

**USING SMULE APPLICATIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' PRONUNCIATION AT  
EIGHTH GRADE OF SMP MUHAMMADIYAH 12 PACIRAN**

Adria Rosy Starrinne

M. Faris Kholid

Universitas PGRI Ronggolawe Tuban

**ABSTRACT**

The nature of this study is action research. This study aimed at improving the students pronunciation by using smule applications in the process of teaching and learning. The subject of this research were 41 students of class VIII-G in SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Paciran. The research instrument was collected through test form. The data were in the form of pre-test and post- test. The researcher used quantitative method to analyzing the data. The result of data analysis were obtained from pre-test up post-test. The average of study result gained in pre-test with average value was 3.74, whereas in post-test after applying smule applications had enhanced 5.91. From the research findings, it showed that using smule media could improve the students' pronunciation. Overall, the finding of the study indicates that: (1) using smule application was able to improve the students pronunciation. (2) Teaching pronunciation by using music technology such as smule gives positive influences on students' pronunciation ability (3) The use of smule in teaching pronunciation can motivate students to learn pronunciation. Students can also learn to use smule without having to be accompanied by the teacher, because students can use smule media wherever and whenever. Because smule media includes singing as the main activity which is becoming a hobby of some students.

Keywords: Smule, music, technology, learning development

## I. INTRODUCTION

There are four skills that should be mastered in learning English namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is considered as an important skill to be accomplished by students. The goal is to motivate and prepare students to be able to learn English well.

The reason why the junior high school level English teaching should also pay attention to pronunciation because of perceived teaching junior high school level is quite difficult. The proper technique to create an effective English teaching is to emphasize the pronunciation acquisition capabilities needed to help students learn without fear. Regarding the communicative approach to use in teaching pronunciation, it should be supported by other elements in the teaching of English.

Pronunciation usually becomes a problem for some EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students. They cannot pronounce a word with correct phonetic rules. That problem can cause misunderstanding in a conversation and the conversation might not go so smoothly. Some of them who already understand the problem are usually begin to be afraid of talking in English because they do not want other people to hear their faulty pronunciation. The impact of it, as a student, they cannot improve their speaking ability. As a communicator, when they meet a native speaker, they cannot easily express their ideas. Therefore, an English teacher cannot neglect the importance of pronunciation teaching and learning as an independent subject in English classroom, instead of a mere additional element of speaking subject.

Teaching English to teenagers is not easy but needs more patience. The process of teaching for young learners is different from the process of teaching adults. It needs such method to make it easy in delivering the materials. Fun and innovative activities are now widely used in an English classroom. It is a task of a teacher to find attractive and authentic tasks and bring them into the classroom to make the learning process become more enjoyable. However, sometimes it becomes a challenge because it is not easy to track down good and effective materials. Oftentimes, teachers and students are fastened with an oldschool procedure which can be good but might be too monotonous for students.

For young learners or teenager, English is the first foreign language to be learned, and the students just learn simple English pattern. As the secondary language, the students have very limited knowledge of English. Sometimes it creates

problems in learning process, especially pronunciation, the first is a genuine pronunciation problem, which exists when the learners have difficulty in making the required sound to imitate. The researcher has observed that they tend to have problems in pronouncing, for example “Sleep” (,sli:p), “tree” (tri), “true” (,tru:) in which these do not exist in Bahasa Indonesia. Secondly, a pronunciation problem occurs when the sound is not really difficult as such, but the learner is misled by the spelling. For example, the words “up” [ʌp], “tea” [ti:], “duck” [dʌk], “cup” [kʌp], “see” [si:], and “sing” [siŋ] are not pronounced as they are written, so learning pronunciation is not easy for the students.

In connection with the above problem, the research decided to find out the ways to solve this problem and to improve pronunciation skills' of eighth grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Paciran through music applications. Smule music application is believed to stimulate and guide students to improve their pronunciation. Almost everyone likes to listen to music. Various types of music with a variety of very diverse songs could easily get and of course with a very affordable price. Especially now, it is supported by a wide range of facilities e.g mobile phone that can be used to play songs anywhere and anytime.

In the development of English language skills, the music has a huge positive impact. In other words, we can develop our English language skills by listening to the song. Of course, songs with English lyrics. There are so many application benefits Smule music in English language learning, such as developing the ability of listening, writing, reading, and speaking.

Pronunciation ability is our ability in the way of English pronunciation. Through songs using lyrics in English is a very enjoyable way of learning. We will not feel bored to learn how to use English pronunciation by Smule.

Based on the experience of some English teachers, and it is supported by statement of Abdulrahman Al-Faridi, English songs can help teachers in creating an active, creative and fun learning (Alfaridi, 2006), the researcher tried to use music in improving students pronunciation.

Singing and music is used as a technique in the process of learning English. The music has a variety of content elements in it can be used as one of the facilities to develop the cognitive abilities of children. *Singing* teaches phonics and helps *the children* develop early language skills. Children love to sing, as they like to listen a song. Smule is creates

music-making *apps* that connect people. Children can use *smule* easily to learn English pronunciation. For those reasons, this study is going to explore *Smule* application to improve pronunciation skills' of eighth grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Paciran. perience (Suratman and Rusadi, 2002) . The problems can be formulated:How *Smule* apps can improve English pronunciation skills of eighth grade students of SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Paciran?What is the students' perception after using *smule* applications in learning pronunciation?

## II. METHODOLOGY

This research is an action research` This action research is done quantitatively to get the data from the test and qualitatively to get the description of the errors the students often make, whether the students' pronunciation is intelligible or not. The Primary Data was taken through observation and tests.The structured Interview was done to answer some questions about their perception on the use of *smule* in learning pronunciation and the problems that they faced when learning pronunciation by using *smule*. The subject of the research was the students of class VIII G. SMP Muhammadiyah 12 Paciran Lamongan. The results of the test (recording) are analyzed by using descriptive statistics to describe the existing data set. Descriptive statistic used in this research is to know the mean The results of the test (recording) are analyzed by using descriptive statistics to describe the existing data set. Descriptive statistic used in this research is to know the mean (arithmetic mean score group). Scores of each student are calculated using the following patterns:

To get the mean from the total scores, the researcher used to formula of

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

Mean = average

$\sum X$  = the total of scores

n = the number of students

## III. THE RESULT OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSON

The test 1 was conducted to know the initial pronunciation ability of the students before treatment. It was stated that the average grade value before applying the learning using *smule* is 3.74. For those situations, students were in

serious trouble. They need special treatment..

In this phase, this step is to strengthen student achievement in student pronunciation using smule application. The students were also given a post-action test 2, which aims to get the final results of achievement. To show the results of the study, here are some explanations of student achievement during the conduct of classroom action research in teaching pronunciation using smule application medium.

It was stated that the average grade value before applying the learning using smule is 3.74, and after applying smule, the mean score of post-action test 1 result of student is 5.91. This indicates an increase in student achievement of English class. The improvement is very significant, ie 2.17. Which means increased learning results using smule average score almost half of pre-action.

Based on the above explanation, it is stated that there is an increase in percentage using smule application to improve student pronunciation. The tests were given to the students in order to know their ability in pronouncing English words. There were two tests in which the students participated; test 1 and test 2. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the data from the tests was used to find out whether there is a difference between the test 1 and the test 2.

After getting all the data, the writer would like to discuss and analyze the result of the present research. The result of test 1 and test 2 shows that the mean score of the test 1 was 3,74 and the mean of the test 2 was 5,91. This indicates that the test 2 result was higher than that of the test 1. Thus, it answers the first research question that Smule, as learning media, can help students to improve their pronunciation ability. It is in line with Juliana Spirlandeli Batista's (2008) statement that claims music was so powerful in the language classroom that it enhances a wide range of social and academic skills, activating memory, facilitating language development, and above all, fostering positive attitudes towards learning. In addition, from the interview it can be understood that all students perceived the smule session in learning pronunciation was interesting and it helped the students in improving their pronunciation. Andres Roberto Rengifo (2009: 94) stated that karaoke machines were not so expensive, and the discs were very easy to find and affordable. Apart from the cost, the real function of karaoke is that it mutes the voice and shows one the lyrics so one can listen to the rest of the musical instruments

along with reading the words to pronounce or sing, depending on the activity. Smule was not much different from karaoke as a learning media more effective and efficient, did not require a lot of cost to get this application. And most importantly smule was able to improve students' pronunciation ability. It must be due to the fact that most of them said that using smule in the classroom is interesting.

Eventhough there is improvement from the test 1 score to the test 2 score, The mean of the test 2 only 5.91, which was considered as medium score. Good score for the test was in the range of 6 to 9. The students did not get good score because they had difficulties in pronouncing the right sounds and correct intonation. It can be seen in the analysis of interview that most students stated that they were difficult in understanding and learning sounds and intonation element. The data of exercises also show that the students were difficult in differentiating minimal pairs in sounds, and identifying intonation. Murphey (1992: 8) As a result, smule seems to be a promising aid for attracting students, and to achieve the great goal of helping them improve their pronunciation while at the same time having a good experience. Murphey concludes that songs are fun; They encourage harmony within oneself and within a group. While the writer observed the action research process, he found that the students were easier in answering the exercise about stress. To conclude, for the students stress is the easiest element of pronunciation compared to sounds and intonation element in learning pronunciation.

The last research question was to know the problem faced by students in learning pronunciation by using smule. Most of the students stated that there was no problem in learning pronunciation by using smule media. However, some of them said that learning intonation was difficult when using smule media because the intonation in the song is different from intonation in speaking. Furthermore, students had complaint about the song used in the activity, because they did not know the song well, so that it was not familiar to them. Zatorre RJ, Baum SR (2012) The weakness was on how the intonation was made. Intonation in singing was made by a melody and Intonation in speech was made by prosody. Thus, it was difficult to sing the song. In short, the writer considered that the reason why some of the students faced problems in learning pronunciation by using smule was the nature of intonation in speaking in which is produced by prosody.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study and explanations in the previous chapters, the writer would like to draw some conclusions as follows:

1. Teaching pronunciation by using music technology such as smule gives positive influences on students' pronunciation ability. It is shown in the students' tests score, where the test 2 result is higher than that of the test 1. The mean of test 1 result is 3,74 while the test 2 is 5,91. In other words, the using of smule helped students to improve their pronunciation.
2. The problem faced by students in learning pronunciation by using smule was in intonation element. Based on the data, the students could not learn intonation in singing activity because intonation in singing is produced by melody, not prosody. Moreover, some students were difficult to sing the chosen song because the song might be unfamiliar to them.
3. The use of smule in teaching pronunciation can motivate students to learn pronunciation. Students can also learn to use smule without having to be accompanied by the teacher, because students can use smule media wherever and whenever. Because smule media includes singing as the main activity which is becoming a hobby of some students. It is shown in the interview results that most students found smule as the interesting media for learning.

## REFERENCES

Juliana Spirlandeli Batista, "Music and Song: A Learning Tool", *Dialogos Pertinentes Journal* Volume 4/4, (2008), p. 156 (Online), accessed on December 17, 2012

Andres Roberto Rengifo, "Improving Pronunciation through the Use of Karaoke", *Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, Profile 11 (2009), p.94

Murphey, T, *Music and Song*, (Oxford University Press, 1992), p.8

Zatorre RJ, Baum SR, "Musical Melody and Speech Intonation", *Singing a Different Tune*, Vol 10, 2012, accessed on July 10, 2013, from <http://www.plosbiology.org/article/info%3Adoi%2F10.1371%2Fjournal.pbio.1001372>