A STUDY OF THE USE OF ENGLISH POP SONGS FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF PAKISTANI PRIMARY LEVEL ESL LEARNERS' ENGLISH PRONUNCIATION

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of English pop songs in enhancing the pronunciation skills of the primary-level learners in a semi-government English medium school, employing classroom action research. The study's data encompasses pretest and two posttest cycles, conducted on a conveniently sampled group of 20 ESL learners of Grade 5. Drawing on Kemmis and McTaggart's model, the tests analyse the pronunciation of the sampled learners before and after the proposed pop song treatment, administered over a 9-week period. The results of research procedures reflect significant differences in mean values after comparing and analysing paired t-tests of cycles 1 and 2, using SPSS version 23. The findings indicate a notable increase in percentages, rising from 50.8 in the pretest to 77.4 in posttest I and further to 83.6 in posttest II. These results affirm that the use of pop songs motivate learners to enhance their pronunciation skills and reinforce their ability to recall correct pronunciation. The overall results suggest a positive correlation between the integration of pop songs and the enhancement in English pronunciation among young ESL learners.

Key Words: Action Research; ESL Learners' pronunciation; English pop songs; Pronunciation Treatment; Kemmis and McTaggart's model

Introduction

In both the fields of ESL research and ESL teaching, pronunciation seems to have a relegated status, which even the advent of modern ELT teaching approaches/methodologies could not change much (see Murphy & Baker, 2015). Unlike what is generally believed, pronunciation is not just a speech production but, as the Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics (2002) explains, it is 'the way sounds are perceived by the hearer' (p. 492). Yates and Zielinski (2009) insist that teachers consider pronunciation as one of their goals for teaching ESL/EFL learners. They argue that how we pronounce words, phrases, and sentences communicates to others considerable information about who we are and what we are like as people. Therefore, in the context of ESL/EFL, it is important to instruct learners in pronunciation. In the Pakistani ESL context, English is taught as a compulsory subject from grade 1 to undergrad BS levels. However, the focus is primarily on reading comprehension and understanding grammar and vocabulary. This approach is in opposition to the standard sequential order of language learning/teaching, which normally commences with listening and speaking and, in turn, leads to developing reading and writing skills. Consequently, the Pakistani ESL learners' pronunciation, sometimes, hinders their ability to achieve the necessary level of intelligibility for effective communication in the English language. It is in this background that we conduct this study which is outlined below.

This study aims to investigate how the use of English pop songs in the primary level (Grades 1-5) ESL classroom setting can help enhance learners' pronunciation skills. For this

purpose, this classroom action research implements Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) model to enhance learners' pronunciation which it assesses via pre and posttests in accordance with the edition of Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2010). O'Brien (1998) describes action research as 'learning by doing'. Taking the research questions and the above-stated concepts into consideration, it explores the link between English pop songs and pronunciation, and proposes null (Ho) and alternative (Ha) hypotheses, as delineated below:

> Ho: There is no correlation between the use of English pop songs and enhancement in learning English pronunciation.
>
> Ha: There is a correlation between the use of English pop songs and enhancement in learning English pronunciation.

As stated earlier, the primary goal of the research is to measure the enhancement of primary-level (Grades 1-5) Pakistani ESL learners' pronunciation. The succeeding part of the study briefly reviews relevant literature on pronunciation, its teaching and the significance of using English pop songs in relation to the ESL learners' enhancement in English pronunciation.

Pronunciation is generally linked to better communication; however, its learning is beset with several challenges. Some of these relate to the high number of currently practised global varieties of English as well as the varieties of standard English, i.e., widely recognised as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood (Merriam-Webster, 2022). Pickett et al., (2005) consider standard English an ideal variety of language acceptable in academics and in many social situations. In this regard, in line with Beare (2019), we consider two main variants of standard English used worldwide: British and American. On the other hand, Levis (2005) presents two aspects: nativeness and intelligibility, where the former term refers to speech which sounds exactly like natives, whereas the latter is defined as speech which is more understandable (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 263). Morley (1991) emphasises intelligibility, where learners are not encouraged to speak like native speakers. Nevertheless, in this research we do not reflect on this aspect, as it is beyond the scope of this study. The Pakistani ESL learners' pronunciation seems to tilt towards the American rather than British English. Ali et al., (2020) argue that they find some features of American pronunciation relatively easy, such as not dropping the final /r/ sound. Also, American English has gained popularity due to its widespread culture and pop music among the Pakistanis. In this study, we consider the American standard English when we link English pop songs to enhance the sampled Pakistani ESL learners' English pronunciation.

Murphy as cited in Nunan (2003) identifies three historically primary orientations in discussing pronunciation teaching. The first emerged in the 1940s-1950s, characterised by a focus on '[l]isten carefully and repeat what I say' (p. 114), influenced by behaviourism theory. The second orientation, prominent in the 1960s-1970s, involved analysing sounds closely to enhance pronunciation clarity. The third orientation emerged in the 1980s and has continued till date under the influence of communicative and task-based language teaching. Murphy as cited in Nunan (2003) maintains that in the third phase, the emphasis shifted to '[l]et's start using these sounds in activities as soon as we can while I provide cues and feedback on how well you're doing' (p. 114). However, interestingly, learning and practising English pronunciation is still an underprioritised area, and the situation is not much different from when Kelly (1969), using the metaphor of Cinderella, described it. Notwithstanding the emergence of CLT approaches, Underhill (2010), as cited in Levis (2022), writes that '…pronunciation [still] is the Cinderella of language teaching. It has been neglected, and disconnected from other language learning activities' (p. 40). The ESL teachers still focus on teaching grammar, vocabulary and reading comprehension and do not include pronunciation. Harmer (2001), while identifying learners' pronunciation errors, maintains that teachers

neglect and compromise on learners' erroneous pronunciation because they have become habitual of it. He also blames it on the non-availability of suitable practising pronunciation material and the lack of time, besides teachers' beliefs that learners can learn pronunciation without proper instructions and practice.

Studies emphasise the need for active pronunciation instruction for ESL/EFL learners. Sase and Alsadae (2022)'s research on the Libyan learners highlights that the Libyan EFL learners tend to mispronounce lexical items and find it challenging to learn English pronunciation. These difficulties mainly arise due to the difference in their dialects and the interference of mother tongue. They substitute /b/ for /p/, and /f/ for /v/, and /r/ is pronounced as trill. Difficulties in pronunciation of the Pakistani ESL learners also arise due to their usual practice of reading English words letter by letter instead of sounds. Thus, the studies recommend instructions in pronunciation. Yates and Zielinski (2009) emphasise teachers to consider pronunciation as one of their goals to teach EFL/ESL learners the correct sounds, word stress and pronunciation together.

This study employs pop songs to investigate if these can help enhance the Pakistani ESL primary level (Grades 1-5) learners' pronunciation skills. There are multiple studies which favour the correlation of pop songs and language learning, mainly for pronunciation and vocabulary. Ridhayatullah, Qasim and Daud (2020)'s quasi-experimental research in which they included thirty-one learners in experimental group and thirty-two in controlled group was in this area. The experimental group was taught by using English pop songs unlike control group that was taught by regular teaching techniques. Oral tests and questionnaires were used to collect data and their performance was evaluated using pronunciation pretest and after song treatment posttest. The results of posttest conclude a statistical disparity between the final average score of both groups. Moreover, the z-test results show that learners have given far better pronunciation results after learning via songs. Therefore, the results of experimental group reflect higher average score with 81.51 in comparison to 60.37 average of the controlled group. Their z-score enhances as a result of the final test score, which is greater than the critical value of the statistics chart. The study concludes that the incorporation of songs in the classroom activities, enhances learners' English pronunciation. Rahmawati and Yunus (2020) carried out research intending to use songs to enhance learners' pronunciation at school in Malang, Indonesia. The research maintains that the Indonesian EFL learners find certain English sounds difficult to pronounce. Ghaith (2018) investigated the influence of children's songs on 97 Arabic speaking primary learners, with the aim to maximise their vocabulary as well as to make their pronunciation more intelligible. The result analysis of the experimental group reflects that the intervention of song is helpful in improving their English pronunciation. Other significant studies that employ songs for the same purpose and substantiate the above findings include those of McCormack et al. (2018), Tegge (2018), Shehadeh and Farrah (2016), Džanić and Pejić (2016). In the next section, we explain how this study was carried out.

II Methodology

This study undertook classroom action research by adopting Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) action research model to carry out pre and posttests. The rationale behind undertaking this framework was to enable learners to enhance their English pronunciation.

Fig 1. Adapted from 'The Action Research Spiral of Kemmis and McTaggart' (1988).
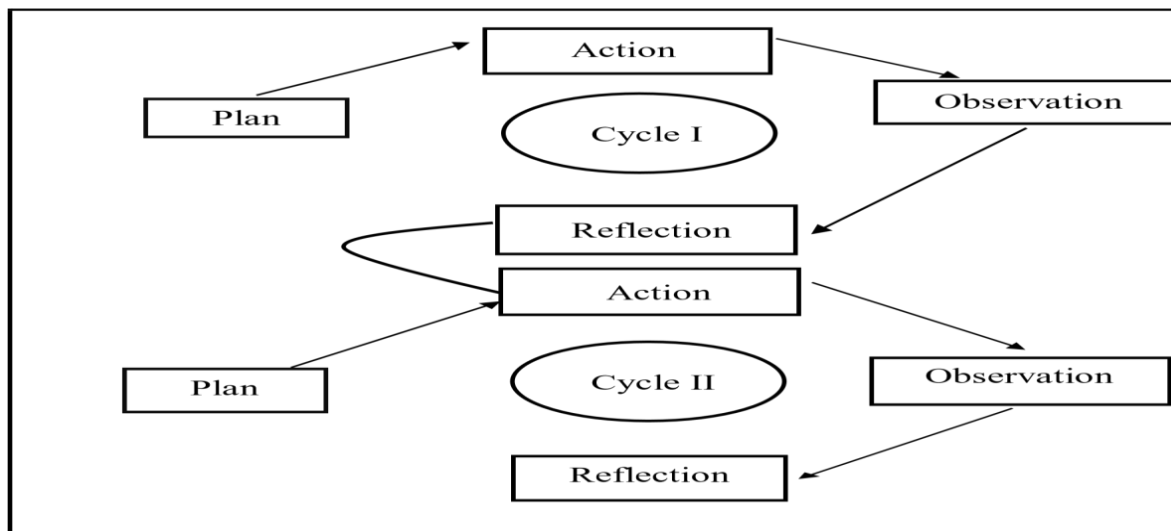
Kemmis and McTaggart's model involves two cycles including plan, act, observe and reflect to enhance the process (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988). The first cycle led to the second cycle, which allowed to enhance deficiencies observed during the first phase of the study. Lee & Lin (2015) maintain that music stimulates young learners' motivation and increases their attention span. Similarly, Lake (2002) believes that music can become a good way to make learners feel secure, motivated and confident.

1 Research Context, Participants and Sampling

This research was conducted at the workplace of one of the researchers in a semi-government English medium school, on a conveniently sampled 20 grade 5 ESL learners in the academic year 2022-2023. All sampled learners belonged to a mixed-ability group, with ages ranging from 10-12. Almost all of them came from a middle-class background, however, in their English pronunciation ran a streak of mother tongue (Punjabi). Some of them were found to hesitate while speaking English and they tended to stress unstressed syllables. Despite these differences, all of them seemed eager and motivated to focus on sounds by listening to songs in their classroom. This research completed in a period of nine weeks, comprising 2 sessions per week, where each session continued for 50 minutes in both cycles.

2 Selection of Songs

The study selected pop songs after obtaining learners' musical preferences, based on their experience of listening to English music, outside the classroom. According to de Souza (2014) a song is ideal for arousing a greater emotional response which in turn can lead to rich language input. Hence, we selected seven pop songs including *shake it off* and *twenty-two* by Taylor Swift, *let it go* by Idina Menzel, lyric video of *firework* by Katy Perry, *fight* by Rachel Platten, *how far I'll go* by Disney movie Moana, and lyric version of *treasure* by Bruno Mars. Since the learners belonged to the primary level (Grade-5), the focus of study was on teaching aspirated consonants, consonant clusters, ending –ed sounds and / ɒ / and / ɔ: / and /ə/ vowels sounds with correct stress. The song *shake it off* is an upbeat song and serves the opportunity for learners to learn aspirated /p/ sound. The song how *far I'll go* has the clarity of pronunciation with a lot of vocabulary and provides a medium for teaching correct stress pattern of words along with aspirated /t/, /k/ and /p/. Similarly, this song helps with smooth pronunciation of consonant clusters as in words like strong and pride. It also assists in pronouncing difficult words like island, staring and beyond along with many contractions. *Treasure* by Bruno Mars works for practicing the /ʒ/ sound as it repeats the word treasure

several times throughout the song. The lyric video of the song *firework* by Katy Perry can help learners with consonant clusters starting with pl, dr, sp, scr, bl and few others. There is a further possibility to enhance the ending –ed sound and triphthong, for instance, fire. Another Disney song *let it go* is a fun way to teach vowels / ɒ / and / ɔ: / and shortening of unstressed syllables as in words like mountain and kingdom. *Fight* song similarly fulfils the purpose of teaching all the above-mentioned features. It assists in teaching consonant clusters such as in words like small, scream, strong, prove and play; aspirated sounds /p/, /k/ and /t/ in can, power, take, tonight, care, and many examples of vowels as in all and ball.

3 Data Collection and Instruments

This research used pre and posttests for collecting data. Pretest was used to analyse learners' pronunciation before the intervention of songs, which was recorded and transcribed, using the American version of Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary's (2010) pronunciation for the identification of learners' pronunciation mistakes. The research involved two posttests which were used to analyse and measure learners' pronunciation enhancement after the intervention. The first posttest was conducted in the first cycle of research and the results of this test helped frame the second intervention in the second cycle. Posttest II was the last step of research which evaluated learners' enhancement by comparing the results of posttest I and II. They were assigned scores according to the rubrics designed for their pronunciation assessment. Both pre and posttests were evaluated quantitatively.

4 Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using quantitative method, to assess learners' recorded pronunciation in the testing phase. This phase included one pretest and two posttests, as per the assessment rubric, leading to the comparison of both test results by calculating their mean score. In Cycle 1, 20 words were used with 5 maximum score each (see Appendix 1). The rubric for the assessment of pronunciation considered the following 5 points: pronounce correct sound with correct stress (5 points); correct sounds but incorrect stress (4 points); correct but elongated sound with incorrect stress (3 points); focus on letters instead of sounds (2 points) and clarity of voice but incorrect sound and stress (1 point). The success indicator to pass pretest and posttest was to get minimum 70 marks that makes it up to 70% of the learners' performance. Similarly, overall research was considered successful if at least 70% learners achieved this set score at the end of both research cycles. The results were further measured against the maximum score (100) of English subject in the sampled school.

The procedure included analysing learners' pronunciation, transcribing it for codifying errors, scoring as per rubrics designed, calculating the scores, tabulating the data, comparing the results of tests conducted in first cycle, comparing the first and second posttests, and interpreting the findings. To find the normal distribution of each data set, the Shapiro-Wilk test (normality test) was conducted using SPSS version 23. Furthermore, a single group design paired t-test was used to assess the significant difference in pronunciation after song treatment.

III Results

1 Cycle I: Pretest and Posttest I

The pretest was conducted to analyse sampled ESL learners' pronunciation by recording their reading of selected excerpts. This test comprised 20 items, with each item carrying 5 marks as per rubric, making it a total of 100 marks (see Appendix II). The learners found it hard to pronounce vowels, consonant clusters, aspirated consonant sounds, ending -ed sounds and elongate unstressed syllables. The Table 1 below presents an analysis of the mispronounced sounds along with the learners' list. The table is divided into four categories of vowels, consonants, ending –ed sounds and consonant clusters.

Table 1. Difficult Sounds for Learners in Pretest: Cycle I.

Cycle I	Pretest			
Learners	Vowels	Consonants	Ending sounds	Consonant Clusters
Learners 1, 5, 7, 20	ɔ, ə, ɒ, ɛ, aɪə	/ʒ/, /p/, /t/, /k/,	-ed sounding /t/	sc, st
Student 8, 4, 13, 11, 19	ɔ, ə, ɒ, ɛ, aɪə	/ʒ/, /p/, /t/, /k/,	-ed sounding /t/	sc, st
Student 2, 15, 16, 9	ɔ, ə, ɒ, ɛ, aɪə	/ʒ/, /p/, /t/, /k/,	-ed sounding /t/	sc, st
Student 3, 12, 18, 10	ɔ, ə, ɒ, ɛ, aɪə	/ʒ/, /p/, /t/, /k/,	-ed sounding /t/	sc, st
Student 14, 17, 6	ɔ, ə, ɒ, ɛ, aɪə	/ʒ/, /p/, /t/, /k/,	-ed sounding /t/	sc, st

The table illustrates twenty learners categorised into five groups, according to common mistakes. It also lists frequently mispronounced words in each category. The non-strikethrough sounds in all categories of the table are those which they could not pronounce correctly, whereas strikethrough sounds are those which they could do. All learners mispronounced the ending –ed sound which gave the final /t/ sound as in words stopped, laughed and talked. They pronounced the aspirated consonants /p/, /t/, /k/ as unreleased sound. Some of them seemed to pronounce one of these with release of air but later forgot to pronounce other aspirated sounds in a similar manner. They faced problems with vowels such as /ɔ/, /ə/, /ɒ/, /ɛ/ and a triple vowel sound /aɪə/. They found the pronunciation of consonant clusters challenging due to the influence of their MT. For instance, /sʌkri:m/ instead of /skri:m/ and /sʌtrɒŋ/ instead of /strɒŋ/ Learners stressed unstressed syllable in the word *comfortable* by uttering the word letter by letter as /kʌmferteɪbl/. The following figure shows the overall percentage of each mispronounced sound group within the scale of hundred:
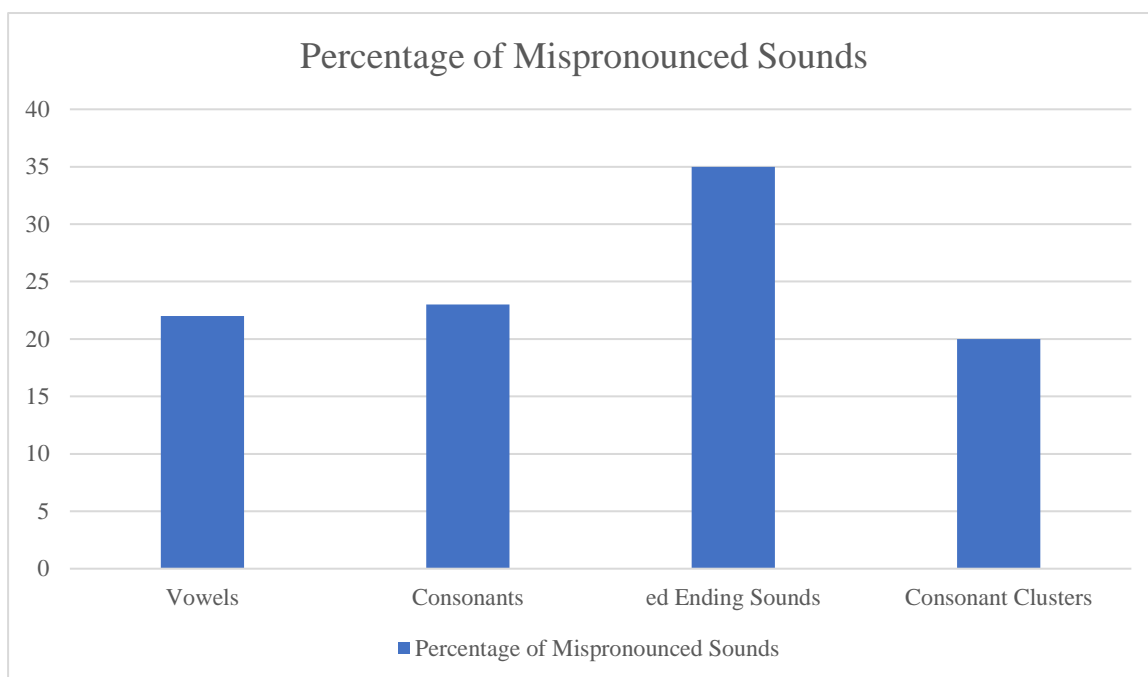
Fig. 2. Graphical representation of mispronounced sounds.

The bar graph of the above table describes the results of the sounds with the highest to lowest percentage. The sound group with the maximum degree of mispronunciation was –ed ending sound with the fractional percentage of 35%, followed by consonants with its percentage value of 23%. As highlighted, vowels comprise 22% of the overall graph with its minor difference of 1% with its antecedent, and consonant clusters take up the remaining portion with its fraction of 20%.

The intervention commenced by the planning phase, which included lesson planning, arranging teaching aids (multimedia/LED screens) and the treatment via selected pop songs. This action stage continued for a period of three weeks and concluded with a posttest. For treatment, the class was arranged in a multimedia room where learners could watch visuals and lyrics on an LED screen instead of merely listening to audios. The lesson began with the close listening activity, where learners worked in pairs and listened to the song without any lyrics by focusing on one specific sound at a time, for instance, aspirated /p/ sound. Afterwards, they were handed over the lyrics of the song in printed form and asked to mark the features they were focusing on by playing the song again. At this stage, learners could speak along as this helped them imitate the sounds they were listening for. Also, it provided them a chance to compare the marked features with those particular sounds which were being pronounced in the song. The lyric video was played twice or thrice and the learners practised with the researcher's assistance. The 1st posttest was conducted after three weeks. It compared the mean difference of both tests indicating the success rate of cycle I which assisted in designing the second posttest of cycle II.

Table 2: Comparison of Cycle I: Pretest and Posttest I.

	Pretest	**Posttest 1**	**Difference**
Combined Score	1016	1548	532
Mean	50.80	77.4	-
Highest Score	67	89	-

Lowest Score	34	68	-
Success Percentage	50.8	77.4	26.6

Table 2 compares the first research cycle which illustrates the difference in learners' pronunciation scores after their song treatment. The difference of performance increased by the value of 30 in the latter test, which meant that songs enhanced their articulation of different sounds. There was an apparent difference between the total score as it soared to 1548 in posttest I from the previous 1016 in pretest. Correspondingly, the average reached 77.4 from 50.8. There was an increase in the highest score as well, which was 89 in posttest in comparison to 67 in pretest. The posttest 1 met the criteria for passing the test by attaining above 70% at 77.4%. Individual performance rate increased in posttest with 15 learners achieving more than 70%. This made posttest a notable success in correcting learners' pronunciation via songs which significantly enhanced by 26.6%.

2 Descriptive Statistics of Cycle II

The cycle II started in the sixth week, repeating all the four steps of the cycle I which were meant to work on learners' faulty pronunciation that had persisted despite cycle I treatment. At this stage, a few changes were made i.e. in methodology, songs and classroom seating arrangement for the better execution of treatment. The treatment phase continued for another three weeks leading to second posttest in the ninth week. Lastly, the reflection stage compared both cycles by calculating the mean of both posttests, utilising t-test to decide if the intervention of pop songs enhanced learners' English pronunciation.
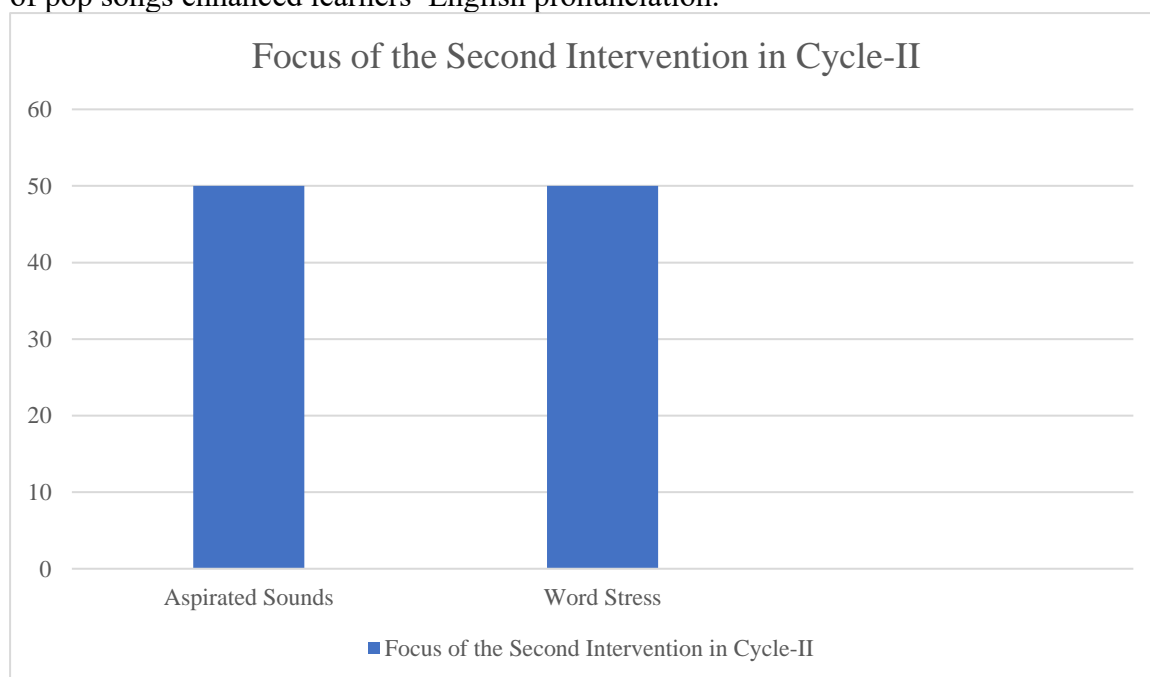

Fig. 3. Focus of the second intervention in cycle II.

3 Posttest II

After the second posttest, learners' scores were compared with the first posttest to identify the success rate of overall action research (see Appendix III). Table 3 presents the comparison of both posttests.

Table 3. Comparison of posttest I and II.

	Posttest I	Posttest II	Difference
Combined score	1548	1672	124
Mean	77.4	83.6	-
Highest score	89	93	-
Lowest score	68	69	-
Success Percentage	77.4	83.6	6.2

Table 3 shows the scores of posttests I and II. The combined score of posttest II (1672) in comparison with posttest I score (1548) represents that the learners improved considerably in posttest II. Similarly, the mean of both tests reflects variance from 77.4 to 83.6; the highest score of posttest II was 93 in contrast with 89 in posttest I. Comparison of individual performance revealed that eighteen learners achieved above 70% score in cycle II than in cycle I. However, one student, despite achieving more than 80 percent in second posttest, scored less than his first posttest with a difference of 4. Only one student obtained less than 70 percent. Cycle II has the percentage rate of 83.6% which exceeded with a difference of 6.2%. Hence, both cycles have significantly enhanced learners' pronunciation skills.
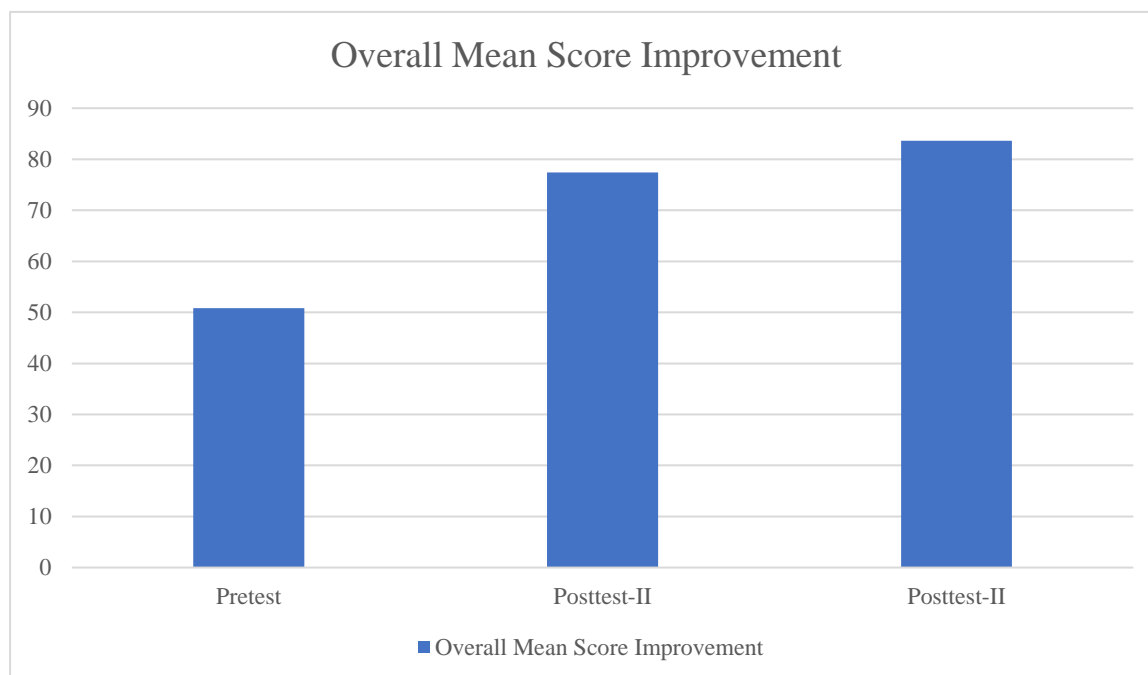

Fig. 4. Learners' overall mean score enhancement in each test.

The graph 4 shows the average performance of each phase of the research starting from pre to posttest I and posttest II. It is noticeable that learners' performance attained maximum success rate during the second posttest.

4 Normality Test

After comparing the test results of both phases, normality test and t-tests were run in SPSS

version 23 to analyse normality of data as well as to measure the significance of the mean values. To determine the normality, Shapiro-Wilk test was used for pre and posttests. According to the results of the normality test, the p value is greater than .05 which means that the test has not shown any evidence of non-normality. The data sets are normally distributed for pretest and posttest of first action research cycle. Table 4 displays the values of each test.

Table 4. shows Normality Test.

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pretest	.135	20	.200*	.962	20	.585
Posttest I	.132	20	.200*	.937	20	.213
Posttest II	.173	20	.118	.939	20	.230

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

5 T-test

Paired t-test was performed to find the significant mean difference of dependent groups. The t-test showed the difference of mean, standard deviation and mean error between the two pairs of action research. The following hypotheses were tested:

Ho: There is no difference between the means of tests in both research cycles.
Ha = There is a difference between the means of tests in both research cycles.

Table 5. Paired samples statistics of Pretest and Posttest I.

Pair 1	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pretest	50.8000	20	9.12832	2.04116
Posttest	77.4000	20	8.75034	1.95664

Table 6. Paired samples statistics of Posttest I and Posttest II.

Pair 2	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Posttest I	77.4000	20	8.75034	1.95664

| Posttest II | 83.6000 | 20 | 6.87788 | 1.53794 |

After getting the t-value, results of two-tailed paired t-test were shown via curved-bell diagram. The t-value after using the formula came 25.4, (df) degree of freedom = (n-1) → =19 and confidence interval of bell curve was analysed at 95% which was 0.05. As per rule, t-test holds the power to reject the null hypothesis if the value of t-statistics **i**s greater than the degree of freedom on t-table. In case otherwise, it fails to reject the null-hypothesis.
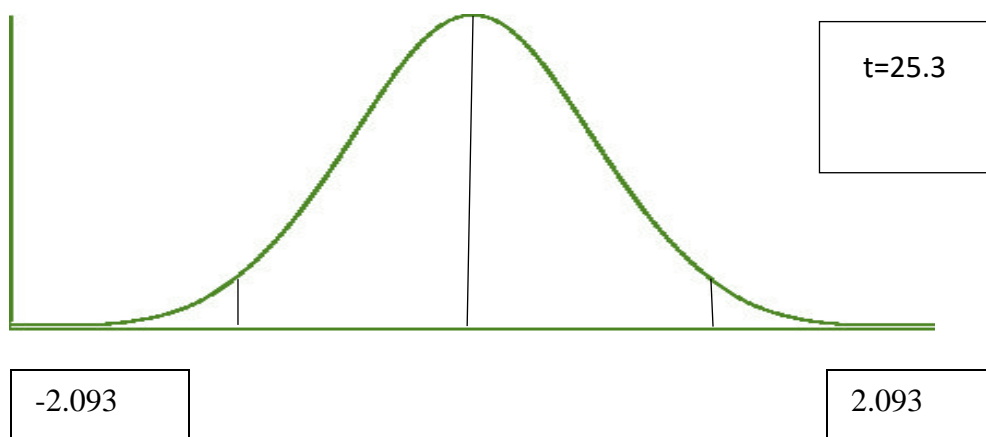

t=25.3

-2.093   2.093

Fig. 5. Bell-curve graph for t-statistics of pre and posttest I.
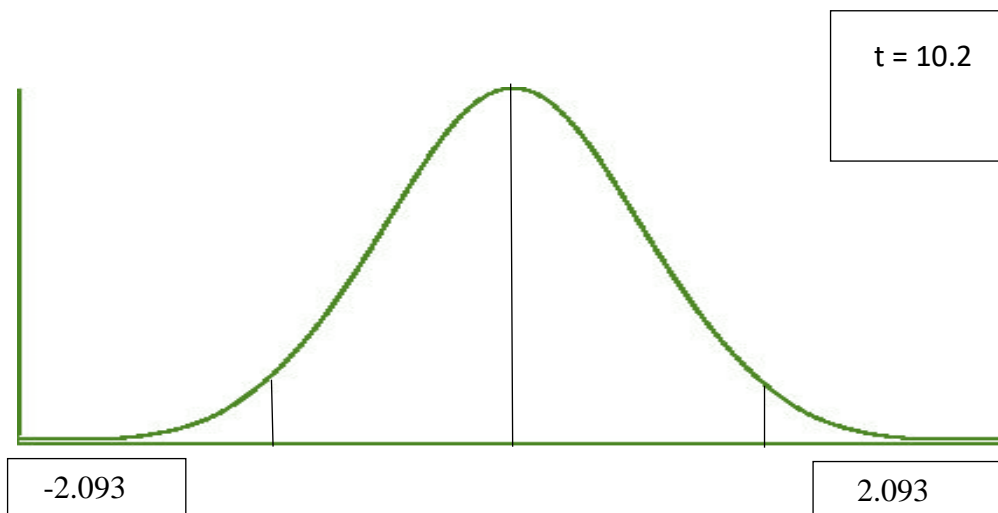

t = 10.2

-2.093   2.093

Fig. 6. Bell-curve graph for t-statistics of posttest I and II.

According to the graph, t-value is 10.2 which again is greater than the t-statistics value of t-table. After analysing the both bell-curves, it can be seen that t- values are beyond the value of 2.093, hence it concludes that tests in both cycles show considerable difference between their mean values. Therefore, these observations are sufficient to reject the null hypothesis.

IV Discussions and Conclusion

This action research was conducted following Kemmis and McTaggart's model to investigate the effectiveness of English pop songs for enhancing primary-level ESL learners' pronunciation. This model centres around two cycles involving plan, act, observe and reflect steps to enhance the learning process. During Cycle I, a pretest was conducted to diagnose and analyse sampled ESL learners' pronunciation problems, which led to the intervention by treating their pronunciation issues with pop songs and conducting the 1ˢᵗ posttest to see the results. The mean values show the significance of treatment, as the mean value of students' pronunciation scores increased from 50.8 to 77.4, with a total difference between the combined scores of 532. Notably, the highest score in the pretest was 67, whereas the lowest in the posttest was 68. Cycle II involved further intervention, and the posttest II, to see if pop songs helped learners enhance their pronunciation, which was the aim of this action research. The scores improved progressively as the mean value reached 83.6, with the total difference between the combined score being 124. Here, the lowest score was 69 and the highest increased from 89 to 93. The lowest scores in all tests were not obtained by the same students; rather, there was no student who maintained the same score or scored less than the previous test.

During the intervention weeks of Cycle I, learners appeared more relaxed in the English class compared to other lessons. However, initially, it proved challenging for them to focus on specific sounds for learning because songs used to be just a source of entertainment for them. Similarly, they found identifying lyric words challenging while listening to music because they focused more on music than words. It is evident from their scores that all 20 students scored below 70%, with the highest reach score of 67 and the lowest of 34. As one of the aims of the song treatment was to make them feel comfortable, they gradually settled down and started getting used to the beat and melody of songs. When some of them began recognizing songs, they started to sing along and shared their opinions. Also, they began liking upbeat songs, especially Disney pop songs. Another factor that made them feel happier was that the lessons were now more activity-based, which stimulated their interest in learning pronunciation. For the convenience of students, songs were played twice or thrice, and the repetitive listening helped them shift their focus from songs to words. Also, at this stage, we instructed them to use songs as a warm-up activity, where they would enjoy themselves for a while and then focus on specific word sounds. This made it easier to direct their attention to particular words/sounds. Thus, all twenty sampled students participated in their pronunciation lessons and they found them enjoyable and rewarding. Schoepp (2001) states that young learners associate them more with enjoyable teaching activities than the quotidian ones, making learning fun. Hence, the student who scored 34 initially improved it to 68, and the highest scorer achieved 89. Only 5 students scored less than 70, where the score range was between 57 and 69, whereas in the pretest, the range of all student's scores was between 34 and 67, with only 50% falling between 50 and 69. Similarly, during the practicing stage, students were more involved in competing with each other in identifying word sounds and repeating them with classmates. However, at the end of post-test I, some students displayed signs of nervousness and anxiety. Due to this, they unconsciously stressed some syllables or produced forced pronunciation of some sounds, which contributed to their inability to achieve full marks.

During the intervention weeks of Cycle II, the main focus was on aspirated sounds and word stress. The difference in percentage after the treatment phase decreased from 26.6 % (in posttest I) to 6.2 % (in posttest II), as maximum students (19 out of 20) secured above 70 % scores. Also, the overall mean score in enhancement reached from 77.4 to 83.6. The appreciation in score range was due to the motivation and interest of the students. The evidence is that they were offered the option to skip the activity if they felt exhausted or nervous, but none of them did so. At this stage, the learners were also assigned songs to listen to at home,

for at least ten minutes, to maximise their performance. Students were likewise encouraged not to be afraid during the testing phase and to take it as a fun class activity. One more significant observation at this point was that no student absented themselves from the tests when the procedure was taking place. Their interest continued growing with each passing lesson, and then even those students who were hesitant in the beginning started participating confidently. We ascribe this positive attitude to the instruction via songs, which caught their attention and that improved their motivation level.

To further validate the results of the study, paired sample t-tests were conducted. In the first pair of t-tests, with posttest I as an independent variable and pretest as a dependent variable, the t-value of 25.3 showed a significant rise from its degree of difference at 19. The critical t-value from a standard t-distribution table for a significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) and 19 df is 2.093. The statistics prove that the t-value is greater than the critical t-value. In the second pair of t-tests, with posttest II as an independent variable and posttest I as a dependent variable, the t-value of 10.2 also showed a significant rise from its critical value of 2.093. The results of sampled students suggest that pop songs provide the right atmosphere, which reinforce their motivation, enhance their mood and engage them in pronunciation lessons to achieve the learning outcomes.

To conclude, this study aimed to measure the effects of English pop songs by linking them to teaching English pronunciation. While planning this classroom action research, the study took insight from several studies of similar kinds (e.g., Ridhayatullah et al. 2020; Rahmawati & Yunus, 2020). Beaton (1995) maintains that music can empower learners to experience real-world communication by providing instances of rhythmic, slow and repetitive speech. Referring to Carolyn Graham- a renowned trainer at Harvard, Cakir (1999) states the benefits of employing jazz music to teach rhythm and stress patterns of English. They consider the inclusion of music a constitutive element for language learning if rightly incorporated into classroom teaching practices. According to the null hypothesis of the current research, songs do not coordinate in improving young learners' English pronunciation. Quantitative data findings were analysed and discussed to find an answer to this, and the results of pre and posttests of both cycles were compared. They revealed the significant difference in students' scores with each progressing level. The research showed a substantial enhancement in the learners' overall mean value from 50.8 in pre-test to 83.6 in post-test II. Also, the paired samples' t-test values of 25.3 and 10.2, with a greater difference from the critical value of 2.093, depict the same result and validate the findings of the research by Ridhayatullah et al. (2020). They affirm that incorporating songs into teaching brings a significant development in the pronunciation of students. It also confirms the findings of Ara (2009)'s study revealing that the songs provide an interesting drill for imitation, subsequently resulting in learners picking the correct pronunciation by repeating sounds. Even though in the beginning, the L1 hinderance of the Punjabi language was evident, but unlike the observations shared by Rahmawati and Yunus (2020) in teaching the Indonesian students with the use of songs, the students in this study overcame the problem of pronouncing difficult words noticeably in Cycle II. Also, playing songs in the classroom was found to be similar to playing games, which afford students an energetic atmosphere where young ESL learners can feel more willing to participate. Songs seem to create a bond of learning with the students through classroom action research, which enhances their English pronunciation. Since the findings of this quantitative study showed positive results, it rejected the null research hypothesis. Thus, it has been concluded that pop songs provide a fair context for improving ESL learners' pronunciation.

The study further suggests that English language teachers can either use pop songs or songs of any other genre as per students' preference to enhance their language learning

experience. Nevertheless, they must be careful while selecting the songs and be more creative in planning classroom activities involving maximum student practice.

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Appendix 1

Table 1: Analysis of learners' pronunciation cycle I

Sr. no.	Words	Learners' Pronunciation	Correct Pronunciation
i.	Comfortable	/kʌmferteɪbl/	/kʌmftəbl/
ii.	Breakfast	/brekfa:st/	/brekfəst/
iii.	Women	/wɒmen/	/wɪmɪn/
iv.	Hot	/ha:t/	/hɒt/
v.	Stopped	/stɒpd/	/stɒpt/
vi.	Rushed	/rʌʃd/	/rʌʃt/
vii.	Helped	/hɛlpd/	/hɛlpt/
viii.	Body	/ba:di/	/bɒdi/
ix.	Fire	/faɪr/	/ˈfaɪər/
x.	Pleasant	/pli:znt/	/pleznt/
xi.	Treasure	/ˈtraeʒ.ər/	/ˈtreʒər/
xii.	Screaming	/sʌkri:miŋ/	/skri:miŋ/
xiii.	Ability	/æbɪlɪti/	/əbɪləti/
xiv.	People	/pi:pɑl/	/ˈpi:pəl/
xv.	Coffee	/ka:fi/	/kɒfi/
xvi.	All	/a:l/	/ɔ:l/
xvii.	Bury	/buri/	/ˈbɛri/
xxviii.	Strong	/sʌtrɒŋ/	/strɒŋ/
xix.	maintain	/me:inteɪn/	/meɪnˈteɪn/
xx.	Measure	/maiʒure/	/ˈmʒə/

Appendix 2

Table 2: Comparison of the first cycle: Pretest and posttest I

Sr. no.	Learners	Pretest	Posttest 1	Difference
i.	Student 1	46	77	31
ii.	Student 2	57	79	22
iii.	Student 3	65	87	22
iv.	Student 4	55	82	27
v.	Student 5	34	68	34
vi.	Student 6	47	68	21
vii.	Student 7	44	72	28
viii.	Student 8	67	89	22
ix.	Student 9	50	78	28
x.	Student 10	65	87	22
xi.	Student 11	50	84	34
xii.	Student 12	53	79	26
xiii.	Student 13	45	77	32
xiv.	Student 14	45	69	24
xv.	Student 15	39	68	29
xvi.	Student 16	49	70	21
xvii.	Student 17	61	89	28
xviii.	Student 18	58	86	28
xix.	Student 19	44	82	38
xx.	Student 20	42	68	26
	Combined score	1016	1548	532
	Mean	50.80	77.4	-

Highest score	67	89	-
Lowest score	34	68	-

Appendix 3

Table 3: Comparison of Posttest I and II

Sr. no.	List of Learners	Posttest I	Posttest II	Difference
i.	Student 1	77	86	9
ii.	Student 2	79	91	12
iii.	Student 3	87	90	3
iv.	Student 4	82	88	6
v.	Student 5	57	69	12
vi.	Student 6	68	77	9
vii.	Student 7	72	79	7
viii.	Student 8	89	93	4
ix.	Student 9	78	84	6
x.	Student 10	87	92	5
xi.	Student 11	84	88	4
xii.	Student 12	79	84	5
xiii.	Student 13	77	86	9
xiv.	Student 14	69	76	7
xv.	Student 15	68	81	13
xvi.	Student 16	70	75	5
xvii.	Student 17	89	85	-4
xviii.	Student 18	86	89	3
xix.	Student 19	82	87	5

xx.	Student 20	68	72	4
	Combined score	1548	1672	124
	Mean	77.4	83.6	-
	Highest score	89	93	-
	Lowest score	68	69	-