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Using TikTok English Song Lyrics to Improve Pronunciation Among Junior High School Students

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the effectiveness of using English song lyrics from TikTok as a medium to improve students' pronunciation skills. Employing a quasi-experimental design, the research involved 38 eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri Limboro in the 2024/2025 academic year. Participants were divided into two groups: an experimental group received instruction using selected TikTok English song lyrics, while the control group was taught using conventional methods. Data were collected through pre-tests, post-tests, and student questionnaires. Statistical analysis using SPSS showed a significant improvement in the pronunciation scores of the experimental group compared to the control group. The mean N-Gain score of 58.4% indicates a moderate level of effectiveness. Furthermore, students' responses to the questionnaire demonstrated positive perceptions toward the use of English songs on TikTok as a learning tool. The findings suggest that integrating digital media, particularly short-form social platforms like TikTok, can enhance pronunciation instruction and motivate learners. This study contributes to the growing field of digital-assisted language learning and provides insights for teachers seeking innovative methods to support pronunciation development in EFL classrooms.

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INTRODUCTION

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, pronunciation plays a vital role in enabling effective communication. Accurate pronunciation is essential for achieving intelligibility and fluency, both of which are crucial for oral competence (Browne & Fulcher, 2017; Cahya et al., 2023; Levis, 1999; Nurmiati et al., 2024). According to Yates and Zielinski (2009), pronunciation refers to how individuals produce the sounds of a language in order to convey meaning clearly. In real-life communication, mispronunciation can lead to misunderstandings, hinder interaction, and affect learners' confidence. Despite its importance, pronunciation remains one of the most challenging aspects for EFL learners, particularly among junior high school students in Indonesia. Many students are hesitant to speak for fear of mispronouncing words and often resort to reading English words as they are spelled, rather than how they are phonetically pronounced (Cahya et al., 2023; Isma et al., 2024; Pertami et al., 2023; Samsudin et al., 2025).

In recent years, the integration of digital media into language learning has opened new pathways for enhancing student engagement and language acquisition. Among various digital platforms, TikTok has gained popularity as a potential educational tool due to its short-form, music-oriented content and its appeal to young learners (Meirbekov et al., 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2023; Ulfadhilah & Nurkhafifah, 2025). Several studies have begun to examine the role of TikTok and music in improving pronunciation. For instance, Hidayanti (2023) explored the use of viral short songs from TikTok and found that students became more motivated and enthusiastic in practicing pronunciation. Similarly, Safila (2023) demonstrated that TikTok videos positively influenced students' ability to pronounce English words more accurately. In parallel, other researchers have investigated the effect of English songs on pronunciation development. Phoowong (2016) found that using English songs improved students' stress, intonation, and rhythm, while Ridhayatullah et al. (2020) emphasized the flexibility and enjoyment students experienced when learning pronunciation through music.

While these studies confirm that both TikTok and English songs offer promising avenues for pronunciation instruction, many of them either focus on college-level learners or use only fragmented, viral parts of songs without systematically integrating full lyrics into classroom instruction. Additionally, existing research tends to focus solely on student motivation and attitudes, with limited emphasis on measuring actual learning outcomes quantitatively. There is still a lack of empirical studies that combine the pedagogical use of complete English song lyrics sourced from TikTok with formal assessment of pronunciation improvement, especially in the context of Indonesian junior high school students. To address this gap, the present study investigates the effectiveness of using full English song lyrics from TikTok as a medium to improve students' pronunciation skills. Specifically, this study employs a quasi-experimental design involving pre- and post-tests to measure pronunciation performance, along with a questionnaire to capture student perceptions. The participants were eighth-grade students at SMP Negeri Limboro in West Sulawesi, Indonesia. The study compares outcomes between an experimental group exposed to TikTok-based English songs and a control group taught through conventional methods. Pronunciation components such as rhythm, stress, and intonation were assessed using a structured scoring rubric.

The primary aim of this research is to determine whether integrating TikTok English song lyrics can lead to measurable improvements in students' pronunciation, and to explore how students respond to this approach in terms of engagement and perception. By doing so, this study seeks to validate the pedagogical potential of popular digital platforms in enhancing core language skills, thereby bridging the gap between students' digital lives and academic learning. The findings of this research contribute to the expanding field of technology-enhanced language learning (TELL) by offering empirical evidence on how social media platforms can be effectively utilized in EFL classrooms. In particular, it provides practical insights for English teachers who seek to make pronunciation instruction more engaging and contextually relevant for young learners. Furthermore, the study adds to the limited body of literature focusing on junior secondary-level EFL learners in Indonesia, offering a replicable model for incorporating authentic and motivating materials into pronunciation practice.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quasi-experimental design using a non-equivalent control group format. Two intact classes were assigned as experimental and control groups without random assignment. Both groups underwent pre-tests and post-tests to measure differences in pronunciation performance, while only the experimental group received the treatment using TikTok English song lyrics. The design aimed to investigate the impact of the treatment in a real classroom context where randomization was not feasible.

Participants

The participants were 38 eighth-grade students from SMP Negeri Limboro in West Sulawesi, Indonesia, during the 2024/2025 academic year. The two classes selected for the study were Class VIII-B (experimental group) and Class VIII-C (control group), each comprising 19 students. The selection was based on purposive sampling, considering the homogeneity of the classes in terms of English proficiency, teacher assignment, and class schedule.

Instruments

Three instruments were used to collect data:

1. Pronunciation Test: A reading-aloud test using selected English song lyrics was administered both before and after the treatment to assess pronunciation proficiency. The assessment focused on three key aspects: rhythm, word stress, and intonation.
2. Scoring Rubric: A structured rubric adapted from previous research (e.g., Akhmad & Munawir, 2022; Ambalegin & Afriana, 2023) was used to evaluate pronunciation performance. Each component (rhythm, stress, intonation) was rated on a 1–5 scale. Rater consistency was maintained by having two trained assessors, and inter-rater reliability was confirmed with a preliminary calibration session.
3. Questionnaire: A Likert-scale questionnaire consisting of 20 items was distributed to the experimental group after the post-test. It aimed to capture students' perceptions of learning pronunciation through TikTok-based English songs. Items were a mix of positive and negative statements to minimize response bias.

Procedures

The study was conducted over six sessions within four weeks. The procedures included:

1. Pre-test: Both groups took a pronunciation pre-test to establish baseline performance.
2. Treatment (Experimental Group Only): Students engaged with five selected English songs popular on TikTok (e.g., *Talking to the Moon, A Thousand Years*). In each session, students listened to the song, wrote the lyrics, practiced pronunciation guided by the teacher, and received corrective feedback.
3. Control Group Instruction: The control group received conventional pronunciation instruction using textbook-based materials.
4. Post-test: Both groups completed the same pronunciation test after the treatment period.
5. Questionnaire Administration: The experimental group filled out the perception questionnaire following the post-test.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from the pronunciation tests were analyzed using SPSS 25. Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation) were computed to summarize scores. A paired-sample t-test was used to examine within-group improvements, while an independent-sample t-test compared post-test performance between groups. Additionally, N-Gain scores were calculated to determine the effectiveness of the treatment. Questionnaire responses were analyzed using frequency distribution and percentage values to interpret students' perceptions. To ensure data quality, a normality test (Shapiro–Wilk) and homogeneity test (Levene's Test) were conducted before applying inferential statistics. The results supported the use of parametric tests.

FINDINGS

This section presents the results of the study in line with the research objectives. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, supported by tests of normality and homogeneity. In addition, student perceptions were collected using a questionnaire. The results are organized into the following tables.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group	Test Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Experimental	Pre-test	19	45.57	7.22
Experimental	Post-test	19	77.48	6.73
Control	Pre-test	19	45.76	3.98
Control	Post-test	19	57.38	7.45

The descriptive data reveal a significant increase in the mean score of the experimental group after treatment, from 45.57 to 77.48, indicating substantial improvement in pronunciation performance. The control group also showed a slight increase from 45.76 to 57.38, which is expected due to normal learning exposure. The greater standard deviation in the post-test of the control group suggests more variation in student achievement compared to the experimental group, where improvement was more consistent.

Table 2. Classification of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Group	Classification	Score Range	Pre-Test (n/%)	Post-Test (n/%)
Experimental	Excellent	91–100	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Very Good	76–90	0 (0%)	12 (63.2%)
	Good	61–75	2 (10.6%)	6 (31.5%)
	Fair	51–60	2 (10.6%)	1 (5.3%)
	Poor	≤50	15 (78.8%)	0 (0%)
Control	Excellent	91–100	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	Very Good	76–90	0 (0%)	1 (5.3%)
	Good	61–75	0 (0%)	3 (15.8%)
	Fair	51–60	2 (10.5%)	14 (73.6%)
	Poor	≤50	17 (89.5%)	1 (5.3%)

In the experimental group, most students were initially in the "poor" category. After treatment, over 94% moved to "good" and "very good" levels. Conversely, the control group showed minimal change, with most

students remaining in the "fair" category. This indicates that the treatment using TikTok English song lyrics had a notable impact on students' pronunciation performance.

Table 3. Normality Test (Shapiro–Wilk)

Group	Statistic	df	Sig.
Experimental	0.917	19	0.102
Control	0.931	19	0.180

Since the p-values for both groups are greater than 0.05, the data for each group is normally distributed. This justifies the use of parametric tests (independent and paired sample t-tests) in subsequent analysis.

Table 4. Homogeneity Test (Levene's Test)

Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
0.252	1	36	0.619

The significance value (0.619) is above 0.05, confirming that the data between groups are homogeneous. This fulfills the assumption for conducting an independent samples t-test for hypothesis testing.

Table 5. Independent Samples T-Test

Comparison	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Experimental vs Control	9.002	36	0.000	37.25

The p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ indicates a statistically significant difference between the experimental and control groups. The mean difference of 37.25 strongly suggests that students who learned pronunciation using TikTok English song lyrics outperformed those who learned via traditional methods.

Table 6. N-Gain Scores

Group	Mean N-Gain (%)	Interpretation
Experimental	58.40	Effective enough
Control	21.15	Ineffective

The experimental group achieved a moderate effectiveness level according to the N-Gain scale, while the control group's learning gain was minimal. This highlights the pedagogical potential of using TikTok English song lyrics to enhance EFL pronunciation.

Table 7. Questionnaire Results

Statement	Score	Percentage (%)	Category
1	93	98%	Very successful
2	83	87%	Very successful
3	93	98%	Very successful
4	91	96%	Very successful
5	92	97%	Very successful
6	71	75%	Successful
7	81	85%	Very successful
8	90	95%	Very successful
9	88	93%	Very successful
10	76	80%	Successful
11	83	87%	Very successful
12	80	84%	Very successful
13	87	92%	Very successful
14	87	92%	Very successful
15	87	92%	Very successful
16	80	84%	Very successful
17	85	90%	Very successful
18	77	81%	Very successful

19	90	95%	Very successful
20	80	84%	Very successful

$$Final\ Result = \frac{Total\ Score}{Total\ Item} \text{ X } 100\%$$
$$= \frac{1694}{20} \text{ X } 100\%$$
$$= 84.7\ \% \text{ (Very successful)}$$

The questionnaire results show a consistent trend of positive to very positive responses across all areas. The overall average score was 84.7%, categorized as "Very Successful." These findings suggest that students not only improved their pronunciation but also enjoyed and engaged actively with the TikTok-based learning method.

DISCUSSION

This study set out to explore the effectiveness of using TikTok English song lyrics as instructional media to improve pronunciation among junior high school students. The discussion below highlights the main findings, relates them to previous research, and outlines the pedagogical implications and limitations of the study. The quantitative results revealed that students who were exposed to English songs via TikTok demonstrated significant improvements in their pronunciation performance, particularly in rhythm, stress, and intonation. The experimental group's average post-test score increased markedly from 45.57 to 77.48, supported by an N-Gain score of 58.4%, categorized as "effective enough." In contrast, the control group showed only a modest improvement, with an N-Gain score of 21.15%, classified as "ineffective." In addition, the questionnaire findings indicated that students in the experimental group responded positively to the learning process, with an overall success perception rate of 84.7%.

These findings are consistent with earlier studies that support the use of music and digital media in enhancing pronunciation skills. Phoowong (2016) reported that English songs significantly improved learners' pronunciation in terms of prosodic features, while Ghanbari and Hashemian (2014) emphasized the motivational value of music in supporting pronunciation learning. In the context of digital platforms, Fitria (2023) and Muslimah (2022) found that TikTok videos had a positive impact on pronunciation practice, particularly by making learning more engaging for students. However, most previous research either focused on isolated short songs or random TikTok content, whereas the present study employed complete lyrics and a systematic instructional design within a formal classroom setting. This approach offers a more structured and pedagogically grounded use of digital content for pronunciation improvement.

The implications of these findings are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, the study supports the integration of digital-native tools, such as TikTok, into EFL pedagogy, especially for teaching pronunciation, which is often perceived as difficult and monotonous. Practically, the study provides a replicable model for EFL teachers to incorporate students' interests and daily media consumption habits into formal instruction. By selecting popular English songs and leveraging TikTok's audiovisual format, teachers can increase students' motivation while improving their pronunciation performance through repetitive listening, modeling, and guided practice.

Despite these promising results, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the duration of the treatment, spanning only six sessions, may not be sufficient to generate long-term retention or mastery of pronunciation skills. Future studies could explore longer interventions or longitudinal designs. Second, the study focused exclusively on rhythm, stress, and intonation, while other aspects of pronunciation such as articulation, vowel quality, or minimal pairs were not addressed. Including these in future research would provide a more comprehensive understanding of pronunciation development. Third, the sample size was relatively small and drawn from a single school, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Expanding the study across multiple schools and grade levels could yield more robust results. Lastly, while the questionnaire captured general student perceptions, more detailed qualitative data, such as interviews or reflection journals, could enrich the analysis and provide deeper insights into learners' experiences.

In summary, this study confirms that TikTok English song lyrics can serve as an effective and engaging medium for improving pronunciation in junior high EFL learners. The integration of familiar and enjoyable content into structured classroom activities not only enhances performance but also fosters positive attitudes

toward language learning. Future research is encouraged to build on these findings by refining the instructional model, exploring additional aspects of pronunciation, and expanding the scope of participants.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the effectiveness of using TikTok English song lyrics as a medium to improve students' pronunciation skills in an EFL junior high school context. Utilizing a quasi-experimental design, the findings revealed that students in the experimental group who were taught using selected English songs from TikTok achieved significantly higher pronunciation scores compared to those in the control group who received conventional instruction. The improvement was evident in the aspects of rhythm, stress, and intonation, with an N-Gain score of 58.4%, indicating moderate effectiveness. In addition, students expressed highly positive perceptions of the learning method, as reflected in the questionnaire results, with an overall success rating of 84.7%. These results support the growing body of research advocating for the integration of digital media and music in language learning. TikTok, with its audiovisual and culturally relevant content, offers unique opportunities to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes, especially in pronunciation, one of the most challenging skills for EFL learners. The study contributes to both theoretical and practical developments in the field of digital-assisted language learning. It provides a replicable instructional model for incorporating song-based TikTok content into pronunciation teaching. While the results are promising, further studies involving larger and more diverse samples, extended treatment durations, and more detailed pronunciation features are recommended to expand the scope and applicability of this approach.

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