USING ENGLISH SONGS EFFECTIVELY FOR THE PRACTICE OF PRONUNCIATION IN LAC HONG UNIVERSITY EFL CLASSES

SỬ DỤNG BÀI HÁT TIẾNG ANH HIỆU QUẢ TRONG VIỆC LUYỆN TẬP PHÁT ÂM TRONG CÁC LỚP TIẾNG ANH TẠI ĐẠI HỌC LẠC HỒNG

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ABSTRACT. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) where the exposure to authentic English language is limited, there is always a need of methods of teaching and learning which offer learners sufficient access to communicative practice. Among the problems that arise, issues related to pronunciation really ring the alarm and should be taken into account. There have been existing similar problems in EFL classes at Lac Hong University where students find it hard and unmotivated to learn and improve their pronunciation in general, and the ability to perform sentence in particular. Therefore, a novel approach of using English songs for practising this communicative aspect was used with a hope that this could reflect a sense of effectiveness. Qualitative action research with questionnaires, interviews and class observations was carried out with the participation of 100 learners from 4 classes where they were presented English songs in the periods of pronunciation practice. The result was positive – the level of engagement and performance strongly increased. Moreover, this approach was also proved to be an interesting and effective way of self-study and long-life study.

KEYWORDS. *English pronunciation, sentence stress, English songs, innovation, engagement*

TÓM TẮT. Trong bối cảnh tiếng Anh được sử dụng như một ngoại ngữ với việc người học ít có cơ hội tiếp xúc với tiếng Anh thực tế, cần có một phương pháp cho việc dạy và học tiếng Anh mang lại cho người học cơ hội tiếp cận với tiếng Anh giao tiếp thực tế. Trong số những vấn đề khó khăn mà người học thường gặp phải, vấn đề liên quan đến phát âm thể hiện tính nghiêm trọng đáng kể và cần phải có những giải pháp hiệu quả. Trong các lớp tiếng Anh tại Đại học Lạc Hồng, sinh viên dường như ít hứng thú trong các giờ phát âm qua đó hạn chế việc phát triển kỹ năng quan trọng này, đặc biệt là khả năng thể hiện trọng âm và ngữ điệu. Do đó, những phương pháp tiếp cận mới cần được áp dụng nhằm tăng hiệu quả của các giờ luyện tập phát âm và trong số đó việc sử dụng bài hát tiếng Anh có thể thỏa mãn yêu cầu này. Một nghiên cứu hành động trên 100 sinh viên từ 4 lớp học với phiếu khảo sát, phỏng vấn và quan sát lớp học đã được thực hiện với mục đích làm rõ sự tương tác của sinh viên với bài hát tiếng Anh trong những giờ luyện tập cùng với mức độ hiệu quả mà phương pháp này mang lại. Kết quả cho thấy sự khả quan khi mức độ tương tác của sinh viên khá cao và khả năng thể hiện trọng âm và ngữ điệu nói riêng, cũng như kỹ năng phát âm nói chung cũng được cải thiện. Hơn nữa, kết quả còn cho thấy việc sử dụng bài hát tiếng Anh còn là một phương pháp tự học thú vị và hiệu quả.

TỪ KHÓA. *phát âm tiếng Anh, trọng âm, bài hát tiếng Anh, cải tiến, tương tác*

1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of teaching and learning English in a particular context is often characterised with its own features suitable to the social reality and cultural identity. Among the contexts which are generally common, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) seems to draw much attention from English language experts, language teachers and learners as that context, which is typical in many of Asian countries, especially Vietnam, reflects several challenges to both instructions and acquisitions and individuals who, directly and indirectly, get involved in these. One of the biggest perceived challenges is very little level of authentic English exposure, as defined as the real English used widely and similarly to how it is present in native speakers' communication. This results in a high dependence on course books and teacher instructions which are demanded to model a real world to learners where they can actually use the language, e.g. communicative language teaching method. However, the methods of this kind are not ultimately and thoroughly across the country's secondary schools as they require major changes, difficult and expensive, in the whole system of education and testing. Therefore, a big shift in both teaching instructions and learning strategies, e.g. focus on

speaking ability and phonological range and control, at college seems very demotivating.

Students at Faculty of English Language (FoEL), Lac Hong University (LHU) are currently taking ESP courses; particularly, English courses for business communication as working for foreign companies. Typically, the students at FoEL in particular, and LHU in general are with a low level of prior English knowledge; in other words, they do not have a good foundation of most of language aspects, especially pronunciation. Also, the school is located in an area with very little authentic English which students can have access to as very few foreigners come to live and work, not mention the unfavourable rural areas where a big proportion of students are originated. This could cause the students to attempt vulnerably to acquire the communicative competence, often broken down as grammatical competence, strategic competence, social-linguistic competence and discourse competence which ideally act in a close relationship for a full formation of language proficiency. For

both the subjective and objective reasons, students at FoEL currently find learning English pronunciation and phonology real big hardship, including English sound articulation and, more seriously, sentence stress and intonation – of the suprasegmental phonological elements – which features the prominence of important syllables in utterances to express meaning (Roach, 1991), under the control of firstly grammatical rule of content words and function words, and secondly the intention of speakers in delivering messages and feelings through the language. This feature strongly emphasises the role of sentence stress and speech chunking in meaningful communication production. Sentence stress and speech chunking are also one of the focuses of Lingua Franca Core theory by Jenkins (2000), highlighting major aspects of languages essential to getting messages across. Specifically, in the case of FoEL, students, as observed, often struggling distinguishing stressed and unstressed words within phrases and sentences, and syllables within the words themselves; as a result, they have a tendency to read aloud word by word, with relatively similar level of loudness, highness and length. Besides, students find it challenging to perform phoneme articulation, and this draws most of the students' attention to both performing and correcting themselves, which leads to unnatural speeches.

The reasons for this problem vary. Firstly, this situation could be originated from the number of noticeable differences between Vietnamese and English. Particularly, the former is monosyllabic while the latter is multisyllabic with the notions of stressing in words, phrases and sentences. Another difference is that English is of stress-timed languages, which means the speed of utterances depends on the number of their stressed syllables; whereas, Vietnamese is syllable-timed as the number of syllables, whether stressed or unstressed, rules. It can be concluded that stressing is an aspect commonly seen in English but in Vietnamese, is often neglected. As a result, Vietnamese learners of English tend to speak the two languages in the same way, declining the efficiency of English language communication, even causing breakdowns as Nguyen (2004) pointed out in his research. The second reason should be the insufficiency in learning activities and practices in FoEL classes. Actually, teachers here follow both audio-lingual and CLT approaches, offering students chances to practice from mechanical drills to meaningful activities based on the language knowledge they have acquired from presentations. However, time allocation and class size are seemingly hold-backs. Outside the classroom, furthermore, students do not have good access to a self-learning environment due to the unfavourable locations of the school as well as the students' hometown; thus, self-study is also in shortage or ineffective. This is especially serious for those, from many parts of Vietnam, who are identified with local accents.

Therefore, novel measurements are highly recommended in order that students at FoEL could be fully aware of the two languages' differences, and the remarkable features of English, as well as practices, both in and outside classroom, could be sufficient, practical and fun, which is able to inspire students in their learning as a whole.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Behaviourism theory by Watson (1913) illustrates the process of learning in which repetition, imitation, reinforcement and building habits are main stages. It means learning a language takes time and learners have to put themselves in a process of steady acquisition. Therefore, using English songs in EFL teaching is found relevant when they facilitate classroom activities such as listening, repeating and role-playing. English songs, actually having been a popular teaching aid, are often introduced in listening lessons, and, in a larger scale, presented in lots of EFL course books, including those officially used in Vietnam, e.g. English 11. Regarding Vietnamese social and cultural context, music presents itself as an important cultural value as traditional music of many forms play a role in the people's life. Namely, Cai Luong, popular in the south of Vietnam, and Cheo or Tuong in the north part – perceived as national heritages – are types of music in which people are talking to each other in the way of singing, which signals possibility of applying this technique in training speaking a language.

Beyond possibility, actually, the effectiveness of using songs for teaching and learning English language have been evidenced by a number of research studies including those in the area of English pronunciation. The effectiveness may firstly come from the relaxing and non-threatening classroom atmosphere thanks to the presentation of songs, amazingly motivating students to get engaged in studying. An investigation into the relationship between songs and language performance done by Monlinsky & Bliss (2000) showed that songs could create motivation among learners which contributed hugely to the state of concentration and memorisation. Another study by Chen & Chen (2009) reportedly indicated that to those learners who expressed interest in listening to and singing songs during class time, pronunciation, listening and speaking skills actually got improved. Therefore, in a culture which emphasises the importance of music like Vietnam, it can be possible to hope for particular progress in teaching English using songs. Secondly, English songs are a form of authentic English which is definitely beneficial, according to Feric (2012). In fact, English sung or "spoken" in songs are real and produced by native English speakers; therefore, they reflect themselves as a huge source of authenticity –situations which are witnessed in real life. This resource could be highly valued especially in the context of EFL where exposure to real English, e.g. English pronunciation in this case, is a weakness, as in FoEL as well. English songs are believed to also provide students with linguistic knowledge, e.g. colloquial phrases, besides the noticeable phonological expertise. Third, access to English songs is not a complicated task without worry about copyright issues. Thanks to iTunes music downloading service, songs are easily and economically bought as downloads and stored in computer or smart phone, whatever part of the world it is. Besides, free global streaming services such as YouTube or Spotify really make English songs accessible. Likewise, Vietnamese students can also approach to English songs as streaming or paid downloads via mp3.zing.vn – a streaming and downloading service in agreement with Sony Music and Universal Music. Also, students are facilitated, especially in their independent and life-long learning, with several lyrics websites and karaoke applications, charged or even free of charge. **(x)**

Regarding linguistic knowledge embedded in English songs, phonological knowledge, as being investigated into song lyrics and rhythm, is of major points because song writers, typically those who speak English as first language, inherently connect English linguistic features to those of rhythm and beats during the act of composing. As analysing

lyric lines from a pop song written by American singer Taylor Swift named We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together, findings are extremely interesting.

I'm **real**ly gonna **miss** you picking **fights**
And me **fall**ing for it **scream**ing that I'm **right**
And you would **hide** away and **find** your **peace** of **mind**
With some **in**die record that's **much** cooler than **mine**.

The boldface parts in the lyric lines above illustrate the stressed syllable in terms of phonological rules as they are parts of most of the content words which mainly convey meaning. Surprisingly enough, those boldface parts are also written on major beats of the song rhythm. This similarity indicates the way Taylor send out messages through the song and the way other people speak those lines naturally enough to demonstrate meaning are relatively identical. In fact, music is a composition of pitch, stress and tones which are synthetically matching with the written lyrics lines. According to Reilley & Ward (1997), "the rhythm forces to put the stress in the right places and to observe the strong and weak form" (p.24). Song writer from English speaking countries, purposefully and inherently, know how to make use of this correlation – placing linguistically stressed syllables on a string of beats – well enough for message delivery. Therefore, this act serves as a foundation for a perception of benefits of English songs to language learning. Spicher and Sweeney (2007) claimed that singing along to songs is like speaking in a rhythmic way, similarly to the case of the Vietnamese traditional Cai Luong and Cheo. Additionally, loads of data have been collected in search for a convincing answer about the effectiveness of English songs on the speaking ability of English language learners. Farmand and Pourgharib (2013) conducted an experiment in language oral production with university students in Iran who appeared to share similarities with those from LHU, e.g. the age of 17-19 and the language level of pre-intermediate as those students at FoEL who took part in this research. They concluded in their report that the students, after a certain time learning English with songs, could be able to produce oral communication with good level of accuracy in pronunciation in general, which included stressing and intonation. The mention of Iranian students leads to the consideration into a fact that Vietnamese and Iranian people share a reactive culture (Lewis, 1989) which demonstrates the peoples' characteristics of being good at listening, observing, imitating and understanding patterns. They actually need to spend time for accessing real language and studying the mechanisms before moving to produce repetitions of the observed actions, and ending up with habit building. Students, likewise according to Shen (2009), admitted to have awarded themselves with broader phonological knowledge including important rules in sentence stressing and intonations after much repeated singing along to songs. This phenomenon was also concluded by the researcher himself after careful analyses on those students' performances. Other researchers, e.g. Parker (2000) and Tuan & An (2010), also came to a similar conclusion about English songs and phonological performances.

However, the subject of those research studies were often English pronunciation in its broad term. In the other hand, there were rarely studies carried out intensively on such single phonological aspect as stressing, speech chunking or intonation, which may demand deeper investigation into linguistic aspects, more critical analyses on music and practical experiments on learners' actual performances. What is more, very few articles which have been written suggested particular novel techniques of synthesising English songs to classroom activities as well as approaches for learner's self-study. Actually, that using English songs can be innovative or not depends on how they are presented. A suggested hypothesis is that the use of English songs can be a combination between audio-lingual method and communicative language teaching approach, aiming at providing students with adequate mechanical practice and communicative activities. For greater details, English songs can be presented as a tool for controlled stressing practice upon teacher's instructions, mechanical drills and exercises from the course book being completed. The songs can be used in a pattern of stages throughout a pronunciation lesson, to some extent similar to PPP (presentation – practice – production) format. Firstly, teachers can use an English song for a simple listening exercise which enables students to be aware of the words which contain major meaning, e.g. gap-filling, error correction, etc. The second stage is for mechanical and controlled practice starting with choral and individual drills with lyric lines demonstrating particular stressing patterns. This stage could move from listening, singing along to reading aloud and finally speaking out. This stage is followed by a conversation practice in which those lyric lines are uttered, which then leads to another practice with different sentences but similar stressing patterns. The third stage will be a follow-up activity which is to get students writing their own lyrics lines with a sample music, or even a piece of their own one. This could be a more challenging task for stronger students.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The innovation of using English songs in practicing pronunciation was carried out during a process of an action research (Dahlbeg & McCaig, 2010) following qualitative approach which is appropriate to social and educational studies as this approach is set to have insights to participants' emotions, attitudes and behaviours along with their natural characteristics (Silverman, 2000; Hatch, 2002; Flick, 2014). As part of a circulation of research for progress, implementation and reflection in areas of linguistics and language proficiency at FoEL in particular, and in LHU in general, this type of research appeared to be suitable. More specifically, teaching staff at FoEL are required to attend academic meetings, seminars and workshops scheduled by the management in which they do their own teaching practice reflection, exchange ideas and make suggestions for improvements. Therefore, this action research with assistance from the academic managers at FoEL was expected to bring out positive results. Aiming at comprehending FoEL students' experience in pronunciation training facilitated by English songs, whereby understanding the extent of efficiency of this method, this research was to answer the following questions.

1. How can English songs be used in practising sentence stress in pronunciation class?
2. How do students respond to using English songs in practising sentence stress in pronunciation class at ED, LHU?

The research was implemented during the Pronunciation in Use course at FoEL with a group of 100 participants who were English-majored freshmen from four different classes – 19AV111, 19AV112, 19AV113 and 19AV114. These

participants were characterised as being 17 – 19 years of age and at pre-intermediate level of English proficiency. As for other noticeable properties, those students came from many different parts of Vietnam, in most of which exposure to authentic English was a weakness, along with old teacher-centered teaching methods which only focused on grammar; for that reason, they have long formed a habit of passive learning which was highly dependent on teachers' instructing and task assigning activities. So the innovation could be a brand new experience that could bring motivation and inspiration to them. The research was implemented in a stand-alone pronunciation course which includes eleven weekly 180-minute class meetings with the use of three different data collection instruments – classroom observation, students interviews and students artifacts, and the analysis method of grounded theory and coding (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003). During the entire process, the researcher observed the happening with a checklist to record students' participation in activities which included the level of engagement, facial expressions, and body language, etc. This observation, as to Marriam (2002), Hatch (2005) and Dahlberg &McCaig (2010), could work well in exploring participants' engagement in a particular situation with an in-depth and first-hand set of data. The second instrument was individual interview, one of the ultimate methods for qualitative research, according to Hatch (2005). Ten out of one hundreds participating students were at random invited to semi-structured interviews, lasting approximately 10 minutes each, where they were asked eight pre-set questions regarding their experience and other follow-up questions in case of a need to collect more detailed information. Besides, students' recorded performances, defined as artefacts (Hatch, 2005) were collected from the production stage of pronunciation lessons as well as from other speaking classes, which were then analysed by Adobe Audition software which allows visioning sound waves, to visualise the development in their ability after a period of implementing the innovation. All the data were then coded and categorised for inductive analysis and discussion (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003).

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data, after being analysed, indicated a large range in participants' engagement to English-songs-assisted pronunciation lessons, generating from medium to high levels. An average level, nevertheless, was categorised with participants' confidence though lots of them admitted to have gained much more confidence and self-esteem. In contrast, a positive sign was found in the development of linguistic knowledge among participants leading to expected improvement in stressing and intonation, and oral communication ability as a whole. But on top of those, the activities with English songs in class initiated a more active, interesting way of self-study in which students could make use of the native pronunciation, as well as the lexical aspects through the songs for their imitation and practice. Still, levels of all these aspects showed an inconsistency because they were actually influenced by a number of factors such as the choice of songs and the organisation of activities in the classroom. Firstly, participants responded differently according to the melody speed, the music genres and the popularity of songs as well as how they connected to the students. Classroom activities also affected students' engagements because of their types, level of interaction and

level of challenge. The presentation of the categorical data is in the following sections.

Engagement

The biggest notice from the observation was that almost all students paid their participation in the activities which were scheduled and guided by the teachers, with a high consistency across the groups and class times. This actually indicated readiness and willingness to learn with songs and to do practice in later stages. However good they were, and however they enjoyed listening to music, it seemed that they all knew what was coming and what they needed to do. It was thought at first to be their learning responsibilities; however, it turned out to be a contradicted situation thanks to the observation to the students' smiley faces, cheering noises and attempts to achieve required tasks. In fact, students admitted that they *'were very excited'* or *'really enjoyed the practice',* or, if they did not express much excitement, still had lots of things to do during the time. However, the level of engagement, as mentioned above, varied, from students to students and from activity to activity. As can be seen in the observation checklist, a number of students showed their higher level of engagement by being loud in drill times, spending much time working on conversations and discussions (learning autonomy), being active in expressing ideas and opinions, getting reading for modelling, being willing to ask for assistance and giving other supports (cooperation). Whereas, a group of students often tended to be silent, and tried to complete assigned tasks as soon as they could regardless how successful they could be; others chose to work alone and tried to answer questions on their own rather than being in groups or ignoring the activities. They admitted:

"I always carefully took notes of the instructions of the teacher when he showed us how to stress in the sentences but I did not talk much in class, even though I had questions. ... and I actually didn't do much in class."

The reason could be, for some of the students including those who were not necessarily weak, English songs were not of their interest, or quite new as a form of a teaching and learning aid. Another cause was that students, especially passive participants, still found it hard to overcome the complexity of English pronunciation notions and the hardship of training. They said:

"It was my first time learning this way. I got used to learn grammar and do exercises for long time, so pronunciation was something too new to me and I think it takes time for me to get along with it."

The choice of songs was also an important factor. The researcher realised that popular songs attracted students more than other genres such as rock, country music or hip-hop. Those pop songs were reported to be heard at many places – *"they automatically went through my ears. I love All of Me by John Legend and Blank Space by Taylor Swift"*. Besides, lyrical love songs, e.g. golden oldies such as Only Love by Trademarks, 25 Minutes by MLTR or If We Hold On Together by Diana Ross, were well responded; or those songs with empowering messages, e.g. Born This Way by Lady Gaga or Firework by Katy Perry, always made class time more fun and lively with discussion and presentations using the song lyrics. Another important factor was the

melody speed. Students were often avoiding songs with fast flows due to a fear of failing to accomplish associated-with-the-song tasks The notes showed that on the day when such songs were presented, the activities were not well-participated.

There was also a variety in how engaged students got in different stages of the practice. The first stage of the lesson often witnessed high level of involvement as students worked actively in answering listening comprehension questions and/or completing gapped lyric texts, followed by loud choral and individual drills. Furthermore, *"I listened to the teacher explaining the stress pattern in the lyrics and also the meaning of the song"* or *"I usually used a pencil to underline the words that could be heard clearly in the song and tried to imitate."* The controlled conversation stage that followed was a peak time as most of students found it exciting to make use of the song lyrics to perform life-like conversations with friends. The checklist showed that students worked with their partners to perform conversations until they believed they were at their best. However, excitement lowered when students approached the final stage when they were to write their own speech in accordance to the stressing patterns they had learned before. In fact, it was an extremely challenging task and it aimed at strong students. Therefore, teacher's assistance was vital in this stage in order not to let student's engagement reach a low level.

Confidence

The confidence actually agreed with the engagement level of students. In other words, those students who were actively engaged in the practice often showed a great level of confidence, while some others admitted they were still nervous. For that reason, students' confidence generally stood at an average level. In the reality, the students who felt excited and enjoyed the activities often raised hands and spoke loud in class; they seemed to be always ready to work whenever they had chance. There were many differently expressions which signaled how confident the students were during class time, which include their actions and facial expressions. Unconfident students rarely maintained eye contact to teachers and friends in conversations, and very often, they came up with '*being nervous'*, '*shaking'* or even '*sometimes wishing that they were not invited for an individual performance*' while direct eye communication with various facial expressions added to conversations were seen from strong, confident students. Confident students, also, often spoke with flexible body language and relaxed hands and shoulders. However, as explained before, learning English language is a building habit process, and expectations for changes and improvements are always reasonable.

As for the factors which influenced the students' confidence, firstly, the novelty to the method did as to how engaged the students were. Actually, nerve and anxiety usually happened to those who were not quick at getting adapted to new environment and those who were not ready for changes. In the case of FoEL, the changes were presented in the entire teaching and learning English process when students, perhaps "grammar addicts", were to live another life of real language communication, but more directly, from the use of English songs in lessons which were previously perceived as tools for entertainment. Really to some students, *"The use of songs is new to me"* or *"This was the first time I listened to English songs because I only listened to Vietnamese songs before."* The second factor came from the organisation and the difficulty of the activities. Students seemed to be more comfortable and less nervous in group work or social communication activities when they could avoid the direct look from many other friends and the teacher while in individual practice, e.g. short talk delivery or podium presentation, few students were volunteer for it because they considered those times a real struggle. It demanded more control and supervision from teachers in order to firstly ensure the practice time for all students and secondly perceive how they get along with the activities and track their improvements.

Understanding and performance

To most of CLT activists, and many other English language teachers, pronunciation deals very little with theory, but requires actually work and involvement. That is absolutely true; however, as described above that Vietnamese brings an inactive culture – a desire to understanding patterns before building skills through repeated imitations, there exist several rules in stressing and intonation which they could use as foundations to scaffold their skills. Therefore, the categories of understanding and performance are taken into consideration relatively at the same time. The data suggested that English songs could help students much in acquiring both general knowledge about pronunciation, and more expertise knowledge about linguistic aspects including stress and intonation. Actually, the songs enabled them to comprehend the differences between stressed and unstressed syllable in a way with connection to rhythm. Evidence for this came from the notes taken by students during the time teachers explained phonological rules to them, as observed. In those notes, students took actions to underline or circle meaningful parts of the speech and from that, they practice speaking those parts louder than other to form stresses. One of the notes is illustrated as follow.

"Staring at the ceiling in the dark

Same old empty feeling in your heart"

Not just for song lyrics only, a similar thing happened with other sentences, in a conversation or in a short talk. The students themselves also realised this positive improvement. Thanks to the provided theory and the effective way of practice with songs, students managed to perform more understandable, natural utterances in conversations, both in pronunciation practice stages and other speaking lessons. Speeches with rhythm and differences in highness, loudness and length across syllables were produced more often over time. In fact, their speech could be a bit clumsy, and slow but, as a listener, an idea of what they were talking and, more importantly, of how they changed their tones and pitches when saying were frequently witnessed. Students themselves admitted *"when I was able to get a good line, it was really nice saying it like singing, because I felt it sounding like American."* The differences in tones and pitches were clearly visualised with the support of Adobe Audition software.
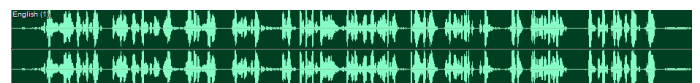
As can be seen from the illustration above, most of the words which contain meaning were said visually at a high

sound wave peak, regardless of some mispronounced words such as '*deserve*' or '*sure*'. However, the following was not as a good performance because the sound waves are relatively no big difference.

Actually, the first illustration was from a short talk with conversation-like sentences and the second one was from a short talk which used more formal language. As actually seen, the more informal performance was better than the other, mainly because the language used in this talk was similar to that used in popular songs. To have a comment on the performance, the teacher who involved in the assessing students' recordings stated that the stress could be clear in the speech, rather than a flat tone from the beginning to the end of the talking; the accuracy of the stressing was rather high because she could understand by focusing on the words said louder and higher, even though there were still stressing points which were misplaced. However, she thought the speech was not very smooth and fluent and students needed more time of practising to better themselves. Of course, the goodness of a performance and degree of improvement could vary, but to some extent, the improvement of the performance does exist, at a high medium level in this case.

Self-study

The result of that students would make use of the resource of English songs for their self-study was most positive. Students started to share ideas about songs and make recommendations of good songs to their friends, which proved that they had actually spent time searching for and listening to English songs at home. Another noticeable point from the observation checklist was that they used other lyric lines for their conversation composition which were not introduced in class by the teacher. The reality that students got access to and listen to English songs at home really initiated a positive change in their perceptions to English learning and English songs, as well as their learning habits.

The use of English songs, in the context of FoEL, was really a big change, but positive in teaching practice which not only served as a teaching aid, but also created a lively environment where students got exposed to high quality English language and found inspirations in study. Being bold and trying new things, in fact, is an effective way to build learning power (Claxton, 2002). Also, new experience and new notion actually stimulate the speed of absorbing and its quality. For that reason, the use of English songs to introduce the notion of sentence stress, as well as to emphasise the importance of this aspect in conveying messages across did work, specifically in the case of FoEL's students.

As previously discussed, English songs are not only a sophisticated form of delivering messages, but also a great source of authentic vocabulary and pronunciation (Feric, 2012). This 'magical' combination of the communication and the language knowledge did prove how well it worked for students at FoEL. Students here did not only vision according to theory of rules and requirements, but did know how to match them with their own understanding; or vice versa, they could draw out the rules for themselves based on the way they got to understand the songs' message. Regarding students' performance, furthermore, the innovation could be a success limited to the type of language

students would use, because they seemed better at stressing when the language was kind of informal, such as conversation or informal talks. Another benefit that the use of songs created was that it was a good opportunity for students to boost their self-study. In fact, this could be the greatest success of the innovation when almost all students showed evidence of using songs to learn at home. The important thing was not whether students could make progress in a short period of time, but how they could force themselves in a good habit, which later could make them forget about Vietnamese whenever they speak English.

However, there were still demands for reconsiderations in terms of confidence. What needed reconsidering includes teachers' techniques in selecting and presenting songs, showing the songs' educational purposes within a form of entertainment as a group of students were not fond of music in general, and English music in particular. Another consideration is the conduct of activities, especially those which were more challenging. It does not mean difficult tasks should be eliminated, because students are believed to learn more outside of their comfort zone, but teacher's instructions should be clear cut and simplified along with enthusiastic assistance during the time, so that students would not be demotivated and subsequently lose their confidence and esteem.

5. CONCLUSION

English songs, appearing in lesson plans of several English teachers for different purposes, could be now added to Pronunciation lessons in order not only to teach students a particular aspects or skill, but to encourage them to be more active, and motivated in their independent study outside the classroom as well. Songs will present their educational value, besides entertainment values as often perceived, and create huge benefits to learners if they are used carefully with critical selection and associated activities which are appropriate to learners' tastes and backgrounds. However, other objective factors could contribute the effectiveness of using English songs include the learning site, students' specila cultural features and local accents, etc. which should also be taken into account when teachers design lesson plans and afterwards implement them in class.

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