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Vocal and Consonant Patterns in Indonesian Children's Songs



Abstract: - As a medium in educational music, the song provides space for explanations related to the sound of the language. Prosody or language sounds have similarities to musical sounds studied in phonology. Thus, the management of language sounds in expressing children's songs can be used to identify prosodic factors in educational music. This study aims to provide an explanation of the prosody of children's songs in the context of educational music and to find out the factors that influence prosody in children's songs, the sound changes that occur, accompaniment sounds that accompany the main sound, and the factors that influence it in the context of music education. The results of this study show the characteristics of vowel and consonant sounds in children's song lyrics and the sounds produced for certain vowels and consonants. The factors that influence prosody in children's songs are the word order in the form of vowels and consonants in each of the lyrics. This is to clearly understand the sounds produced by children and their use in educational music.

Keywords: vocal pattern, consonant pattern, prosody, children's song.

I. Introduction

Song has been considered an essential part of education, especially in children. Many school curriculums insert song and singing activities to enhance the learning experience. A document analysis review of Spanish curriculum policy showed the importance of songs and singing songs in early childhood education to language learning acceleration, cultivate cultural understanding, and enhance social skills [1]. Another study in Indonesia showed a positive correlation between children's songs and the ability to memorize foreign vocabulary in kindergarten, supporting the notion of children's songs as a learning strategy in language learning [2]. Thus, implementing and involving songs and singing activities might accelerate children's learning process.

The importance of children's songs in childhood education is not only about their ability to facilitate cognitive learning, but it also supports the children's emotional development. A systematic review showed the benefits of music in an educational context to some crucial aspects of children's development, such as emotional intelligence, academic performance, and prosocial skills [3]. Another experimental study on preschoolers showed the benefits of music as a background sound during learning to improve social skills such as trust, perseverance, organization, understanding, and emotional strength [4].

One of the exciting aspects of song and language is the superimposing concept of prosody and rhythm in language and music. As music, children's song has their musical characteristic driven by the duration and accentuation of the notation, namely rhythm. Meanwhile, the lyrics in the song have their linguistic concept that entangles the tune and rhythm in the speech that contributes in the meaning of a language, namely prosody. Thus, this superimposition tends to form a unique characteristic due to the collaboration of musical and linguistic prosody [5]-[7]. This unique characteristic is shown in the adjustment of musical or language units to achieve better coherence between these two aspects. Understanding the crossover of these two aspects and how they are combined in a song is vital since songs influence children's language development. The musical prosody in children's song tend to include the adjustment of lyrics or musical phrase to obtain better harmonization between these two due to different approach in song writings. The first approach is to insert lyrics to an established musical phrase or, in the other way, to put musical sound into lyrics that have been written first[5].

The adjustments to achieve better coherence between musical and linguistic phrases tend to implement some techniques such as melismatic (the prolongation of syllables to follow the note flow), abbreviations (the shortening of syllables by eliminating a phonetic sound), and syllable addition [6]. The inclination of adjustment in both linguistic and musical aspects is vital to be identified to better understand how musical and linguistic aspects interfere with each other and influence how children develop their sense of language and music. Thus, this research aim is to analyze the popular children's songs in Indonesia to explain the adjustment of music and language.

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a. Anaptyctic

Anaptyctic, a phonology phenomenon where a vowel is inserted into a word, tent to suite the word count and the notation count in a musical phrase. It is often found when the overall syllable of a lyrics is less than the notation in a musical phrase. The detailed explanation can be seen in the following example:



Figure 6 Musical notation of *Burung Kutilang* by A. T. Mahmud

In the passage above, the word *po-hon* is sounded as *po-ho-hon* by adding *ho* in the middle of the word to maintain synchronization between the musical progression and the lyrics. This anaptyctic tent to be identified in the pattern of *melismatis*, a term to define a condition where multiple notation move only have one or smaller amount of syllable count. Still, from the example above, anaptyctic as an adjustment of *melismatis* also happens to the word *Burung* (bird), which is called *bu-hu-rung*. Since the syllable addition occurs in the middle of the main word, it is called epenthesis. It can be seen in another example such as:



Figure 7 Musical notation of *Cemara (The Pine Tree)* by A. T. Mahmud

The passage above showed another epenthesis in the song of *Cemara* where the words such as *cemara*, *ramping*, and *daun* sounded as *ce-he-ma-ra*, *ra-ham-ping*, and *la-hang-sing* by adding an extra syllable. The tendency to put an extra syllable to a lyric occurs to maintain the aesthetic of the musical phrase so that it won't lose the sense of flow. Even though it is not written in the musical notation, the epenthesis occurs naturally once the song is sung without losing the meaning of the original words.

b. Abbreviation

Some musical notes might lack a syllable of its lyrics so they add extra syllables to keep the synchronization between the music and lyrics beautifully. Meanwhile, another musical phase tends to lack of notation count compared to the syllables in the lyrics. In this case, there is a tendency to abbreviate the syllable or the word in contrast to the previous scenario. The abbreviation is mainly in the form of phonetic reduction, such as the following example:



Figure 8 Musical notation of *Trima Kasih Ya Tuhan (Thank You, Dear God)* by A. T. Mahmud

Trima kasih is the modification of the original wordings *Terima kasih*. By the syllable count, it should be *te-ri-ma*, three syllables. Meanwhile, the modification became *tri-ma*, two syllables. Eliminating the /e/ in *te-ri-ma* can maintain the lyrics synchronizing with the musical phrase. If, in the other way, we want to preserve the original form, then the musical notation has to be changed, affecting how it sounds musically. The more explicit abbreviation that maintains the repetition of musical rhythm can be seen in the following song:

Commented [PP1]: Fig 8 citation missing

A - ku sa - yang I - bu da - ri ha - ri Se - nin A - ku sa - yang

11 I - bu sam - pai ha - ri Ming - gu Se - nin sa - yang Sla - sa sa - yang Ra

21 bu sa - yang Ka - mis sa - yang Jum - at sa - yang Sab -

27 tu sa - yang Ming - gu sa - yang sa - yang se - la - ma - nya

The musical notation shows a melody in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat. Brackets labeled 'pattern' are placed above the notes corresponding to the syllables 'Se-nin sa-yang Sla-sa sa-yang Ra' and 'Ming-gu sa-yang'.

Figure 9 Musical Notation of *Aku Sayang Ibu* (I Love Mommy) by A. T. Mahmud

The song above highlights the role of abbreviation by reducing the phonem to maintain rhythmical motives and to make sense of the lyrics in the song. This song tells a story about how a kid loves their mother every time the mention indicates that "loves mommy day by day. The pattern in the bracket mentions the name of the days of the week in Bahasa Indonesia, followed by the love expression by the kid. Six out of seven days in Indonesia have two syllables except for *Selasa* (Thursday), which contains three. The song can't achieve rhythmical motives if this syllable is not adjusted. In the musical notation above, the abbreviation of the word *Se-la-sa* to *sla-sa* occurs by eliminating the phonetic /e/ so that it contains two syllables without changing the meaning of the overall content.

2. **The vocal and consonant pattern in lyrics adjustment and the factors behind it**

The previous analysis showed the adjustment of lyrics to musical phrases by adding or reducing the word unit. By examining closer, we can see this adjustment's pattern of vocals and consonants. In words like *cemara*, *ramping*, *daunnya*, and *langsing*, we can identify the vocal and consonant pattern as follows:

Ce-ma-ra → *ce-he-ma-ra* CV-CV-CV → CV-CV-CV-CV
Ram-ping → *ra-ham-ping* CVC-CVCC → CV-CVC-CVCC
Da-un-nnya → *da-ha-un-nya* CV-VC-CCV → CV-CV-CV-CCV
Lang-sing → *la-hang-sing* CVCC-CVCC → CV-CVCC-CVCC

The accompaniment sound automatically occurs in the consonant-vocal pattern, where the additional vocal will follow the vocal in the previous syllable. For example, in the word *ce-ma-ra*, the addition *he* has the phonetic /e/ to follow the *ce*. Meanwhile, in the word *ramping*, the addition *ham* has the phonetic /a/ to follow the *ram*. The most used consonant tends to be /h/ due to its natural sound to produce vocal without creating new meaning of the word.

Another case of adjustment is to eliminate a word unit to reduce the syllable count. The most eliminate phonetic sound is the vocal such as /e/ in *te-rima* and *se-la-sa* to become *tri-ma* and *sla-sa*. The pattern can be seen as follows:

Te-ri-ma → *tri-ma* CV-CV-CV → CCV-CV
Se-la-sa → *Sla-sa* CV-CV-CV → CCV-CV

This abbreviation is common in many Indonesian songs, not just children song, and mostly sound and perceived as an acceleration of a syllable. The adjustment also can occur in a word that contains a diphthong, two vocals in a sequence that produce a sound as if a consonant was there. For example, in Bahasa Indonesia there is a word *bi-ak* with the /ia/ that is sound as if there was /y/ there. We can see this form in the following passage:

Ber-cri - ta Pa - man ten - tang ter - nak - nya ber - kem bang bi - ak se - mu - a

The musical notation shows a melody in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Figure 10 Musical Notation of *Pamanku Datang* (My Uncle was Coming) by A. T. Mahmud

The first red notation showed the abbreviation by eliminating /e/, resulting in *ber-cri-ta* differing from its original form *ber-ce-ri-ta*. Meanwhile, the second red notes with the lyrics *bi-ak* is an example of phonetic addition to make *bi-ak* sound like *bi-yak* with the imaginary /y/.

The analysis of adjustment in the previous explanation emphasized on the inclination of various adjustments in Indonesian children's songs, yet it is important to understand the underlying factors behind this phenomenon. One of the most explicit and technical reasons behind this approach is to maintain synchronization of musical and linguistic prosody in children's songs so that the children will receive the best musical experience without losing the context of language exposure. The previous analysis shows how eliminating a phonetic sound can reduce the syllable count to maintain the rhythmical pattern. The next consideration of underlying factors is the general aesthetic aspect of the songs. Children must experience a good song, both the lyrics and the music. Since the song has a role in developing the children's language skills, maintaining the language to be understandable is as essential as maintaining the music to be enjoyable. Thus, it needs adjustment to provide and achieve this goal.

IV. Conclusion

The analysis gave us a sense of linguistic adjustment and its essential role in providing a piece of good music for children. By emphasizing these aspects, educators and children's-song writers can reflect deeply on how to put lyrics to the music they wrote, or vice versa, how to optimize melodic writing to established lyrics. The modification and adjustment of vocal and consonant patterns hold a vital role due to the natural inclination of adjustment based on the habits of the speaker of a particular language. This analysis and its providence of linguistic-music analysis is also emphasized on the uniqueness of relation between music and language in providing better development for children. Lastly, it is both important to maintain musically aesthetic song and provide good linguistic approach.

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