

The Use of Action Songs on Young Learners' Pronunciation Accuracy

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ABSTRAK

This study aims to know how action songs are used to help elementary school students improve their English pronunciation in one of schools in Aceh. The study focuses on the problem that many students still have difficulty with English sounds, word stress, and rhythm, which makes it hard for them to speak clearly and confidently. The study employed a descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected from classroom observation and interviews with several students. The results show that action songs help students in many ways. Rhythm helps them say English words with correct stress and beats. Word repetition helps them remember sounds and improve pronunciation. Movements keep students active, reduce boredom, and help them connect sounds with meaning. Students with different ability levels showed improvement in pronunciation, confidence, and participation in class activities. This research concludes that action songs are a fun and useful technique for pronunciation practice for children, especially in classes with limited learning resources.

Keywords:

Action songs, young learners, pronunciation accuracy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation accuracy, which includes clear speaking of English sounds, word stress, rhythm, and intonation, is a key part of good communication in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes (Levis, 2018). It is important to start with correct pronunciation early, as it helps build listening skills, speaking, and overall smooth communication (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Poor pronunciation teaching can cause mistakes that are hard to fix later and can make students less confident in real talks (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Teaching pronunciation to young learners is important because it helps them speak clearly and understand others better in English (Richards, 2015). Many young learners struggle with pronunciation because they are still learning how sounds work in a new language (Purwanto, 2019). Action songs are a fun way to teach pronunciation, as they combine music with simple activities that make learning enjoyable (Gorsuch & Griffiee, 2017).

In the bigger TEYL framework, educational songs are divided into six types: action songs, nursery rhymes, chants, story songs, routine songs, and concept songs. Each type has different teaching benefits, such as helping vocabulary learning, supporting language structures, and showing natural speech flow through rhythm and repetition (Halliwell, 1992). In addition, action songs work best for elementary students because they mix music, words, and coordinated body movements that make classroom activities more interactive (Phillips, 1993). Action songs, with their rhythm and repetition, help young learners notice sound patterns and improve how they pronounce words (Medina, 2006).

The combination of rhythm, repeated words, and body movement also follows experiential learning ideas, where learning becomes stronger when students participate actively, feel relaxed, and gain confidence when speaking (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). In term of rhythm, rhythm helps young learners feel the beat of words, making it easier to say sounds correctly (Ávila-López & Espejo-Mohedano, 2022). When kids listen to the rhythm in action songs, they can copy the timing of English sounds, like short and long vowels (Derwing & Munro, 2015). Studies show that rhythm in music can improve how well kids pronounce words by matching the song's beat to speech patterns (Magne et al., 2016) For example, songs with a steady rhythm help learners practice stress in words, which

is key for clear pronunciation (Levis, 2018). Teachers can use irama to make pronunciation lessons more fun and less boring for young students (Ludke, 2019).

Moreover, words in action songs are important because they give learners real examples to practice. Songs often repeat simple words, which helps kids remember and say them right (Nation, 2015). When young learners sing words in action songs, they get more chances to hear and repeat them, improving their pronunciation over time (Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020). Research shows that using words in songs can build vocabulary and make sounds clearer, especially for beginners (Webb & Webb, 2020a). For example, action songs with easy words help kids focus on how to say each sound without feeling overwhelmed (Webb & Webb, 2020b). This way, words in songs act as a bridge to better pronunciation skills (Zimmerman, 2020).

Finally, movement or activity, makes action songs special for young learners. Moving while singing helps kids stay active and engaged, which can lead to better pronunciation (Pinter, 2017) Studies find that physical activity in songs, like clapping or dancing, helps learners connect body movements to sounds, making it easier to remember how to pronounce words (Wulff & Ellis, 2018). For example, when kids move to the rhythm of a song, they practice timing and stress in speech more naturally (Lightbown & Spada, 2021a). Gerak in action songs also reduces boredom and increases motivation, leading to more accurate pronunciation (Dörnyei, 2020). Teachers can use this activity to create a positive learning space for young students (Sahan, 2021).

Putting these three elements rhythm, words, and movement, action songs offer a complete way to teach pronunciation. Rhythm supports the flow of sounds, words provide practice examples, and movements keep children engaged (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2017). Many studies show that incorporating these elements into songs is very effective for young learners who learn best through play (Hedges & Cooper, 2016). Before conducting the main research, a preliminary study was carried out to obtain an initial overview of the English pronunciation difficulties experienced by elementary school students (Fitriani et al., 2025). This study was conducted through classroom observations and informal interviews with English teachers, methods commonly used to depict language learning conditions in real-life classroom contexts (Ahmad, 2018).

The observation results show that most students have difficulty pronouncing English sounds accurately, especially in suprasegmental aspects such as word stress, intonation, and speech rhythm. Students' pronunciation patterns tended to be monotonous, with improper stress placement and unstable sound duration, which negatively affected their confidence in oral English communication (Umar & Aspany, 2024). Furthermore, initial observations revealed that pronunciation teaching was still dominated by conventional techniques such as unvaried repetition exercises, which were less effective at maintaining students' interest and engagement (Saldraner, 2021)

Conversely, when songs were incorporated into learning activities, students showed more positive responses enthusiasm, increased participation, and higher willingness to speak indicating songs' motivational and pedagogical benefits (Hamilton et al., 2024). However, the use of songs in many classrooms remained incidental and not systematically designed to integrate movement and targeted sound-focus for pronunciation training (Saputri & Widyasari, 2024). Based on these initial findings, a more innovative, child-centred approach that combines music, repetition, rhythm, and motor activities appears promising for improving elementary students' pronunciation accuracy and confidence (Farmandl et al., 2013). Therefore, this study aims to systematically examine the implementation of action songs in classroom learning and to explore how musical and movement elements support improvements in elementary students' English pronunciation skills (Misa, 2024)

2. METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to directly illustrate how action songs are used to help elementary school students develop their English pronunciation. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on the learning process that occurs naturally in the classroom, rather than on numerical calculations or comparisons between groups. Through this method, the researcher aims to understand how students respond to the rhythm of the songs, pronounce repeated words, and follow the movements that are part of the learning activity (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The research was conducted at one elementary school in Aceh and involved one full class consisting of 18 sixth-grade students. The researcher entered the classroom for four sessions to implement learning using action songs. The first meeting was conducted on 25 October 2025, followed by the second meeting on 1 November 2025. The third meeting took place on 8 November 2025, and the final meeting was held on 15 November 2025. In each session, the researcher introduced the action songs, taught the lyrics and pronunciation, and guided the students to follow the appropriate rhythm and movements. The entire learning process was conducted directly by the researcher, while the class teacher only granted permission for the use of classroom time and space. Thus, all interactions that occurred during the learning activities were the result of the teaching conducted by the researcher himself.

Data collection was carried out through classroom observation and interview. Observations were conducted to see how students followed the rhythm of songs, pronounced English words, and engaged in movements. After the entire learning sequence was completed, the researcher conducted interviews with six students selected from the class. The interview questions focused on whether they enjoyed the song's rhythm, whether the words were easy to follow, and whether the movements made the learning activities more engaging and helped them understand pronunciation better.

The data obtained were then analyzed qualitatively through the processes of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The researchers selected information relevant to the research focus, grouped the findings based on categories of rhythm, words, and movements, and then formulated conclusions on how action songs support students' pronunciation development. The analysis was conducted descriptively to illustrate the students' learning experiences as they were demonstrated during four meetings.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

This section explains the learning process using action songs to improve students' pronunciation accuracy in the classroom. These aspects were observed to see how action songs were used during the lesson and how students responded and participated in the activities. The observation data were used to answer the research question about how the learning process using action songs supports the improvement of students' pronunciation accuracy. The explanation is based on four classroom observations that focus on three main aspects: rhythm, word repetition, and movement. The rhythm aspect is discussed as one of the key elements in action songs that helps students practice word stress, intonation, and timing, which are closely related to accurate pronunciation. It can be shown in table 1 below.

Table 1 Rhythm

NO	RHYTHM	1 st MEETING	2 nd MEETING	3 rd MEETING	4 th MEETING
1	Ability to follow the song tempo	-	-	√	√
2	Consistency of rhythm while singing	-	-	√	√
3	Accuracy of pauses and line	-	-	√	√

Based on table 1 it is found that some students still had difficulty following the rhythm of the song and often pronounced words without clear stress in the first and second meetings. Some students sang with an unstable rhythm. However, in the third and fourth meetings, most students were able to follow the song's rhythm better and showed improvement in using word stress while singing.

This is also reinforced by the results of interviews with student 1 and student 2, who mentioned that the rhythm of the song felt fun and made them enjoy learning with their friends more. Student 3 also stated that the rhythm of the song made the words easier to memorize and the classroom atmosphere more lively. Meanwhile, students 4, 5, and 6 said that even though their level of understanding varied, the rhythm of the song still helped them follow the lesson and made them enjoy the learning process more. These findings indicate that the rhythm of the song plays an important role in creating a positive learning atmosphere and supporting accurate pronunciation.

After discussing the rhythm aspect, the next focus of the observation is word repetition, which plays an important role in helping students become more familiar with correct pronunciation through repeated exposure to the target words.

Table 2. Word Repetition

NO	WORD REPETITION	1 st MEETING	2 nd MEETING	3 rd MEETING	4 th MEETING
1	Accuracy of repeating words	-	√	√	√
2	Clarity of pronunciation during repetition	-	√	√	√
3	Consistency of pronunciation in Repeated words	-	√	√	√

The table 2 shows that the repetition of words in songs helps students remember and pronounce English vocabulary more clearly and accurately. Based on Table 2, students showed gradual improvement in the word repetition aspect across the four meetings. In the first meeting, students had not yet demonstrated accuracy, clarity, or consistency in repeating words. However, starting from the second meeting, most students were able to repeat words more accurately and clearly, and this improvement was consistently maintained in the third and fourth meetings. These findings indicate that repeated exposure to words through action songs helped students become more familiar with English pronunciation, enabling them to pronounce vocabulary more clearly, accurately, and consistently over time.

This is also supported by the results of the interviews. Two students (student 2 and student 3) revealed that the repetition of words in songs makes it easier for them to memorize and understand the meaning of the words. In addition, students 1, 4, and 5 also feel more confident when pronouncing vocabulary because it is sung together. Although Student 6 stated that they sometimes still feel difficulty and lack confidence, they still acknowledged

that the song helps in understanding and remembering words after several repetitions. This shows that action songs can help with vocabulary improvement, although the effect varies for each student.

After examining word repetition, the final aspect observed in this study is movement, which supports pronunciation practice by engaging students physically and helping them connect sounds with meaningful actions.

Table 3. Movement

NO	MOVEMENT	1 st MEETING	2 nd MEETING	3 rd MEETING	4 th MEETING
1	Accuracy of movement following the song	-	√	√	√
2	Coordination between movement and pronunciation	-	√	√	√
3	Students participation through movement	-	√	√	√

Based on table 3. students showed noticeable improvement in the movement aspect throughout the meetings. In the first meeting, students had not yet demonstrated accurate movements, coordination between movement and pronunciation, or active participation. However, from the second meeting onward, most students were able to follow the movements accurately, coordinate their actions with correct pronunciation, and participate more actively in the learning activities. This improvement continued consistently in the third and fourth meetings, indicating that integrating movement with action songs helped students engage more fully and supported their pronunciation practice. During the learning activities, students appeared actively engaged in the movements of action songs such as clapping, spinning, and jumping. The movements help students stay focused and reduce passive behavior. Most students seemed more confident when saying English words while performing the movement.

In addition, this is emphasized by the results of interviews from Students 1, 2, and 3, who mentioned that the movements made them more active, cheerful, and not sleepy in class. Students 4 and 5 also stated that the movements were easy to follow and helped them understand the lessons better. However, Student 6 revealed that they sometimes still had difficulty following the movements and occasionally felt sleepy. Nevertheless, in general, the movements in the song are considered capable of increasing student activity and helping them focus better during learning.

The three parts of action songs rhythm, repeating, and movement work together to improve kids' pronunciation skills in an elementary school in Aceh. Rhythm helps with sound timing, repeating strengthens memory and pronunciation accuracy, and movement keeps focus, motivation, and physical understanding of words. All student groups, whether high, medium, or low ability, show better pronunciation clarity, bravery in speaking, and following English sound patterns. These findings support child learning theories that say mixing music, words, and body movements creates more effective and meaningful learning experiences.

DISCUSSION

Based on the results of classroom observations and student interviews, the use of action songs was shown to positively support the improvement of students' English pronunciation accuracy. Improvements were clearly seen across the four meetings in the aspects of rhythm, word repetition, and movement. Students gradually became

better at following the song rhythm, using correct word stress, and pronouncing words more clearly and consistently. The repetition of words in songs helped students remember vocabulary and feel more confident when pronouncing English words, while rhythm created an enjoyable learning atmosphere that encouraged active participation. These improvements were observed in students with different levels of ability, although the level of progress varied among individuals.

Furthermore, the integration of movement in action songs played an important role in increasing students' engagement and focus during learning activities. Physical movements such as clapping, spinning, and jumping helped students stay active, reduce passive behavior, and connect pronunciation practice with meaningful actions. Most students reported feeling more cheerful, motivated, and confident when learning through songs and movements. Overall, the findings indicate that combining rhythm, repetition, and movement in action songs creates an effective and enjoyable learning environment that supports pronunciation development in elementary school students. The findings of this study are in line with research conducted by (Palupi et al., 2022), which stated that the use of songs in English language learning can significantly improve the pronunciation skills of young learners. The study showed that the use of songs containing repetition and rhythmic patterns provides students the opportunity to practice pronunciation repeatedly without feeling pressured. Similarly, in this study, similar results were found, where action songs helped students become familiar with English sounds, making their pronunciation more accurate and natural.

Moreover, the results of this study are reinforced by the review by (Singh & Jeganmohan, 2020), which revealed that action songs are effective in improving ESL/EFL learners' language skills, particularly in speaking. They emphasized that the combination of music, lyrics, and physical activities can enhance students' learning motivation and engagement during the learning process. These findings are relevant to the results of this study, where students appeared more enthusiastic, active, and confident in speaking English when the learning involved action songs. Furthermore, the combination of rhythm, words, and movement in action songs aligns with the characteristics of young learners, who tend to learn through direct experience and physical activity. The learning environment created through action songs allows students to absorb English sound patterns more effectively. Thus, based on the results of this study and support from previous research (Palupi et al., 2022); (Singh & Jeganmohan, 2020), it can be concluded that action songs are a relevant and effective learning strategy for improving the English pronunciation accuracy of elementary school students in an EFL context.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this study show that the use of action songs positively improves elementary school students' English pronunciation accuracy. The improvement is seen in rhythm, word repetition, and movement, which help students follow word stress, pronounce words more clearly, and participate actively in class. Action songs also increase students' confidence, motivation, and engagement during pronunciation practice. These findings are consistent with previous studies, which state that songs with repetition, rhythm, and physical activities support pronunciation development and reduce learning pressure for young learners. Therefore, action songs can be considered an effective and appropriate strategy for teaching English pronunciation in an EFL elementary school context. Future research is recommended to involve a larger number of participants and a longer

implementation period to further examine the long-term effects of action songs on students' pronunciation development.

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