



## IMPACTS OF ENGLISH POP SONGS ON EFL STUDENT'S ELISIONS LEARNING AT A UNIVERSITY IN THE NORTH OF VIETNAM

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### Abstract

The article describes the experimental procedure of teaching English elisions through English pop songs after 8 weeks of testing on 2 groups of learner adolescents learning English for special purpose (EFL), experimental group with 35 freshmen and controlled group with 33 ones. Each group consisted of 30 university freshmen who are enrolling full-time in social majors at a university in the North of Vietnam. Materials for experimental were 8 English pop songs with exercises designed in the form of Cloze-Test exercises on the lyrics. Students listened to music while brainstorming 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 elisions sounds has been demonstrated through the scores from the post-test after the experimental.

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## TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA NHẠC POP TIẾNG ANH ĐẾN VIỆC HỌC ÂM RÚT GỌN TIẾNG ANH CỦA SINH VIÊN HỌC TIẾNG ANH TỔNG QUÁT TẠI MỘT TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC Ở MIỀN BẮC VIỆT NAM

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Thông tin bài viết	Tóm tắt
<p>Received: 18/10/2023</p> <p>Revised: 19/11/2023</p> <p>Accepted: 25/12/2023</p> <p><b>Từ khóa</b></p> <p>Âm rút gọn, Cloze-Test nhạc pop tiếng Anh, pre-test, post-test</p>	<p>Bài viết mô tả lại tiến trình thực nghiệm dạy phát âm về âm rút gọn (elisions) tiếng Anh qua các bài nhạc pop tiếng Anh (English pop songs) sau 10 tuần trên 2 nhóm sinh viên năm nhất học tiếng môn chung (học tiếng Anh như một ngôn ngữ nước ngoài-EFL), nhóm thực nghiệm (35 sinh viên) và nhóm đối chứng (33 sinh viên tại một Trường đại học tại miền Bắc, Việt Nam. Với tư liệu thực nghiệm là 8 bài nhạc pop tiếng Anh được thiết kế dạng bài tập Cloze-Test ngay trên lời bài hát (lyrics). Sinh viên nhóm thực nghiệm vừa nghe nhạc vừa tìm ra các đáp án đúng chứa các âm rút gọn. Phương pháp nghiên cứu định lượng được vận dụng để thu thập cũng như hoàn tất việc phân tích dữ liệu từ pre-test và post-test qua thuật toán Independent Samples Test (ANOVA), SPSS. Kết quả điểm số từ post-test sau thực nghiệm chứng minh được rằng nhạc pop tiếng Anh có khả năng cải thiện phát âm về âm rút gọn của sinh viên học tiếng Anh tổng quát.</p>

### 1. Introduction

Regarding innovative tools for articulation instruction in tertiary education, [14] 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 EFL students ranged from 19%, with correct pronunciation reaching 18%. Approximately 27% of

the students received the zero score [10]. In addition to mispronunciation of vowels, consonants, stress, intonation, etc., elisions are the most serious errors that students make. This is 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 EFL Students' Elision Learning".

## 2. Literature Review

A elision, according to [2], 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, [1] 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 elisions 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 en ænd ə en/) 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 [1] and Murcia et al. [2] imply that a potential approach to teach connecting sounds is to provide activities. Brinton also emphasizes paying attention to the unique adjacent sounds of words in the sentence. Four components are used to offer 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 [8]. Pop music consists of short songs with profound lyrics and simple but memorable melodies. Lamb [7] 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 Betrayal, A pretty boy, Soledad, etc.

Numerous scientists have studied the feasibility of demonstrating articulation using English pop songs and have provided favorable opinions towards this technique. Nambiar [8] 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 [13]. Therefore, pop music constitutes a beneficial educational aid in language instruction [5]. Indeed, the bulk of earlier academics, including Lai [6], Engh [4]. Salcedo [11], and Vo [13] 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 elisions 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 elisions 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 EFL students' elision pronunciation improved through using English pop songs?"

## 3. Methods

The experimental program is conducted for 8 weeks in the first semester of the 2023-2024 school year at a university in North of Vietnam. The sample selected was 2 groups of full-time law university EFL freshmen. Experimental group with 35 students were used to experimentally teach connecting sounds through pop songs. The remaining group, a controlled group of 33 students were taught pronunciation according to the coursebook program. The research sample was randomly selected into 2 groups from 23 groups with a total of 702 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 [10].

Adopting the views of Parkinson and Drislane [9], 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 elisions 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.

### 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 (1) \_\_\_\_\_ 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 wideFLread, 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 elisions to students based on correct rEFLonses 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 elision pronunciation was operated seriously. appearing on a single document is pop music.

For the control group, the 8-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 and 5 are 4 out of 8 lessons chosen by the teacher for experimental teaching. Knowledge about connected phonetic pronunciations in 4 lessons is divided equally by the teacher to teach in 8 lessons, each session is from 22 to 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 4 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 elisions differently before and after the trial. If the Sig. (2 tailed) is greater than 0.05, the post-experimental results are no different from the initial results. On the contrary, if the Sig. (2 tailed) is less than 0.05, the elision pronunciation results before and after the experimental are various in elision utterance level between the two groups.

**4. Results**

In order to answer the research question “To what extent does using English pop music enhance EFL learners’ elision?”. Pre-test and post-test results were treated and compared to reveal the difference between the two groups before and after the experimental. Thereby, the level of improvement of students’ pronunciation is also determined. The results of the pre-test were shown in the following table.

**Table 1. Proportion of correct answers for elisions of the experimental group and the controlled group from the results of pre-test.**

Sounds Content	Elisions	
	Experimental	Controlled
Perceptions	21%	23%
Production	19%	18%

**Independent Samples Test**

**Table 2. Comparison of pre-test results on connecting sounds of the control group and the experimental group.**

		Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Preparation of 2 groups from pretest	Equal variances assumed	1.229	.228	.303	55.011	.723	.10300	.31332	-.51002	.73001
	Equal variances not assumed			.320	53.193	.754	.13400	.31442	-.52002	.73002

whereas the untreated group’s ratio was 23%. These low rates illustrated how poorly individuals in the two groups recognize elisions. Due to their inability to identify and pronounce connecting sounds, the majority of learners struggled with speaking and listening English. A large number of the group percentages are virtually identical and all below 25%.

This underscored how equally limited the pupils’ pronunciation of linked sounds is in both groups.

In table 2, the Sig. (2 tailed) is sequently 0.723 and 0.754 greater than 0.05, which means that the elision proficiency of the two groups was shown through pre-test were no different.

As the research was conducted with guaranteed objectivity and equal student levels, the results fulfilled the original research requirements. The post-test findings are displayed as follows.

**Table 3. Proportion of correct answers for elisions of the experimental group and the controlled group from the results of post-test.**

Sound Content	Group	Elisions	
		Experimental	Controlled
Perceptions		57%	26%
Production		30%	22%

**Independent Samples Test**

**Table 4. Comparison of post-test results on elisions of the controlled group and the experimental group**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Preparation of 2 groups from posttest	Equal variances assumed	1.003	.248	-4.0239	56.050	.0232	-.80165	.15212	-1.120080	-.50231
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.019	55.078	.0221	-.810437	.15222	-1.210002	-.50212

In table 4, data unambiguously posted a variance in the percentage of correct replies between awareness and practice of pronouncing connecting sounds. Notably, the experimental group identified appropriately 57% of all questions in the elisions recognition section and 30% of the practice subsection, comparing to the controlled group's 26% in the perception section.

Regarding the practice part, the untreated group students' highest score was only 22%, which was just 4% more than the pre-test value. The experimental group's outcomes revealed significant improvements when compared to the two groups' pre-test results, with 36% of accurate answers for cognition and 12% for practice. The right percentages increased from 19% to 30% and from a low rate of less than 20% to 50%. Although these are not significant numbers, the improvement from the initial results is approximately 39%. This substantial improvement in scores indicated that EFL students in the experimental group had substantially developed pronunciation on elisions after learning them through pop songs.

**5. Conclusion and Discussions**

**5.1. Conclusion**

As a whole, this paper highlighted how EFL students in the experimental group significantly improved their understanding and practice of elisions 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 EFL students' learning spirit.

**5.2. Discussions**

For participants in the control group, pronouncing linking sounds has remained fairly challenging. As compared to the pre-test results of practicing elisions, almost all of the right rEFLonses in the verbalization and cognition parts did not considerably raise.

Obviously, the findings revealed that the textbook pronunciation teaching method has little impact on students' elisions. Table 4 displayed a two-tailed Sig. (2 tailed) 0.232 and 0.221 EFL respectively, both of which are less than 0.05. These values were consistent with the final test results obtained throughout the experimental procedure. The experimental group's proficiency at elision pronunciation and knowledge varied considerably. It can infer that using English pop

songs to teach elisions is a fantastic and effective method.

The outcomes of the article once again inherited scientists such as Lai [6], Engh [4], Saleso [11], Vo [13] to demonstrate that teaching English pronunciation through songs is a effective solution. In particular, current research exhibited a positive result on the method of teaching elisions through English pop songs, which the above-mentioned scientists and others around the world have rarely studied. The author has synthesized a clear theoretical basis and established an appropriate experimental program to ensure scientific value and usefulness as a reference for other related research in the future. Thereby, Pop songs are an ideal tool for English teachers to teach elisions, which is particularly valuable for teaching speaking, listening, and overall language competencies.

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