence regarding the extent to which singing habits contribute to aspects of pronunciation such as articulation, intonation, fluency, and word stress. Through repetitive singing habits, students are thought to gain exposure to the English language, which can gradually strengthen their pronunciation skills. This study also contributes to understanding how informal learning activities such as singing can support language skills more broadly. In addition, the results of this study are expected to provide input for teachers and curriculum designers to consider the integration of singing activities as a support strategy in learning pronunciation in English classes. Thus, the problem formulation in this study is: Is there a significant relationship between high school students' habit of singing English songs and their pronunciation skills?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs quantitative research design with a correlational approach. According to Creswell (2007), quantitative research aims to test objective theories by analyzing relationships between variables through numerical data and statistical procedures. The correlational design is specifically used to determine the extent to which two or more variables are interconnected without any manipulation of the variables (Fraenkel et al., 2008). In this study, the researchers analyzed the relationship between high school students' habit of singing English songs and their pronunciation skills. Data were collected in the students' natural learning environment using two main instruments: a questionnaire to assess singing habits and a pronunciation test based on four aspects (articulation, intonation, fluency, and word stress). Statistical analysis was conducted using the Pearson and Spearman correlation test to determine the significance and strength of the relationship between variables.

Participants

This research was conducted in one of the senior high schools in East Jakarta. The research location was chosen because it was relevant to the research problem and research objectives, especially regarding students' habits in singing English songs and

their pronunciation skills. The participants in this study were students from one English class, which was selected using total sampling technique because all students in the class were involved as respondents. In total, 37 students volunteered to participate after being briefed on the purpose of the study. To maintain the confidentiality of the participants, the names of students, teachers, and schools were pseudonymized. As high school students who are still developing their English language skills, the analysis of their singing habits and pronunciation skills provided valuable insights into how informal musical activities can support formal language learning achievement.

Data Collection Method

To collect data, the researcher used two research instruments. The first instrument was a questionnaire designed to be accessible and simple for all respondents to complete. This questionnaire was used to measure students' habits in singing English songs, specifically related to frequency, song preference, and the effect of singing on speaking ability. The instrument questionnaire consisted of 20 statement items in three main sections, all administered with a five-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree" as well as "very infrequently" to "very frequently," according to the type of question. This instrument assessed through a questionnaire covering their singing frequency, song preferences, and perceived influence on pronunciation. The purpose of this instrument is to obtain an in-depth picture of students' singing habit patterns

The second instrument was a pronunciation test that was scored in terms of four aspects, namely articulation, intonation, fluency, and word stress patterns. In its implementation, students were asked to mention 20 words taken from English song lyrics that were familiar to them. The selection of these words aims to make students feel more comfortable and can show their pronunciation skills naturally. The students' pronunciation results were then assessed by the researchers using a scoring rubric with a scale of 1 (low) to 4 (high) for each aspect. The pronunciation test was assessed by two English teachers using a standardized scoring rubric to ensure inter-rater reliability. The purpose of this pronunciation test was to investigate the level of students' pronunciation and to examine whether pronunciations correlate with their habit of singing English songs.

Data Analysis

The researchers used quantitative statistical analysis to analyze the data obtained from the questionnaires and pronunciation tests. Creswell (2007) mentions that statistical analysis is used to process numerical data in order to draw conclusions about the

relationship between variables. In this study, the data from the questionnaire was calculated to obtain the total score of each student's singing habit, while the data from the pronunciation test was assessed based on four aspects, namely articulation, intonation, fluency, and word stress, which were then summed to obtain the total score of pronunciation ability. After all the data was collected, the researcher conducted a normality test to check the distribution of the data. Next, a Pearson correlation analysis was run using SPSS software to determine the level of relationship strength as well as significance between the students' singing habits and their pronunciation skills. In addition, since the pronunciation ability data did not meet the assumption of normality, a Spearman correlation analysis was also conducted to double-check and validate the findings of the relationship between the two variables.

RESULTS

Descriptive Analysis

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics of the two main variables of the study, namely students' habit of singing English songs and their pronunciation skills. These statistics include the minimum, maximum, mean and standard deviation values to provide an overview of the data patterns before further analysis.

A description of Table 1 shows that students' singing habit scores ranged from 53 to 100, with a mean of 76.05 and a standard deviation of 12.60. These results reflect that students generally have a fairly high involvement in the activity of singing English songs. A mean score close to the "high" category indicates that this activity is a fairly frequent habit among students, which has the potential to provide informal exposure to English.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistic

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Student's Habit of Singing English Songs	37	53	100	76.05	12.60
Pronunciation Ability	37	8	16	13.24	2.30

Meanwhile, students' pronunciation scores ranged from a minimum of 8 to a maximum of 16, with a mean of 13.24 and a standard deviation of 2.30. This relatively high mean score illustrates that most students already have good pronunciation skills, covering aspects of articulation, intonation, fluency, and word

stress. This finding provides an initial indication that the habit of singing in English may have a positive contribution to students' pronunciation skills.

Table 2 presents the frequency and percentage distribution for students' singing habits and pronunciation skills. Of the 37 participants, only 2 students (5.6%) fell into the 'Low/Very Poor' category for singing habits, whereas most showed 'Moderate/Fair' engagement 19 students (52.8%), followed by 'High/Good' engagement 16 students (44.4%). In contrast, no students were classified as 'Very Poor' in pronunciation, and only 2 students (5.6%) were at the 'Fair' level. Most students achieved 'High/Good' 17 students (47.2%) or 'Very Good' 18 students (47.2%) pronunciation levels.

Table 2 . Frequency and Percentage Distribution by Category

Category	Habit: Frequency (f)	Habit: Percentage (%)	Pronunciation: Frequency (f)	Pronunciation: Percentage (%)
Low / Very Poor	2	5.6%	0	0%
Moderate / Enough	19	52.8%	2	5.6%
High / Good	16	44.4%	17	47.2%
Very Good	-	-	18	47.2%
Total	36	100%	36	100%

The data showed that the majority of students had moderate to high levels of English singing habits, which may reflect their interest in music or learning activities involving songs. Meanwhile, students' pronunciation skills were generally very good, with no students classified as very poor. This indicates a possible positive influence of singing habits on their English pronunciation.

Normality Test

Before conducting a correlation analysis, a normality test is first carried out to ascertain whether the research data is normally distributed. This normality test is important because the results will determine the type of correlation test used, whether parametric (Pearson) or nonparametric (Spearman). The results of the normality test using the Shapiro-Wilk method are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Test of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Habit singing in English songs (X)	.065	37	.200*	.985	37	.899
Pronunciation test (Y)	.197	37	.001	.894	37	.002

Table 3 shows the results of the normality test conducted using the Shapiro-Wilk method. Based on the results of the analysis, the data on the habit of singing English songs (X) showed a normal distribution, with a significance value of $p = 0.899$ ($p > 0.05$). This means that the X data fulfills the assumption of normality. In contrast, the pronunciation ability data (Y) is not normally distributed, with a significance value of $p = 0.002$ ($p < 0.05$), which indicates a violation of the normality assumption on that variable. Since one of the variables was not normally distributed, the researcher considered using nonparametric correlation analysis (Spearman) as an alternative or complement to ensure the accuracy of the results, in addition to the commonly used Pearson correlation analysis.

Correlation Analysis

After the normality test, it was found that the singing habit data was normally distributed, while the pronunciation ability data was not completely normal. This was done because, according to Dancey & Reidy (2017), the Spearman test is recommended when the data is ordinal scale or when the normality assumption in Pearson is not met. The Spearman test only considers the ranking between data, not the absolute value, so it is more resistant to non-normal data distribution. This approach is taken to strengthen the findings by comparing the two correlation methods, so that the interpretation of the relationship between variables can be done more thoroughly and validly.

Table 4. *Correlation Test*

Correlations Test Type	Correlation Value (r/p)	Sig. (p)
Pearson Correlation	0,346	0,036
Spearman Correlation	0,396	0,015

Table 4 shows that the Pearson analysis results yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.346 with a significance value of 0.036 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant positive relationship between the habit of singing English songs and students' pronunciation skills. Meanwhile, the Spearman test results show a slightly higher correlation coefficient of 0.396 with a significance value of 0.015 ($p < 0.05$), which also indicates a positive and significant relationship. The use of both analyses is important because the Spearman test is more appropriate when the data do not fully meet the assumption of normality. By including the results from both approaches, researchers can provide stronger evidence that singing habits have a significant relationship with pronunciation skills, although the strength of the relationship is in the low to medium category.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study aimed to investigate the relationship between students' English song-singing habits and their pronunciation skills, providing important findings for the field of English language learning. Although the Pearson correlation coefficient was low ($r = 0.346$), the relationship between the two variables was found to be statistically significant ($p = 0.036$), indicating that students who sing English songs more often tend to have better pronunciation skills. This finding is in line with Cook (2008) opinion which states that songs can help students understand rhythm patterns, intonation, and word stress, which are essential in mastering pronunciation.

Interestingly, this study did not only use one type of correlation analysis. In addition to using the Pearson correlation test, the researcher also applied the Spearman correlation test, which resulted in a slightly higher correlation coefficient ($r = 0.396$) with a stronger significance level ($p = 0.015$). The use of these two methods strengthens the validity of the findings as the Pearson test assumes normally distributed data, whereas the Spearman test is suitable for non-parametric data and rank-based relationships (Dancey & Reidy, 2017). Thus, the consistent results from both tests indicate a reliable relationship between students' singing habits and pronunciation skills.

The findings also provide a new perspective when compared to previous studies. For example, previous study by Dewi et al. (2020) reported an insignificant relationship between English song listening habits and pronunciation skills ($r = 0.185$; $R^2 = 3.4\%$), while another study by Pamela & Lotulung (2024) showed a low correlation ($r = 0.308$) but with an equally insignificant significance value ($p = 0.072$). The main difference of this study lies in the significant p value, which indicates that the observed relationship is most likely not coincidental. These findings contribute to the understanding of informal learning's role in second language acquisition by emphasizing the impact of active vocalization (singing) rather than passive listening this aligns with sociocultural learning theories that highlight the importance of meaningful, engaging, and context-rich activities in developing language skills. However, the study is relatively small sample size and its focus on a single school in East Jakarta may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future research is encouraged to use larger and more diverse samples to validate these results across broader educational settings.

However, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 11.97\%$) shows that singing habits only explain a small part of the variation in students' pronunciation ability. This implies that other variables are involved, for example, formal classroom learning, practice of

speaking in English, learning motivation, and authentic English exposure. So while the song can be useful device, it should perhaps be considered a supplement in a range of pronunciation learning strategies.

In addition, the results of this study are also supported by findings from previous studies. The study by Makasoe et al. (2022) showed that students had a positive perception of the use of English songs in learning pronunciation, that it increased on learning results, the effectiveness of the media, students' experiences in the learning process. Even though students often listen to English songs; the study highlighted the importance of students' interest so that the learning process becomes more enjoyable and effective. Similar findings were obtained by Mulatsih (2018), which observed the same effect from the effectiveness of using English songs in improving students' pronunciation skills at Unswagati Cirebon. The results of this study indicated that songs had a significant effect on the students' pronunciation accuracy and fluency achieving a more interesting and enjoyable learning and motivating experience. These two findings further support the findings of the present study which indicates that singing English songs had a significantly positive effect on student pronunciation the intensity is of course proportionate to the stimulating teaching and the student participation.

The results of this study show that the habit of singing English songs contributes positively to students' pronunciation skills, although it is not the only influencing factor. The singing activities provide students easy opportunities to learn English intonation, word stress and articulation in a natural way using routine singing while it can be challenging to learn them in a formal way. This is corroborated by Khan (2024), who investigated the effect of learning through songs on pronunciation and discovered that students who were taught pronounce through songs had higher pronunciation scores and showed higher learning motivation than control one, which would be supported by the fact that more than technical improvements in pronunciation, motivational factors are also implicated in addition to affective aspects. Furthermore, Rahmawati and Yunus (2020) through classroom action research proved that the use of songs can improve students' average pronunciation scores between cycles, reflecting that this strategy is not only fun but also brings real improvements in learning outcomes, in line with the findings of this study which shows the significance of the relationship although the correlation coefficient is still classified as moderate. This finding is in line with previous research showing that the use of songs in English language learning can improve students' pronunciation. Misa (2024) found that the integration of songs in teaching pronunciation not only improved students' pronunciation skills, but also increased their motivation and confidence in speaking English. This is reinforced by Widyastuti and Saraswati (2022) findings which revealed that teachers believe pop songs can improve students' confidence and learning

outcomes in pronunciation, despite being faced with challenges such as limited resources and pronunciation errors in songs. Similarly, Siki et al. 2024 also asserted that the use of songs encourages students' courage to speak English actively in class, which shows that singing activities not only have an impact on the technical aspects of pronunciation, but also on the affective aspects of students in the communication process.

Overall, the findings of this study provide an opportunity for educators to consider integrating English song-singing activities in the pronunciation learning process. This approach not only supports students' linguistic achievement, but also increases their engagement and interest in learning English. Future research is recommended to explore other musical activities, test the effectiveness of the intervention across different educational contexts and examine the long-term impact on students' pronunciation development. In summary, this study successfully addressed its central aim of investigating the relationship between high school students' habit of singing English songs and their pronunciation skills. The results confirmed a statistically significant correlation, thereby offering both empirical evidence and practical insights for improving pronunciation through musical engagement in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the habit of singing English songs can play a role in improving the pronunciation ability of senior high school students. The results of the analysis show a statistically significant relationship between singing habits and pronunciation skills, although the strength of the correlation is in the low category. This shows that the more often students sing in English, the better their pronunciation ability, especially in the aspects of articulation, intonation, and word emphasis.

However, it should be noted that this singing habit is often casual or passive, where students do not always pay attention to correct pronunciation when singing. Therefore, this habit has not been fully maximized in formal learning strategies. With the right guidance, singing has the potential to be a more effective learning strategy as it is fun and involves students actively.

Finally, singing should be considered a useful instrument that can support various approaches in the English classroom instead of as the only approach for learning pronunciation. For students to get the most out of teaching pronunciation, English teachers should begin incorporating structured singing exercises. However, this study is limited by the small sample size of only 37 students from a single high school, which may affect the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, in order to further validate and expand the results, future research is advised to include a larger and more diverse

sample and investigate additional factors that might influence the improvement of students' pronunciation skills.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Hannifah Rahmah was the main researcher who was responsible for the conceptualization and design of the research, instrument development, data collection, data analysis, and article writing. Throughout the research process, Dr. Siswana, M.Pd, as the supervisor, provided methodological guidance, academic supervision, and critical evaluation and revision of the article to ensure scientific and academic accuracy. Both parties have reviewed and approved the final draft of this article and agree to take responsibility for the entire content of this work.

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