

Impacts of English Pop Songs on ESP Students' Liaison Learning

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Received: 15/02/2024; Accepted: 26/02/2024; Published: 8/3/2024

Abstract: The article describes the experimental procedure of teaching English liaisons through English pop songs after 10 weeks of testing on 2 groups of learner adolescents learning English for special purpose (ESP), experimental group with 30 students and controlled group with 32 students. Each group consisted of 30 university sophomores who are enrolling full-time in law major at a university in the center of Vietnam. Materials for experimental were 10 English pop songs with exercises designed in the form of Cloze-Test exercises on the lyrics. Students listened to music while finding the correct answers containing the connecting sounds. Quantitative method was applied to collect data from pre-test and post-test; Independent Samples Test belongs to ANOVA of SPSS algorithms were used to analyze the data. From the results, the students' improvement of liaisons sounds has been demonstrated through the scores from the post-test after the experimental.

Keywords: Liaisons, Cloze-Test, English pop songs, pre-test, post-test.

1. Introduction

Concerning creative tools for articulation instruction in higher education, Vo (2015) states that teaching English pronunciation through songs is a prevalent practice, however there is still fret about the research underpinning adopting articulation education in colleges and universities. The unfortunate reality is that students even generally mispronounce words regularly, and non-majors in particular continue to possess poor speaking and listening abilities. Pronunciation test results for ESP students ranged from 12% to 28%, with correct pronunciation reaching 25%. Approximately 29% of the students received the zero score (Department of Academic Affairs, semester 1, school year 2022-2023). In addition to mispronunciation of vowels, consonants, stress, intonation, etc., liaisons are the most serious errors that students make. It has been possible to be the reason why their learning and practicing of English listening and speaking skills are limited.

Regarding the aforementioned pronunciation teaching and learning challenges, a new, more inventive technique for pronunciation instruction needs to be put forth. And the goal of this article is to present an innovative strategy aiding students address their pronunciation issues and gives teachers a useful teaching tool that may enhance and engage students' pronunciation theology titled "Impacts of English Pop Songs on ESP Students' Liaison Learning".

2. Theoretical Foundation

A liaison, according to Cook (2013), is a sound generated through merging two nearby sounds. It is defined as the sound obtained by integrating the last consonant of one word with the first vowel of the following word. Furthermore, Brinton (2009) discovers learners may quickly master pronunciation and comprehension in English if they practice making connections between sounds. In addition, the reality of interacting in English reveals that connecting sounds really superb, but even at a moderate speaking tempo, 'they can be challenging for learners to figure out and necessitate further study. Because liaisons are the sounds of two separate words that are close to each other connected together (Ex: have it /hæv it/, think again and again /θɪŋk ə'gen and ə'gen/) make sentences smoother and easier to pronounce and more professional. Nevertheless this sort of vibrancy is really complicated. Furthermore, those transmit stylized and linked pronunciations that are inconsistent with how guidelines are uttered internationally. In order to guarantee that learners' speaking and listening abilities reach the appropriate levels and that their communication capacity prevails, students must practice extensively and be cautious when pinpointing linking sounds.

On top of that, regarding the trick of teaching intertwining sounds, Brinton (2009) and Murcia et al. (1996) imply that a potential approach to teach connecting sounds is to provide activities. Brinton also emphasizes four components offering learners with a

sentence interpretation function and recommendations for focusing consideration to vocalization: (1) tooth and tongue position (little), (2) connecting rhymes (C_V), (3) infinitive reduction sounds in unstressed syllables, and (4) simplify consonant clusters.

English pop songs have been recognized internationally as a genre of music performed on digital instruments and relished by numerous audiences. (Nambiar, 1993). Pop music consists of short songs with profound lyrics and simple but memorable melodies. Lamb (2014) also agrees that pop music, the main type of popular music, appeared around 1950 is exceptionally well-liked, has a melodious melody and is easy to reach people's hearts like Take me to your heart, Give a little love, Miss you, Only love, etc.

Numerous scientists have studied the feasibility of demonstrating articulation using English pop songs and have provided favorable opinions towards this technique. Nambiar (1993) believes that Pop music inspires adolescents to pursue gaining knowledge due to the fact that individuals can be emotionally stirred by music and compelled to sing along with the lyrics, thereby helps them acquire articulation (p. 336). Besides, the rhythm of music has the unique potential to increase the energy of the listeners, making them more attentive and more interested to approach. Furthermore, pop music can provide a source of mental relaxation for learners and novelty in imparting knowledge to teachers (Vo, 2023). Therefore, pop music constitutes a beneficial educational aid in language instruction (Griffie, 2010). Indeed, the bulk of earlier academics, including Lai (2010), Engh (2013), Salcedo (2010), and Vo (2023) have addressed the issue of teaching language skills by employing English songs. These scientists support the use of songs as a teaching tool in language classes because music is both entertaining and academic, and can help learners enjoy and absorb knowledge well. However, the method of teaching liaisons using English pop music has not been mentioned significantly by these and other research works. To contribute filling current research gap, this article focus on discussing methods of teaching pronunciation on liaisons through pop songs in English as the element chosen by the author to conduct experiments to come across a remedy for the research question "To what extent is ESP students' liaison pronunciation improved through using English pop songs?"

3. Research Methodology

The experimental program is conducted for 10 weeks in the first semester of the 2023-2024 school

year at a university in central of Vietnam. The sample selected was 2 groups of full-time law university students studying English for special purposes (ESP). Experimental group is used to experimentally teach connecting sounds through pop songs. The remaining group, a controlled group of 32 students are taught pronunciation according to the textbook program. The research sample was randomly selected into 2 groups from 16 groups with a total of 505 students. Participants were satisfied conditions to ensure the same age and pronunciation level based on the results of pronunciation tests and exams from the previous semester. Information about the year of birth providing the age of the student is provided from the Academic Affairs Department.

Adopting the views of Parkinson and Drislane (2011), the author uses quantitative methods to collect and analyze experimental data from the results of the pre-test and post-test. The experimental program was designed as follows:

The tools to get data are the pre-test and the post-test. Materials for experimental teaching are 10 English pop songs, including songs *The day you went away*, *Only love*, *Miss you*, *Give a little love*, *Take me to your heart*, *Proud of you*, *That is love*, *Cry on my shoulder*, *Lonely* và *Happy new year*. Before the experimental program began, students in both groups would take a pre-test. Pre-test is performed at the beginning of the program for the author to measure and ensure the level of the two groups is the same. The pre-test and post-test structures are the same, including 2 recognition parts (Perceptions) with 30 multiple-choice items and pronunciation (Production) parts with 20 items.

The author's purpose is to test learners' level and skills in perception and practice of English liaisons in words and sentences. When the experimental teaching program ended, students of the two groups took a final test (post-test) for the teacher to collect data, compare the results and find the difference between the two groups after the experiment.

3.1. Experimental Design

The teacher who designed the experimental and directly taught for both experimental and controlled groups. The experimental program was carried out as follows:

First, researcher-teacher composed a separate lesson plan to teach pronunciation of connecting sounds using 10 pop songs for 10 experimental teaching sessions. The lyrics were printed on paper under being designed to leave blank words or characters containing connecting sounds and shortened sounds in the form

of Cloze-Test exercises (blanks of whole word on lyrics paper, ex: *If the hero (I) _____ comes to you...*), corresponding to each exercise type up to 10 songs. Pop songs that have been chosen are well-known English songs that are accessible to students. The tracks are set in song order, starting with widespread, mellow tunes and moving on to less prominent tunes with faster rhythms. Each song has 10 blank spaces removed from rhymes, letters, and words containing connecting sounds. Each experimental participant in each session would listen to the song twice while completing Cloze-Test exercises on the songs' lyrics. Teachers transferred knowledge about liaisons to students based on correct responses to exercises on song lyrics. Then, the teacher asked students to find more examples to practice in class on words and phrases containing connecting sounds inside and outside the lyrics. In fact, the reason why teacher set up this activity is that students can recognize words and phrases that contain similar connecting sounds and ensure that experimental teacher's and learners' teaching and learning liaison pronunciation was operated seriously appearing on a single document is pop music.

For the control group, the 10-week pronunciation lesson plan was prepared by the teacher according to the textbook Solutions (new edition) by Tim Falla, Paul A Davies Oxford University Press. Lessons 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7 are 5 out of 10 lessons chosen by the teacher for experimental teaching. Knowledge about connected phonetic pronunciations in 5 lessons is divided equally by the teacher to teach in 10 lessons, each session is 25 minutes because English is a general subject, so each lesson will teach all 4 skills, pronunciation knowledge is divided suitable time limit.

However, the distribution of knowledge about pronunciation elements in the book as well as in these 5 lessons was not balanced and complete. This required the experimental teacher to think so that the controlled group was arranged to teach a reasonable pronunciation teaching program and balanced in time compared to the experimental group. Regarding teaching methods, the lecturer applies conventional teaching techniques, students follow what the teacher instructs.

The data from the experimental results would be analyzed and compared by ANOVA algorithm of SPSS software to determine how the two groups' students percept and utter liaisons differently before and after the trial. If the Sig. (2 tailed) is greater than

0.05, the post-experimental results were not different from the initial results. On the contrary, if the Sig. (2 tailed) is less than 0.05, the liaison pronunciation results before and after the experimental are various in liaison utterance level between the two groups.

5. Conclusion

As a whole, this paper highlighted how ESP students in the experimental group significantly improved their understanding and practice of liaisons while participating in an experimental program that taught pronunciation through English pop songs. remarkably strong in intensity. Students' limitations with connecting sounds have been dramatically overcome. The research topic has been answered, and the findings confirmed the scientific validity of the English pop song experimentation approach. Students' speaking and listening capacities will both benefit from improved pronunciation of connecting sounds. The study offered an innovative strategy that English teachers can use to instruct students of various ages in speaking, listening, and pronunciation.

In order to motivate and engage students and encourage passionate learning, teachers must employ innovative and adaptable teaching strategies while teaching language skills in general and pronunciation in particular. Furthermore, to impart pronunciation information to students, teachers' articulation teaching strategies should concentrate on utilizing more sound media includes pop, rock, and jazz, etc. to enhance and effectively encourage ESP students' learning spirit.

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