

Improving Students' Pronunciation Ability through Homophone and Rhyming Games

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A B S T R A C T

This study is based on the fact that many senior high school students still face difficulties in English pronunciation, such as incorrect word stress, mispronunciation, and low confidence in speaking. These problems are often caused by limited exposure to interactive learning media and the use of conventional teaching methods that emphasize theory rather than practice. Therefore, engaging and effective teaching strategies, such as homophone and rhyming games, are needed to improve students' pronunciation ability. This study aims to investigate the application of homophone and rhyming games as teaching media to improve students' pronunciation ability at the tenth grade of SMA N 1 Colomadu in the academic year of 2025/2026. This research employed a Classroom Action Research design conducted in two cycles from July to August 2025. The data were collected using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data were obtained through observation, questionnaires, and documentation, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman method. Quantitative data were collected through a pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2, and analyzed by calculating the mean scores. The results show that the implementation of homophone and rhyming games significantly improved students' pronunciation ability. The mean score increased from 65 in the pre-test to 70 in post-test 1 and 80 in post-test 2. In addition, students showed greater enthusiasm and active participation during the learning process. Therefore, it can be concluded that homophone and rhyming games are effective in improving students' pronunciation ability.

Keywords: *Homophone Games; Pronunciation Ability; Improvement; Rhyming*

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INTRODUCTION

Language is a symbol to express something and being an important feature for humans. Language can vary into spoken, written, or through signed. Humans always use language to communicate with each other, express their needs and release their emotions. As an important language, students who learn English should comprehend its skills, such as structure (can also be called grammar), vocabulary, pronunciation and etc. Among them, pronunciation is one of the important skill students should be aware. Pronunciation ability is a talent or skill of individual in producing sounds involving words, phrase, intonation and articulation. Furthermore, pronunciation ability is a way to pronounce words that are generally accepted (Tika, 2022). By pronouncing words correctly, especially foreigners who only understand English will be able to understand what students mean. Students are also able to convey the message of the words spoken by them because English contains complex vocabulary with different meanings and similar words. By not pronouncing well, the listener will grasp another meaning that different from what the speaker has intended. Therefore, learning how to pronounce correctly is important and beneficial for the speakers. Poposka (2017) mentioned that through mastering correct pronunciation means that it could also affect fluency and if fluency could not be acquired enough, language learners specifically students could future jobs, education and etc. Thus, as a mandatory skill, the learners should mind their

fluency, as well as intelligibility, comprehensibility and neutral accent. Furthermore, Yowani (2021), stated that accurate pronunciation and intonation represent the ability in speaking English which proper communication towards each other conversation can be directly affected.

There are several factors influencing pronunciation ability. According to Khan (2019) in his research, there are motivation, the role of teacher, teaching pedagogy, and classroom environment. Motivation determined the improvement in pronouncing words and develop skills in English as second language. Besides motivation, the role of teacher is also essential for the students to learn English, as English language teachers, they should have appropriate knowledge and information regarding phonetics, phonology and other elements in pronunciation (Susmitha, 2014). Moreover, using English language pedagogy correctly during the English class helps learners improving students' pronunciation. Pedagogy itself, according to Longman Dictionary is the study of the practice and procedure in teaching. And lastly, classroom environment creates a substantial improvement for the students who learn pronunciation in non-native English-speaking countries. As Szyszka (2018) suggested that learners or the students would face difficulties in learning and improving their pronunciation in real life situation if they are not living in English speaking country.

In order to learn pronunciation in school, there are different methods teachers can use as technology is now more advanced than before, so people have more advantages in learning. One of the methods teachers use in school is through interactive games. Trang & Binh (2019) stated that games can be used for educational purposes and entertainment for students at the same time. As Kasvi (2000) cited in Pivec (2007) stated that games tend to fulfill all requirements, such as providing a strength in interaction and feedback; having aims particularly with the procedures are well-established; providing a feeling of challenge that makes people do not feel boredom; providing tool that is fit the task appropriately; avoiding experience that is not disturbing and disrupting; and most importantlu, to make students more motivated in learning. The example can be found in Rahmasari (2021) that identified using interactive game called Bingo Game improved students' vocabulary mastery. Therefore, more interactive games will improve more English skills, no exception for pronunciation. Learning English through game-based learning tool creates fun environment for the students, as well as enhance their skills and they will progress their knowledge.

Learning pronunciation through homophone and rhyming games will create depth understanding for students who have difficulties in pronouncing those English words. Recent study provided valuable insight regarding using homophone games to improve pronunciation in high school student. For instance, Harsin, Rofiqoh and Mashuri (2022). The strategy to learn through homophone games make students involving actively in the class that lead to an enjoyable experience also share the knowledge to each other (Harsin; Rofiqoh; Mashuri, 2022).

The objective of this study is to describe the application of homophone and rhyming games as teaching media to improve students' pronunciation ability at the tenth grade of SMA N 1 Colomadu and to find out whether using homophone and rhyming games can improve students' pronunciation ability at the tenth grade of SMA N 1 Colomadu. The research questions are formulated: 1) How is the application of homophone and rhyming games to improve students' pronunciation ability? and 2) Can the use of homophone and rhyming games improve students' pronunciation ability at the tenth grade of SMA N 1 Colomadu?

METHOD

This research applies Classroom Action Research (CAR) as the research method (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1998). Kemmis and McTaggart (1998) suggest that CAR is followed the same cyclical process as general action research. There is a participatory study that consists of self-reflective cycles in the form of spiral which involves four stages including planning, action, observation and reflection. This research design is a type of research that focuses on enhancing teaching learning process spesifically (McNiff, 2002). This research involves teacher

in identifying the educational practices in order to improve student outcomes that leads to development of the teacher. Through this research design, data will be collected using qualitative and quantitative methods.

The participants in this study are limited to the students of a class in the tenth grade specifically tenth grade class one (X.A1) of SMA N 1 Colomadu. Purposive sampling techniques was applied as a representative of the target population. The subject of the research is gathered to measure the pronunciation ability of the students and to improve it further for the future teaching-learning process.

Data were collected by utilizing two techniques, they are test and non-test. Test is a method to measure ability, performance or knowledge of a person involve evoked responses and are evaluated based on particular criteria (Brown, 2004). Pre-test was administered before the intervention to assess the students' knowledge or ability in understanding English that led to appropriate method would be applied in teaching-learning process. Post-test was administered after the intervention to measure the improvement after the action taken in the classroom. The experimental group was given the test after treatment to figure out the result of the implementation of homophone games in each meeting. This test was used to analyze and evaluate the group to know the impact of teaching strategy. Both pre-test and post-test was applied using short descriptive text about the material that was learned by the students by reading the text aloud while the researcher evaluate and measure the selected participants' pronunciation ability.

Non-test assessment technique was used as a method in gathering data outside standardized testing (Arikunto, 2006). The data were collected through observation to focus analyzing in the real time. This technique is used to understand the teaching intervention towards students' learning and behavior. Questionnaire was also utilized to gather information from the participants through written questions regarding the understanding of pronunciation and the learning process in the class. Documentation is one of the primary techniques used on matter or variables using lesson plans, student worksheets, and class photos of teaching session.

Data analysis was collected using qualitative and quantitative data. The purpose of analyzing the data is to describe the condition and situation during the process of teaching and learning in the class. Qualitative data was employed as the data is descriptive and conceptual (Miles & Huberman, 1994). There are three processes in analyzing qualitative data. Data reduction a form of analysis that focus on organizing data until the conclusion can be drawn or verified without losing the significance and help to concentrate on relevant information. Data display is and organized data to compress the cluster of information that allows a drawing of conclusion and intervention. Data display is meant to comprehend the recent condition and prepare the intervention in the form of graphs, charts and networks. Conclusion drawing and verification is the last stream to confirm the validity through triangulation to ensure accuracy and credibility. The study concludes the improvement of pronunciation ability through the implementation of homophone and rhyming games.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the study was based on the questions posed in the beginning of the study.

Research question #1: How is the application of homophone and rhyming games to improve students' pronunciation ability?

The primary objective in the study is to find out whether the application of homophone and rhyming games improve students' pronunciation ability. The data was obtained through pre-test, post-test 1, and post-test 2.

Table 1. *The mean score of student's pre-test and post-tests*

Score		Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2	Explanation
Student's highest score	highest	87	90	93	Improve
Student's lowest score		43	50	67	Improve
Mean score		65	70	80	Improve

The findings indicated that the mean score achieved 65 in the pre-test increased significantly to post-test in cycle 1 after the intervention of taking action of using homophone and rhyming games. However, the improvement did not pass the standard minimum score of ≥ 75 . Thus, cycle 2 was conducted, resulting the mean score of post-test 2 increased by 10 points than the post-test in the cycle 1. suggested that the action received by the students was effective.

Table 2. *The students' result in pre-test and post-tests*

Explanation	Pre-test	Post-test 1	Post-test 2
Students Passed	16	21	31
Students Failed	17	12	2
Student Total	33	33	33
Students Pass Percentage	48%	64%	94%
Students Failed Percentage	52%	36%	6%

Table 2 presented that 88% of students passed minimum score of ≥ 75 . On the other hand, there was some improvement from the data result on the pre-test and post-test 1. Based on the pre-test result students achieved minimum score of 75 consisted of 16 students. In the post-test 1, there was some improvement as 64% of 33 students passed the minimum score. There was significant improvement in post-test 2 as there was an 30% increase in student scores, gaining 31 students passed the minimum score.

Research question #2: Can the use of homophone and rhyming games improve students' pronunciation ability?

The discussion of the research inquired about the use of homophone and rhyming games was able to improve the pronunciation ability for the students specifically at X.A1 of SMA N 1 Colomadu. The result was obtained through questionnaire and observation data about the use of homophone and rhyming games to improve students' pronunciation ability. Homophone and rhyming games are media given to the students of SMA N 1 Colomadu. According to the results of the observation, students viewed games as a tool to increase their excitement and enjoyment during teaching and learning process. The condition of the classroom before the intervention was not progressing well and the attention of the students was not built. However, after the action taken using games, students were feeling excitement, thus increasing their focus and active participation on their study. Homophone and rhyming games proved to build the confidence in speaking and pronouncing words for the students.

This study corresponds to improvement in the pronunciation ability using homophone and rhyming games. It is supported by the study that using homophone games could help students to recognize homophone and daily occurrence at school (Syamsia & Manawia, 2019) as stated that by trying out different types of homophone games would be an educative approach to learning homophones. It can be concluded that homophone and rhyming games are very useful in improving students' pronunciation ability. This media helps achieving learning purpose. Additionally, as advanced technology supports teaching and learning activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The study investigated the improvement of students' pronunciation ability through homophone and rhyming games at the tenth grade of SMA N 1 Colomadu. The findings revealed that the implementation of homophone and rhyming games proved to be succeed. This result could be seen from the students' score that were significantly improved from the pre-test to post-tests. Furthermore, the study also revealed the effectiveness of using homophone and rhyming games during the teaching and learning process. The condition of the classroom increased the enthusiasm of the students. The EFL instructor is advised to be able to apply the suitable techniques for the students in order to increase the students' excitement and enjoyment in the teaching and learning process. Future research should

explore more references in improving students' pronunciation ability through homophone and rhyming games.

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