



## The Use of Nursery Rhymes to Improve Young Learners' English Listening Skills at Primary Education

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### Abstract

This research aims to find out how the process of the use of nursery rhymes improves young learners' English listening skills, to find out the result of the use of nursery rhymes to improve young learners' English listening skills and to discover why nursery rhymes can improve young learners' English listening skills. This research was conducted at the elementary school level in the fourth grade of SDN Tunjung 1. Classroom action research with two cycles of quantitative and qualitative design was applied in this research. The data analysis was calculated in each cycle of the pretest and post-test, with 75 as the KKM score. The result of pre-test mean score in the first meeting of cycle I was 78,7, while the post-test meeting was 83,5. Then, the pre-test mean score in the first meeting of cycle II was 80, while the post-test meeting was 88,7. There are 18 students, or 78,26%, who passed KKM cycle I, 19 students or 82,60%, who passed KKM in the pre-test of cycle II, and 20 students or 86,95%, who passed KKM in the post-test of cycle II. The researcher concluded that the students improved by using nursery rhymes to learn English listening skills in the classroom.

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## INTRODUCTION

English is a language that everyone must learn and master, especially in education. English can help students to absorb knowledge from all over the world. While, in Indonesia, English is one of the subjects that students must study at school, and this statement comes from Astutik (2018). Therefore, students need to learn English from elementary school to university level and clearly understand the material of English language skills during their studies.

Listening is a skill that is often used to understand what people say when they communicate with each other. Being a good listener would bring many benefits, such as establishing good relationships with many people. Being a good listener also would help students understand what the teacher explains in class, especially during English lessons. Students should practice and learn their listening skills from a basic level. It can improve their listening skills and help them effectively understand and acquire complex English learning levels.

There are several alternative ways for students (young learners) to practice and learn their listening skills. Students can use various multimedia platforms, such as the web and applications that can be accessed in online and offline condition. One of the accessible medium that can be used for students to learn English listening skills is nursery rhymes. Nursery rhymes is one of the accessible tools or medium that students and teachers can use to learn and teach English in the class. Apart from easy accessibility, nursery rhyme are an alternative and fun learning medium that can help students learn and improve their English language skills. Paradisa in Angriana et al. (2020) stated that nursery rhyme songs are simple songs or poems intended to teach children English vocabulary. Nursery rhyme songs use singing as a learning method because one of the learning techniques for introducing English vocabulary is singing. Apart from learning language vocabulary, English nursery rhyme songs can help students better understand their English listening skills.

Based on the expert's explanation above, nursery rhymes can be used as a learning tool for teachers to teach English in the class. Several studies conducted nursery rhymes as a medium to improve English skills by (Farijanti, 2020; Putri et al. 2018; Lian & Ningsih, 2019; Astutik, 2018; Iroegbu & Bosede Ifedayo, 2020). Those studies reported that nursery rhymes can be used as a medium to teach and learn English language skills. Besides that, nursery rhymes are also effective in teaching language skills. Therefore, the researcher needs to apply nursery rhymes as a medium to improve young learners' English listening skills in the fourth grade of SDN Tunjung 1.

### **Listening skills**

Second language learners realize that listening is an important skill to master. People often use their listening skills when communicating with someone. There are many experts who explained the definition of listening skills with different point of views. According to Tyagi (2013) Said, "The sender, message, and recipient all participate in listening. In addition, psychological processes include receiving verbal and nonverbal messages, paying attention to them, constructing meaning from the message, and responding to them." Besides that, Rost points out in Nurpahmi, (2015), "Of the four language skills – speaking, listening, reading and writing – listening is the most important skill in early language learning". Therefore, listening skills are becoming increasingly important in foreign language classes,

According to Sevik, (2012) he pointed out that "listening is the receptive use of language, and the goal of the mental activity of active listening is to understand. Thus, listening naturally focuses on meaning rather than language." It can be said that by listening, people can receive information from external sources. On the other hand, listening also a creative and proactive skill. This statement comes from Ghonivita et al., (2021), which state that listening is an active and creative process that often requires mastery of skills. Therefore, listening is an activity that requires many methods. One of them is understanding what people hear before responding to the speaker.

## **Nursery Rhymes**

Nursery rhymes are songs that children usually hear. Backer, cited in Suryani & Novia (2017), stated that a nursery rhyme is a traditional song or poem taught to young children. So, nursery rhymes are usually prepared for young children. As described by York cited in Pourkalhor & Akhavan Tavakoli, (2017), nursery rhymes are simple poetry in nature written in a particular language that young children can learn and enjoy. Besides that, Dodson cited in Pourkalhor & Akhavan Tavakoli, (2017) described nursery rhymes as “sentences set to music” and assumed that the rhythm and rhymes appeal to young children, also helping them increase their listening skills. Nursery rhymes are songs that are easy to listen to, and the tune is simple and not fast and has deep meaning so that students can learn English through songs. They can also take the moral value of each nursery rhyme song, this statement comes from Aprilia et al., (2019). It means nursery rhymes usually appeal to young learners to learn English vocabulary and language skills. Nursery rhymes are songs that are easy for young learners, because students can enjoy learning while listening to the song.

Based on the explanation above, nursery rhymes can be used as the learning medium for students to learn English language skills. Sukrisno & Wahyuningsih, (2018) stated that some nursery rhymes were intended solely to entertain children, while others were didactic and educational. If the Rhyme's purpose is to help children learn the alphabet, numbers, or specific vocabulary, it would repeat the phrase and rhythm from start to end, making it easy for children to remember and learn. From this statement, it can be said that some nursery rhymes are designed to entertain children, and some are designed for education and didactic. In that case, the nursery rhymes for educational ones would feature repeated words, phrases, and rhymes. So it can help children remember the vocabulary in the nursery rhymes.

## **Notion of Young Learners**

Young learners are children aged 3 to 15 whose learning, Nunan cited in Angriana et al., (2020). In addition, young learners, according to Scott and Ytreberg, mentioned in Arda & Doyran, (2017), are those aged five to ten. Another view is from Suyanto, cited in Oktaviani & Fauzan, (2017), which defines young Indonesian learners as elementary school students aged 6 to 12 years. They are divided into two groups: younger (6 to 8 years old) and older over eight or 9 to 12 years old. Based on the level, the Lower Classes are students in grades one until three, and the Upper Classes are students in grades four until six. Students at the primary level are called young learners because the average age is 6 to 12. Based on the explanation above, it can be said that young learners are those who are around 6-12 years old and in Indonesia context the young learners are those who are at the primary level.

## **METHOD**

The research employed the collaborative classroom action research method with quantitative and qualitative design. Collaborative action research brings together researchers and teachers with broad subject knowledge. It involves implementing new teaching methods and the scientific evaluation of the implementation process after the researchers' inspection. This statement comes from Lune & Berg, Yıldırım & Şimşek, cited in Akkocaoğlu Çayır & Yolcu, (2021). The researcher used observation, tests, and documentation to collect the data. According to Kemmis and Mc. Taggart, cited in Adawiah (2018), describes the procedure of Classroom Action Research into four stages: They are; (1) Planning, (2) Acting, (3) Observing, and (4) Reflecting.

This research was conducted in SDN TUNJUNG 01, located at the village of Ciayun, Malanggah, Sub-district, Tunjung Teja, District, Serang, Banten. The researcher takes students in the fourth grade of SDN TUNJUNG 1 and takes one class from IV B for the participants. The class consists of 23 students: six females and 17 males. Data collection techniques in this research consist of observation, testing, and documentation. The researcher did the pre-observation while doing the pre-research. The researcher has done the first observation by going to the school directly. The observation also was conducted during the learning process in each cycle, from the pre-test and post-test meeting of cycle I and cycle II. The observer was the homeroom teacher, while the researcher became a teacher in this research. Nevertheless, the teacher always helps and supervises the researcher during the teaching process in the class. Therefore, this research was called a collaboration classroom action research. Moreover, this observation also helps to observe the students' classroom activities during the learning process. The researcher used a pre-test and post-test in each cycle for the test. The documentation was collected as photos and an appendix about this research. However, this research's data analysis technique uses quantitative and qualitative design.

The goal of this research as follows:

1. To find out how the process of the use of nursery rhymes improves young learners' English listening skills.
2. To find out the result of the use of nursery rhymes to improve young learners' English listening skills.
3. To discover why nursery rhymes can improve young learners' English listening skills.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There was an improvement of using nursery rhymes toward young learners' English listening skills from cycle I to cycle II. The findings can be seen from each stage as elaborated below.

### Cycle I

In Cycle I, the researchers conducted two meetings including administering the pre-test and the post-test. The mean score in the pre-test meeting that had been gained were still low, which is about 78,7. While in the post-test, the mean score showed a little improvement, which is about 83,5. The improvement happened because the researcher used nursery rhymes in this post-test. However, the improvement was only 4,8%. Therefore, the improvement was still low in this cycle. This is because the students are still learning to listen to English nursery rhymes and try to understand what the nursery rhymes sing about. And the improvement happened because the students enjoyed and were happy during the task, and the students followed the rhythm of nursery rhymes so that they were confident in the task.

From the result of the mean score, the researcher found that there were only 18 students who passed the KKM score in this cycle, or it can be said that only 78,26%. The KKM score of this research was 75. The results of students passing the KKM score in this cycle can be seen in the table below:

**Table 1.** Comparison of Students Achievement obtained from Pre-Test and Post Test at Cycle I

No	Score	Grade/Category	Results at Pre Test	Results at Post Test
1.	91-100	Excellent	14	15
2.	81-90	Good	3	1
3.	71-80	Average	1	2
4.	61-70	Fair		1
5.	<51-60	Bad	5	4
<b>Total</b>			23	23

Besides that, the result from the students' observation in this cycle also improved. In the first meeting, it reached 72%, and in the second meeting, it came 92%. Improvements were evident in student activeness in the classroom. The improvement happened because nursery rhymes could motivate students to learn English skills in class.

**Cycle II**

Having completed the Cycle I, the researchers performed the cycle II in the same way as the first cycle. Like in the first cycle, the pre-test and the post-test were also conducted here. The results from the mean score in this cycle was improved, which is about 80 for the pre-test, and 88,7 for the post-test meeting. The improvement reached 8,7%. It can be said that the improvement in this cycle was higher than in cycle I. On the other hands, the improvement happened because the students knew the nursery rhymes and learned about the English vocabulary from the previous cycle. Because the researcher continually reviews the material in every last meeting before class ends. Besides that, the researcher added additional vocabulary for the students to learn the other English vocabulary. However, by reviewing the material, students can become more familiar with the vocabulary.

Nevertheless, the researcher found that 19 students (around 82,60%) passed the KKM score in the pre-test meeting. The researcher found that 20 students (around 86,95%) passed the KKM score in the post-test meeting. The KKM score was the same as cycle I, about 75. The results of the students who passed the KKM score in this cycle are shown in the table below:

**Table 2.** Comparison of Students Achievement obtained from Pre-Test and Post Test at Cycle II

No	Score	Grade/Category	Results at Pre Test	Results at Post Test
1.	91-100	Excellent	13	15
2.	81-90	Good	5	4
3.	71-80	Average	1	1
4.	61-70	Fair		
5.	<51-60	Bad	4	3
<b>Total</b>			23	23

Furthermore, the students' observation results in this cycle also improved. The first meeting reached 88%, while the second reached 94%. It can be said that this cycle showed more improvement than cycle I. Because the researcher had already improved the teaching techniques in this cycle, the researcher also learned from the reflection in the pre-test and post-test of cycle one. Therefore, the researcher thought to prepare more about the material and the teaching technique. Then, nursery rhymes can help the students easily learn English listening skills in the class.

After conducting Cycle I and Cycle II, it can be concluded that nursery rhymes are useful for improving students' English listening skills. The improvement can be seen from the calculation mean score from cycle I to cycle II. The improvement of students score in cycle I was reached 6,09%, while in cycle II was reached 10,87%. Therefore, using nursery rhymes as a medium can improve young

learners' English listening skills. And the success was seen in cycle II. Here is the table of data analysis in this research:

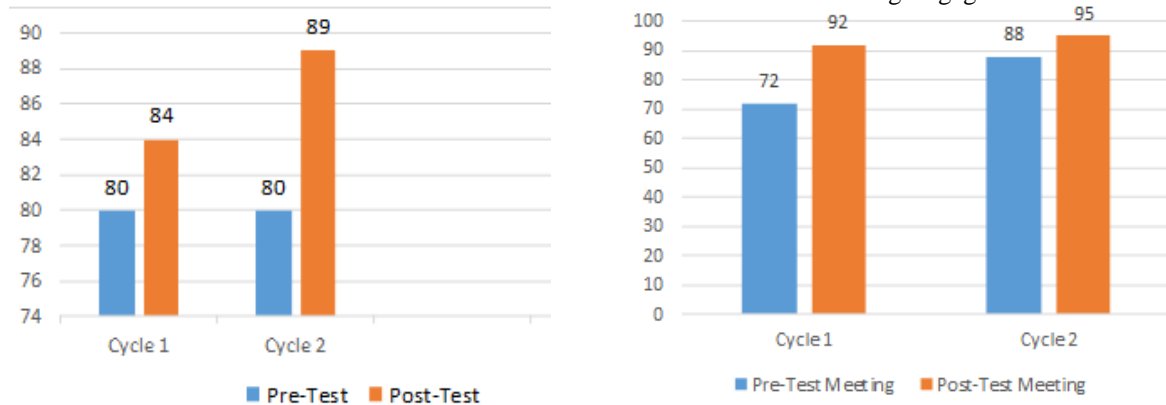
**Table 3.** Result Data Analysis

No	Results	Cycle I	Cycle II
1.	Mean:		
	a. Pre-Test	78, 7	80
	b. Post-Test	83, 5	88,7
2.	Standard Deviation	28, 5	14, 3
3.	T-table	2, 074	2, 074
4.	T-test	3, 078	2, 865
5.	Students' Observation:		
	a. First Meeting of pre-test	72%	88%
	b. The second Meeting of the post-test	92%	94, 7%
6.	Students Passing Percentage:		
	a. Pre-Test	78, 26%	82,60%
	b. Post-Test	78, 26%	86, 95%
7.	Improvement of students' scores	6, 09%	10, 87%

Based on the table above, the improvement was seen from the pre-test and post-test mean score, standard deviation, T-test, student observation, student passing percentage, and improvement in student score.

The result of the test and the students' observations in every cycle can be shown in the chart, and this is to give an easier understanding of the result of this research. The result can be seen in the below:

**Figure 1:** The Improvement of Students Listening Skills and Their Engagement during Learning Proces



**Interview**

This interview was analyzed by using the quantitative technique. The researcher explained the results of the interview descriptively. The interview participants consisted of fifth-grade students of

fourth grade in SDN Tunjung 1. Based on the students' interview results, the researcher found the answer to the third research question: why can nursery rhymes improve young learners' English listening skills. It can be seen from the two questions that the researcher asks.

**The researcher asked:**

“Do you feel that nursery rhymes media can help you improve your English learning? Especially in listening skills?”

**The students answered:**

(S3): “It can help Miss, so it can listen to people who speak English.”

(S4): “It is helpful, Miss, it can learn by listening to English songs, especially when doing a task. It is easy if you use songs”.

(S5): “It is helpful, Miss, so it can learn English better.”

**The researcher asked:**

“Do you think that nursery rhyme media is beneficial as a medium for learning English or not?”

**The students answered:**

(S3): “It is useful, Miss. It can be used to learn English, making it easy for us to learn and not get bored.”

(S4): “Can be useful for learning English at home through YouTube.”

(S5): “It is useful for making learning fun.”

From the students' interview script above, it can be concluded that the students felt that nursery rhymes are a helpful medium to help them learn English, especially listening to English. According to Aprilia et al., (2019) stated that “As in learning English, songs become one of the media in improving students' skills in listening.” They also felt that nursery rhymes are an easy medium that can be used for them to learn English better. Besides that, the students think nursery rhymes are a useful medium for learning English in the classroom and at home using YouTube. Furthermore, the students also thought that nursery rhymes are useful media that can make students feel not bored and make learning fun.

## **CONCLUSION**

The researcher concludes that the process/the implementation of the use of nursery rhymes to improve young learners' listening skills at fourth grade of SDN Tunjung 1 was successful. The improvement was can be seen in the cycle II, reached 10, 87%, while the cycle I only reached 6, 09%.



Besides that, the students who passed the KKM score was improved in cycle II. There are 19 students (around 82,60%) passed the KKM score in the pre-test meeting. And 20 students (around 86,95%) passed the KKM score in the post-test meeting. The KKM score of this research was 75. It means there was an improvement from the mean score between cycles I and II.

However, the improvement happened because the students knew the nursery rhymes and learned about the English vocabulary from the previous cycle. Because the researcher continually reviews the material in every last meeting before class ends. Besides that, the researcher added additional vocabulary for the students to learn the other English vocabulary. By reviewing the material, students can become more familiar with the vocabulary. Nevertheless, from the interviews with the students, it can be concluded that the students found nursery rhymes to be a useful medium for learning English, especially when listening to English. They also felt that nursery rhymes are an easy medium that can be used for them to learn English better.

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