The Use of Song in Teaching English Pronunciation

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Abstract—**Pronunciation is one of the important aspects of language learning. The bad pronunciation will influence the understanding of the listener to grab the message. Song is one of the media that can be used to teach pronunciation. By using songs, students can learn how the word is pronounced. Thus, this paper discusses how to improve pronunciation through song on the third-grade students of SDN Cangkringan 2 by using the classroom action research method. Total of the students in this class is 21 students on the beginner level. The researchers conduct a cycle in this study, which consisted of reconnaissance, planning, enacting the plan and observing, and reflection. The result of the study showed that songs could improve students' pronunciation and confidence. Even, one of the very shy students in the class is enjoying the lessons; she can pronounce the vocabulary correctly and confidently.**

Keywords— Teaching English, song, pronunciation

I. Introduction

Language plays an important role in communication. Someone is required to be able to convey language in communicating appropriately. This accuracy will not be obtained if someone has bad pronunciation. The issue of pronunciation is a long-standing problem, especially for someone who is learning a foreign language, for example, in English. English is a very different language compared to Indonesian or regional languages. The striking difference is in the pronunciation. In English, the written is not always the same as the spoken. The most contrasting example is on pronouncing the word "one" that pronounced as "wʌn".

From these differences, many of English learner in Indonesia think that pronunciation is difficult: especially for the beginner. The cause may be influenced by their first language; Indonesian or regional language. Thus, there are many of the beginner students that pronounce English vocabulary as written. Therefore, the teacher has an important role in dealing with the problem. The teacher needs to determine the right method and media to solve problems in teaching pronunciation. Indeed, in learning pronunciation, the goal is not to make students pronounce the word like the native speakers (Gilakjani, 2016). However, the aim is for the listener to understand the meaning of the spoken word.

The problem on pronunciation is also found in SDN Cangkringan 2 in the third-grade students. Many of the students are difficult to pronoun vocabulary in English. Moreover, they are also feeling shy when asked for pronoun the word one by one. Instead, when they are asked to pronoun the vocabulary together, they are very enthusiastic. Based on the observation, the researchers found that after students can pronounce the vocabulary correctly, they are not feeling shy anymore. Thus, it can be concluded that

students' pronunciation effect on self-confidence. Learners who have low shame and fear and high self-confidence will be more successful in language learning than the opposite (Krashen, 1982).

In this era, technology comes to make the learner easier to learn a language, including for learning pronunciation. For example, from the habit of listening to a song, someone can take advantage of learning the language. Someone can learn how to spell the vocabulary in the song correctly.

Song is one of the media that can be used for teaching pronunciation, and proven can increase students' pronunciation (Asmaradhani, Evendi, Mursid, & Gani, 2018; Moradi & Shahrokhi, 2014; Shehadeh & Farrah, 2016; Stanculea & Bran, 2015; Yusmita & Angraini, 2017). Moreover, the use of song as media for teaching can increase students' vocabulary, motivation, interest and students' self-confidence. It is in line with the affective filter hypothesis that explains that the bad stigma towards something (could be material, teacher, etc.) influencing students in achieving learning goals (Krashen, 1982). The use of song as media for learning, according to Murphey, is memorable, which work in short- and long-term memory in the brain (Millington, 2011). It means that the use of song can help the students to remember the vocabulary and the way to pronounce the word.

Therefore, the researchers will try to solve the pronunciation problems on the third-grade students of SDN Cangkringan 2. Thus, the steps applied in this research can be used as a reference by teachers or other researchers who have the same problem.

II. Pronunciation

The definition of pronunciation, according to the Oxford Dictionary, is how a language or a word or sound is spoken. Cook adds that pronunciation as the production of English sounds (Gilakjani, 2016). Then, pronunciation can be defined as how the vocabulary is voiced. Pronunciation is divided into two things; phonemes and suprasegmental features (Kelly, 2000). Below is a diagram of the features of pronunciation.
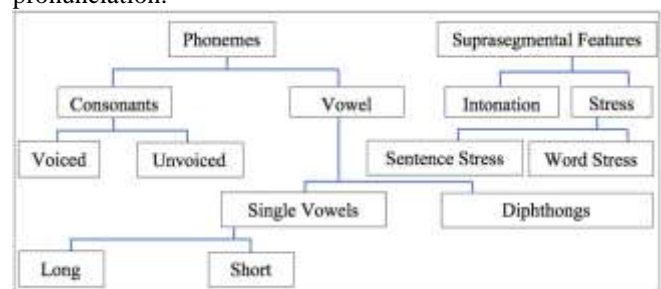

Fig. 1. Features of pronunciation (Kelly, 2000)

A. The importance of teaching pronunciation

Mastering pronunciation is important because it can facilitate in clarity, fluency in communication (Szyszka, 2017). Language learners also need to understand the importance of sound articulation, because if they ignore the articulation, the articulation features of the target language cannot be well received. Thus, the message conveyed by the learner will not reach the clarity for the interlocutor. Therefore, language learners need to learn or practice pronunciation. The teacher must pay special attention to the practice of pronunciation; by instructing and guiding students about how to learn pronunciation, including for independent learning (Szyszka, 2017).

Moreover, teaching pronunciation is important because it does not matter how good a learner's vocabulary or grammar is if no one can understand them; it same as nothing (Yates & Zielinski, 2009). Students with good pronunciation will be understood (in oral communication context) even if they make mistakes in the other language part (example grammar). Then, the students that have bad pronunciation will be hard to understand, even with the use of perfect grammar or additional expressing. Thus, other people will assume him as an incompetent language user (Yates & Zielinski, 2009).

B. Teaching Pronunciation

It has been explained previously that pronunciation learning is important because it can affect communication smoothness. In teaching pronunciation, the teacher can use the method that can make the student habituate to speak. Habituating the students to speak with the target language will make the student get a better pronunciation because the speaking practice can increase the students' knowledge in pronunciation (Szyszka, 2017). In other word, the students that have more time to speak will increase the student pronunciation and confidence (Miller in Szyszka, 2017). Thus, students who are less of pronunciation skills can cause a lack of self-confidence, fear or anxiety and can influence student attitudes towards learning pronunciation.

Some techniques can be used for teaching pronunciation such as drilling, pronunciation and spelling activities, taping students' English, listening activities and reading activities (Kelly, 2000).

- Drilling activity is a basic form of teaching pronunciation. The procedure in conducting drilling activity is by asking the students to repeat or imitate to the teacher's word. There are several kinds of drilling activity, consisted of choral drilling, chaining, open pair drilling and substitution drilling.
- Minimal pairs and related activities. In this activity, the teacher provides similar words that have different phoneme. From this activity, the students will learn; when they are doing mispronounce of the word, the meaning will change. Below is the example of the minimal pairs and related activity:
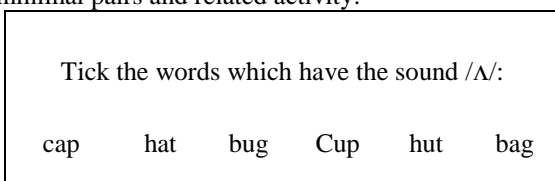
Tick the words which have the sound /ʌ/:

cap   hat   bug   Cup   hut   bag

Fig. 1. Minimal pair and related activities (Kelly, 2000)

- Pronunciation and spelling activities. In this activity, the student can learn the relation between the word that is spelt and pronounced. The teacher can use homographs and homophones in teaching. The example of using homograph activity is by providing the same spelling or written word but different pronunciation such as *Why don't you* <u>*read*</u> (v1*)* *this book?* And *I've already* <u>*read*</u> (v3) *it*. Then the example of using homophone activity is by providing the different spelling or written word, but same pronunciation, such as *write* and *right; there, their* and *they're*. After that, students asked to choose the correct word from the listening activity.
- Taping students' English. This activity can provide benefits if the teacher does it regularly. This taping activity can be made when students are involved in language practice activities, especially pronunciation activity. The activity that can be conducted by the teacher is taping students' pronunciation, after that comparing the sound with the native.
- Listening activities. In this activity, the teacher can use the media that allow students to listen and pronounce the language in the form of a narrative or conversation. Listening activities may bring authentic materials in the classroom because the material is designed by using normal speed and natural language.
- Reading activities. In this activity, the teacher gives the text to students. From the text, the teacher encourages the student to read aloud; then, the teacher can monitor the students pronunciation. Reading aloud provides an opportunity for students to learn the relationship between writing and pronunciation. Texts can be formed as poetry, poetry, songs, etc.

III. METHOD

This research is conducted through action research. Action research is the study to find problem-solving in the social situation. Some points need to be noted in conducting action research in the classroom context (Sanjaya, 2009).

- Action research is a process to find the solution and reflection following the issue that appeared in the classroom.
- The issues are the problems that appeared in the learning process in the classroom.
- It is started and finished by self-reflection, which conducted by the teacher.
- Action research is conducted by an action; it means that action research is not only for understanding the issue instead need reflection from the teacher.
- Conducted in a natural setting, it means that the action is conducted by the teacher in a real learning process and does not interfere with the planned learning program.

This research is conducted in SDN Cangkringan 2. The participants of the research are the students of SDN Cangkringan 2 who were in grade three. The student in this class consists of 21 students, and English is taught once a week.

There are some steps that researchers follow to conduct the research, consisted of reconnaissance, planning, enacting the plan and observing, and reflection (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2014). Reconnaissance is a critical part of action

research; this activity is carried out to identify problems that exist in a class. Then proceed with planning actions to fix existing problems. The next activity is carrying out the plan (this is the action stage) and observe the changes that occur during the action. Finally, the teacher reflects the achievements. Then, this research is completed when almost all of the students have been able to pronounce the vocabulary correctly. The ability of pronunciation referred to in this research is the ability to pronounce vocabulary from the written texts. The researcher only focuses on this area because understanding the written text of spoken pronunciation is the ability obtained from the continue activities.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Reconnaissance

In this step, the researchers conduct observation to find information about the issue related to the aim of the research. This step is performed before creating or planning a strategy to solve the issue. The results of the observations obtained some information that can be used as a basis for creating plans for solving the problems.

First, the third-grade students at SDN Cangkringan 2 are the early students of English learning. Almost all of the students only study English in the classroom. Thus, they do not understand much English vocabulary because English is used only in the learning process.

Second, the teacher (as the team of the researcher) often uses the game media to teach English at the third-grade students of SDN Cangkringan 2. This media always gets a positive response from the students. It means that the students like learning with using the media of games. However, the focus of the game is on the grammar and vocabulary mastering.

Third, the third-grade students of SDN Cangkringan 2 have less of the pronunciation mastery. It influenced their interest in trying to practice oral English skills; because of shame.

Fourth, the next lesson is to introduce the names of animals. Thus, students will be given the material about the names of animal, and almost of them have not understood or familiar with the names of the animal.

B. Planning

Griffee stated that the use of song could develop the human senses by taking knowledge and reducing stress (Džanić & Pejić, 2016), then motivation and interest in language can be increased (Kömür, Saraç, & Şeker, 2005). Wolf adds that the use of song also provides the material for listening (Kömür et al., 2005). Songs disperse the monotonous feelings that are created by the typical learning process, and it offers variations in the classroom.

Moreover, the teacher needs to choose the appropriate song for students, because when the students are exposed to their favourite song or enjoyable song, the students will get more advantages in the learning process. In the previous discussion has been conducting a little discussion about the affective filter, this filter plays an important role in language learning (Krashen, 1982). Thus, the use of song can break the barrier that inhibits student in receiving the material. Moreover, the use of the song in teaching language bring

various cultures into the classroom (Petrus, 2012). It is because language (including those contained in songs) and culture are inseparable.

Moreover, the procedure in using song for language teaching consisted by, set the context; introduce new vocabulary by visual aids, action, or focus; play or sing the song to make the students familiar; do further listening activity; work with pronunciation awareness such as intonation, rhythm and stress; invite students to listen, repeat and practice by joining and learn to sing; provide written text of the song to students. The text can be filling the gap, listen and sequence, illustrate, match pictures with a line, etc.; encourage students to compare the song with the similar type in their language; sing the song with the whole class (Brewster, Ellis, & Girard, 2002).

However, a big question in using the song as media for learning is, how to choose the appropriate song. The researchers claim that knowing the students' level can help the teachers to select the proper song. Moreover, knowing the students' level is essential to link with the vocabulary in the song.

Besides, the teachers need to link with the learning objectives. If the teachers only aim to improve the students' pronunciation for daily communication purpose, the lyric of the song need contain with the everyday vocabulary. The selected song should also provide with easy vocabulary that accordance with the students' level. Besides, the song that the teacher used must increase students' interest.

In this research, the researchers use the song with modified to the purpose of learning the animal vocabulary. This song is created based on the level of students; that is beginner level. They are early English learners and do not much understand about English pronunciation. Thus, the selected vocabulary for the lyric is easy. Moreover, the researchers add the instrumental music that has been adapted to fix with the lyric of the song. Below is the lyric of the song.

> **ANIMAL SONG**
> *Kucing* Cat | *Anjing* Dog | *Kupu-kupu* Butterfly
> *Ikan* Fish | *Katak* Frog | *Gajah* Elephant
> *Singa* Lion | *Tikus* Mouse | *Macan* Tiger | *Ular* Snake
> *Buaya* Crocodile | *Semut* Ant | *dan Burung* Bird
> ……
> Animal.. Animal..
> I really love animal
> They are cute.. They are nice..
> I love animal

Figure 2. Lyric of the song

Then, some points need to be considered by the teachers before using song for teaching English; (1) the teacher as a host should position him/herself as facilitator for students during song; (2) the teacher should give an explicit instruction and score to the students; (3) the teacher shouldn't blame the students if they can't respond to the song (Nanda & Narius, 2012).

Referring to the previous teaching suggestion, the step that is held by the researchers is as follow. The first step is introducing English vocabulary. This step is carried by sharing the song lyrics in the written form. It is better if the teacher has prepared the lyrics in printout form to save time; the researchers do. After that, the students listen to the song;

it aims to tell the students about the kind of song that they will sing. Then, the next is introducing the vocabulary in the song. This activity should not take a long time; it can take about 10 minutes. This activity aims to make the students know about the vocabulary that will be learned. The activity that the researchers does in this research is discussing the translation of the vocabulary together with students.

The next step is singing together. The students can look at the printout, so they can follow and understand what needs to be pronounced and how the pronunciation on the written word. This stage is repeated several times until the students understand how to pronounce the words; with a pleasant atmosphere. Furthermore, the teacher continues the activity by asking students to sing the song in a group to make a better understanding. It is intended that the teacher can analyse the ability of students in a smaller area.

To examine the students' understanding, the researchers use the pronunciation and spelling task. This stage is done by giving some answer choice that has the homophone or homograph words; the activity is adapted from the "animal" songs. The teacher pronounces the word and students find the word from the available choice. Before doing this activity, the teacher needs to keep away the printouts so that students cannot cheat. Below is an example.

Tick the words which have the sound [fɪʃ]:

Vish   Fihs   Fish

Fig. 3. Pronunciation and spelling activity

Or in sentence-level, as follows:

Tick the words which have the sound [ʌɪ lʌv ˈanɪməl]:

I live animel   I lov enamel   I love animal

Fig. 4. Pronunciation and spelling activity

Then the last step is asking the students to pronounce vocabulary independently. The students pronounce each of the lyrics in parallel. For example, the first student pronounces the words in the first line, then the second student on the second line, so on and back to the first line after the last lyric. Thus, every student in the class gets a chance to pronounce the word.

C. Enacting the plan and observing

After finished with the planning, the researchers continue to implement the plan. All the action planning in the previous discussion is divided into several steps. All the steps need to be implemented in the action step. The steps are available in the table below.

TABLE 1. STEP FOR ACTION

No.	Steps
1.	Introducing the vocabulary
2.	Sing a song
3.	Pronunciation and spelling task
4.	Pronounce independently

At this stage, the researchers observe the actions in the classroom. Moreover, the researchers provide a checklist sheet for guiding the implementation of the planning. From the results of the observation, the researchers got some information below.

First, all steps that have been arranged by the researchers are going well. All of the learning stages are implemented in the sequences according to the plan. The students can follow the step with the big difficulties.

Second, the use of song to learn pronunciation has a very positive impact. Almost all of the students have the courage and ability to pronounce or sing the lyrics correctly.

Third, students feel more interested in learning pronunciation by using a song rather than use the usual method. One of the timid students can follow the learning process with the better self-confidence; in this learning process. This student also can pronounce the vocabulary loudly enough and correctly.

Fourth, the results of the test showed that more than half of the total students in the third-grade class get the unsatisfying score. Many of the students choose the wrong answer; they selected the written vocabulary according to what the student hears. The figure below is the example; many of the students choose the "enimel" option.

Tick the words which have the sound [ˈanɪməl]:

Animel   Animal   Enimel

Fig. 5. Pronunciation and spelling activity

D. Reflection

The next step is reflection. From the results of the implementation, the researchers found the reflection. Many students still choose the wrong choice-answer in pronunciation and spelling task. Several causes influence this; the first cause is the error of instruction made by researchers in preparing the assignments. In the assignment sheet, the instruction is *"Pilihlah Jawaban berikut ini berdasarkan apa yang kamu dengar!"* translated as "Choose the following answer based on what you hear!". Therefore, some students choose the answers according to what they hear, even the wrong answers. This matter is discovered by the researchers, after checks the results of students' answers; in the class. Next reason is less of practice time; when the researchers conduct the research, it is the first time for the students in learning "animal" topic. Students are not habituating to the written word of the animal.

However, this research has reached the goal, in terms of spoken language or reading the vocabulary; the students have been able to do it very well (have proper pronunciation). They are brave or confidence in pronouncing the word, and the pronunciation is correct.

Nevertheless, students enjoy the learning process by using songs. Even, students ask for the instrumental music of "animal" to the researchers. The teachers must have creative abilities in teaching pronunciation through song. If the teachers do not find the appropriate song to use, the teachers need to create the lyric and add instrumental music to make students more interested in the songs.

V. CONCLUSION

Learning by using songs can provide many benefits. In the context of learning English, the song provides the

learning material for improving pronunciation and self-confidence. It is supported by this study that is conducted in the third-grade students of SDN Cangkringan 2. The way that can be followed by the other teachers is following bellow.

Teachers need to know the students' level. It is important especially to link with the vocabulary difficulty in the song lyric. Besides, the teachers need to consider with the learning objective, if the teachers aim to improve the students' pronunciation for daily communication purpose, the lyric of the song need contain with the everyday vocabulary.

After choosing the appropriate song with the learning objective and students' level, the teachers need to introduce English vocabulary at the beginning of the lesson. It aims to make the students understand with the lyric; the activity can be translating the vocabulary.

After the students understand the vocabulary, the next activity is singing the song together. The teachers can create a variation in conducting this activity, such as singing in a line of the students' desk; horizontally or vertically. This activity is undertaken in several times until the students can pronounce the vocabulary correctly.

Then, the teachers give the pronunciation task. This stage is done by providing some answer choice in the form of the homophone or homograph vocabulary. Then the teachers pronounce the vocabulary and students find the vocabulary from the available option. In this activity, the teachers need to consider the instruction. It needs to be clear; better if the teachers give an example before starting the task.

The last is asking the students to pronounce vocabulary independently. The students pronounce each of the lyrics in parallel.

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