

# Utilizing English Pop Songs with Karaoke Application among Young Adults to Enhance Connected Speech Production

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the use of English pop songs with karaoke application in an EFL classroom. It aimed to figure out whether using English songs with karaoke application could enhance connected speech production and what the attitudes towards such a technique are. Data collected during the study was through an identical pre-test and post-test, a questionnaire, and an interview. There were 46 first-year students from a renowned university in Southern Thailand who participated in this study. The researcher divided the students into two groups. The control group was taught without the use of English songs or karaoke application, whereas the experimental group with the same instructor, was required to listen to and sing nine English pop songs. Additionally, they were encouraged to use a karaoke application on their smartphones to keep practicing the English songs they had sung. After analyzing the post-test mean scores of both groups by the independent samples t-test, the results showed that their connected speech production after using songs with karaoke application improved significantly ( $p < .05$ ). The study concluded from the qualitative data that the students accepted this technique as a meaningful activity because it promoted pronunciation, listening and speaking skills, and vocabulary in English. Furthermore, learning English through songs and karaoke application were claimed as a fun and relaxed activity; the students could learn English anywhere and at any time.

**Keywords:** English Pop Songs, Connected Speech Production, Karaoke Application

การใช้เพลงภาษาอังกฤษแนวป๊อปพร้อมกับแอปพลิเคชันคาราโอเกะ

เพื่อพัฒนาการออกเสียงต่อเนื่องกัน

บทคัดย่อ

วิจัยนี้มีจุดประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาการใช้เพลงภาษาอังกฤษแนวป๊อปพร้อมกับแอปพลิเคชันคาราโอเกะในเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ และเพื่อศึกษาว่าการใช้เพลงภาษาอังกฤษแนวป๊อปพร้อมกับแอปพลิเคชันคาราโอเกะส่งผลต่อการพัฒนาการออกเสียงที่ต่อเนื่องกันในภาษาอังกฤษหรือไม่ อีกทั้งสำรวจทัศนคติของการใช้เทคนิคนี้ ผู้วิจัยเก็บข้อมูลผ่านการทดสอบก่อน-หลังการทดลอง

แบบสอบถาม และการสัมภาษณ์ ผู้เข้าร่วมวิจัยเป็นนักศึกษาชั้นปีที่ 1 ทั้งหมด 46 คน ซึ่งกำลังศึกษาในมหาวิทยาลัยที่มีชื่อเสียงแห่งหนึ่งในภาคใต้ ผู้วิจัยได้แบ่งกลุ่มทดลองเป็นสองกลุ่ม โดยกลุ่มควบคุมนั้นมีการเรียนการสอนโดยปราศจากการใช้เพลงภาษาอังกฤษแนวปี๊อปร่วมกับแอปพลิเคชันคาราโอเกะ แต่ในกลุ่มทดลองนั้น ผู้เรียนจะได้ฟังและฝึกร้องเพลงภาษาอังกฤษแนวปี๊อปทั้งหมด 9 เพลง นอกจากนี้ นอกชั้นเรียน ผู้วิจัยเชิญชวนและส่งเสริมให้ใช้แอปพลิเคชันคาราโอเกะในมือถือของผู้เรียนเองเพื่อฝึกร้องเพลงภาษาอังกฤษ จากการวิเคราะห์ค่าเฉลี่ยการทดสอบหลังการทดลองโดย Independent Sample T-test พบว่าความสามารถในการออกเสียงต่อเนื่องกันในภาษาอังกฤษของผู้เรียนเพิ่มขึ้นอย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ .05 ผลจากแบบสอบถามสนับสนุนว่าการใช้เพลงภาษาอังกฤษแนวปี๊อปร่วมกับแอปพลิเคชันคาราโอเกะนั้นเป็นวิธีที่มีประโยชน์ต่อการฝึกร้องเพลง ทักษะการฟังการพูด และการเรียนรู้คำศัพท์ ยิ่งไปกว่านั้น ผู้เรียนมีความเห็นว่าเทคนิคนี้เป็นกิจกรรมในการเรียนการสอนที่สนุกและเพลิดเพลิน รวมทั้งผู้เรียนยังสามารถเรียนรู้ภาษาอังกฤษได้ทุกเวลาอีกด้วย

## Introduction

Connected speech, or reduced forms, happens when we speak naturally and fluently without stopping word by word. This way of speaking makes the continuous sequence of sounds. The sound of those words changes depending on the ending and the beginning of the words. This continuous speech normally occurs in all levels and at all rates of speech. However, it was found that only 32% of the reduced forms or connected speech instruction is included in the EFL course books (Crawford & Ueyama, 2011). Therefore, using songs in the classroom is another alternative for developing pronunciation among EFL language learners. Songs can be a beneficial pedagogical tool to help enhance the students' language skills since music and language share many specific features (Mora, 2000). First of all, both music and language originate from sound; they possess some common features of pitch, rhythm, stress, volume, and pause. Another standard feature is their similar composed structures from a small to a larger unit. Both of them are also expressed with the same purpose of conveying a message to others. Finally, we could learn both of them through exposure because the acquisition of language can be acquired through music by written or oral input. These connections will support the students to quickly achieve their goals in language learning, especially in connected speech production.

A number of studies have pointed that using songs in an EFL class benefit both young learners (Paquette & Rieg, 2008; Millington, 2011; Limbong, 2012) and high school English learners (Liva, Sutapa, & Bunau, 2015) in language skills. The researchers investigated the positive effect English songs had on various aspects such as speaking ability (Liva et al., 2015), pronunciation (Aini & Widyawati, 2014; Farmand & Pourgharib, 2013), and vocabulary acquisition (Shaffer, 2004; Schoepp, 2001; Li & Brand, 2009; Alipour, Gorjian, & Zafari 2012). Similarly, several studies have been investigating EFL learners' attitudes toward using English songs in the classroom. In Li and Brand's survey of students in a Chinese context (2009), they asked the students to listen to and sing pop songs in the classroom. The finding revealed that the students showed a positive attitude towards English songs, and they also felt confident in their ESL instruction. Also, Ulate's (2008) survey of the importance of using songs in an EFL class showed that the

students found songs beneficial in terms of practicing pronunciation and listening comprehension.

Apart from learning English in a classroom, the students can learn and practice English anywhere since most of them have smartphones. They can download applications on their phones and watch YouTube videos, movies, and video clips via the Internet which is readily available to most of them, if not all, at all time. These new technologies, which are a part of our lives, can be combined with English language learning successfully because both of them are all about communication. Additionally, Lee (2014) stated that educational technology tools could help improve language skills that are necessary for our daily life. The tools are a modern material that could be integrated into English language learning in all skills, like listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Kasapoğlu-Akyol, 2010). In this study, karaoke application was used for the EFL learners to practice English pronunciation and listening skills.

Before now, research into the use of listening to songs accompanied by karaoke application by young adult EFL learners has been under-researched. Therefore, this study aims to investigate whether there is an improvement in connected speech production after using English songs with karaoke application. Surveying the students' attitudes towards using this technique in the EFL classroom is also part of the aim of this study.

## Research Questions

This study seeks to achieve its aims by means of the following research questions:

1. Do English pop songs with karaoke application improve the connected speech production of young adult learners?
2. What are the students' attitudes towards using English songs with karaoke application?

## Review of Literature

There are many features of connected speech; however, only some aspects: assimilation, elision, vowel reduction, intrusion, contraction, and linking, which are considered frequently present in the English language and in the song lyrics (Crawford & Ueyama, 2011; Ahmadi & Matour; 2014), were included in this study.

- *Assimilation* refers to a sound becoming similar to the adjacent sound in the quick speech; for example, "last year" is pronounced /'lɑ:tʃɪə/.
- *Elision* is a dropping sound or weak form of a word or phrase; for example, "next day" is pronounced /neksdeɪ/.
- *Vowel reduction* happens when the vowel is weak, especially in the unstressed syllables or words, such as article and preposition. It is called schwa and represented as /ə/ in the phonemic symbol.

- *Intrusion* is an inserting /y, r, w/ sound between two words; for example /w/ is intruded between words “do it” and pronounced as /dowɪt/.
- A contraction is a short form of a word, such as /'aɪm/ for “I am” and /dɪdnt/ for “did not”.
- *Linking of sounds* happens when two words are connected and link a consonant and a vowel; for example, “hold on” is often pronounced /hoʊldɒn/ in a rapid speech.

Many aspects of connected speech above appear in the singing of songs (Ashtiani & Zafarghandi, 2015). As a result, singing English songs will guide the students to improve pronunciation and connected speech production in a natural way.

The advantages of using songs in language learning are proposed in different ways. First of all, Abbott (2002) suggested that song lyrics use rhymes, and rhyming is fun; therefore, a state of relaxation and happiness will take place in the language classroom. This suggestion is in line with Stephen Krashen's (1985) The Affective Filter Hypothesis. When the learners are in a state of relaxation, confident, and full of motivation the affective filter will be low, and the input will become intake. Then, the learners will be ready for language acquisition and learning. Secondly, songs can also be a valuable pedagogical tool (Schoepp, 2001; Paquette & Rieg, 2008; Millington, 2011). Using songs in the language classroom can improve language skills, pronunciation, vocabulary, sentence structures, and sentence patterns. Especially in pronunciation, an English pop song is a very beneficial tool. Many researchers claimed that by repeatedly listening to and singing songs, the students gradually acquired different aspects of pronunciation without realizing it, such as connected speech (Ulate, 2008; Arevalo, 2010), structure usage (Schoepp, 2001), and even native-like accents (Shen, 2009). Murphey (2010) insisted that when someone connects with foreign songs for a period, the phenomenon of the “song-stuck-in-my-head” happened to the listeners. Listening to the songs seems to have an unconscious effect in the long-term memory (Mora, 2000); this will help lead them to the acquisition of a second language.

A lot of qualitative research utilizing surveys, observations, and interviews (Li & Brand, 2009; Baker, 2012; Liva et al., 2015) were also conducted to investigate the students' attitudes towards using English songs in the EFL classroom. Many surveys about the opinion on using songs administered among primary school students and high school students showed different findings. Most of the findings indicated that using English songs is fun, enjoyable, and relaxing during the learning process. Furthermore, the students accepted that their language skills such as vocabulary, pronunciation, listening, and speaking improved after being exposed to the English songs. Some researchers found out that English songs helped the students to have more confidence in speaking.

It should be noted that it is essential to select the appropriate genres which align with learners' interests and levels, since there are several genres of songs, such as rock n' roll, pop, hip-hop, jazz, R&B, and so on. The most popular and motivational song type, more than others, is pop songs (Lee, 2014). Kim and Kang (2015) also noted that pop

songs are more like daily conversations between two people because they frequently apply the second person pronouns like “you.” It seems as if the singer is sending his/her message to the listeners. Moreover, the content and the structure in pop songs are constructed in an easy to understand way. These structures make pop songs authentic and natural, and they can be useful materials for language learning in a classroom (Rogers & Medley, 1988). Most researchers concert that using pop songs in the English classroom enriched student’s language skills (Domoney & Harris, 1993; Limbong, 2012; Kim & Kang, 2015).

Karaoke is another tool that promotes effective English language learning. First, with smartphones, the students can download a lot of free karaoke applications to use outside of the classroom to practice English pronunciation. Erten (2015) opined that the rationale for using songs and karaoke in an ELT classroom is not entirely different from each other since they both aim at language practice. Karaoke helps improve both receptive and productive language skills. It can be a useful tool for practicing pronunciation by singing the song numerous times, and the learners can try to imitate the sound like the original version (Rengifo, 2009). Second, classroom karaoke has the potential to be dynamic in social interaction and academic integration (Baker, 2012). Online karaoke applications have these interactions whereby singers can create solo, duet, or group videos on their smartphone. It is new and exciting when the singer approaches and interacts with unknown people online. In all, Lee (2014) proposed that educational technologies like karaoke application can be recognized as “a ubiquitous form of learning,” since the learner can use them anywhere and at any time.

## **Methods**

In order to find out the answer of two research questions on the use of pop songs with karaoke application, the following method was employed.

### **Participants**

The participants of this study were 46 students studying in a renowned university in Southern Thailand. They were the first year students studying in Faculty of Commerce and Management. They were divided into two groups. The control group was engaged in listening and speaking instruction for four months, based on the EFL textbook without the use of English songs or karaoke application. Whereas, for the second group (the experimental group), they had the same hours of instruction practiced. They practiced the English pop songs in the classroom and incorporated learning English through their smartphones.

Since all participants were young adults, they were asked to sign the consent form at the very beginning of the study. They were informed about all details and processes that would take place in this entire research project. They were also assured that all information collected from them would be kept confidential.

## **Research Instruments and Other Materials Used in the Study**

### ***The Identical Pre-Test and Post-test and Rating Rubrics***

The identical pre-test and post-test were used in the study. In the very beginning, the read-out-loud pre-test was conducted in both groups to investigate the students' prior connected speech production ability in these aspects: intrusion, assimilation, elision (deletion), vowel reduction, contraction, and linking of sounds. These aspects of connected speech are examined frequently present in the English language and usually in the song lyrics. All participants had to read aloud 25 short sentences (appendix A) twice for each sentence, and record their voices. The researcher and another two experienced native speaker instructors were the graders, and the method of grading was adapted from Aini & Widyawati, 2014. Each sentence had only one spot to mark; that is, the spot where the ending and the beginning of two words join together. For example, in the sentence "This picture is so ugly," if the students pronounced the connected words naturally and correctly with an intrusion of /w/ sound between 'so' and 'ugly' at least once in the two times they were spoken, they got one point for that item. If two-thirds of the graders agreed, then, that was the final score for each item. At the end of the experiment, the identical post-test was conducted in the same way. The test was graded with the same scale by the same graders.

For the test validity, forty sentences were validated and checked by two native-speaker instructors to ensure that the focusing spot showed the connected speech aspects clearly. The unclear items were cut off until 25 items remained. Moreover, the tests have been piloted once with a similar group of students in the same faculty.

### ***Questionnaire and Interview***

All of the students were asked to answer the questionnaire and later were interviewed after the experiment. For the questionnaire, the first section consisted of one close-ended question and three open-ended questions asking the students' opinion about their preference and problems with using English songs in language learning. The second section was composed of 13 statements about aspects of English songs presented in a five-level rating scale: strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree, and strongly agree. The questionnaire was written in Thai, and the students also answered the questions in Thai. After the questionnaire had been administered, a semi-structured interview was utilized. There were seven students (one male and six females) who volunteered to be questioned for further information about their opinions towards using pop songs with karaoke application. The questions are about their preferences, benefits, and problems in using songs with karaoke application. Their voices were recorded and later transcribed for analysis. To validate the instruments, two experts in English teaching supervised both the questionnaire and the interview questions.

### ***Speech Synthesis Program***

Speech synthesis program (speech-to-text) is another interesting feature provided on smartphones. This feature decodes the human language speech into the written word, so it can be easily used to help check English pronunciation. If the students pronounce the words correctly, the program will transcribe them into the correct written text. Nomass (2013) claimed that speech synthesis programs on smartphones could also strengthen speaking skills in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation ability. It is a beneficial tool to help improve speaking skills. In this study, it was only used to assess the accuracy of students' pronunciation and see how much the students had improved after the song practices.

### ***Song Selection***

For the song selection, the researcher, the native-speaker instructors, and the students selected nine English pop songs to be utilized in the study. These songs had already been checked by the native-speaker instructors to ensure that all of the selected songs presented clear aspects of connected speech such as assimilation, elision, vowel reduction, intrusion, contraction, and linking of sounds.

### **Procedures**

In the experiment, the 30-minute implicit instruction of connected speech was in the form of communicative instruction adapted from Kuo, Kuo & Lee (2016), such as, working on a worksheet, making conversation, and listening to the dialogue. The connected speech aspects were embedded in these activities. They also learned how to pronounce the reduction of *has to*, *have to*, *of*, *did you*, and *want to*.

After the instruction, the song lyrics were given to the students, and the songs were played twice. The students were asked to listen to the songs and fill in the missing words or phrases in the blank spaces on the worksheet. The researcher intended to blank the words and phrases that clearly presented the aspects of connected speech. This omission forced the students to pay close attention and listen carefully to how the connected words were pronounced. After the song was played for the second time, the missing words and phrases were defined. Then the class sang the song out loud together, and some students were invited to sing with the microphone in front of the class.

Later, the students were persuaded to sing karaoke on their smartphones through an application recommended by the researcher. It assisted them to practice the songs they had sung by themselves. At the same time, it was the opportunity for them to visit their favorite songs and create solo, duet, or group videos with other singers from around the world. Once they could sing that song fluently, they recorded their voices and saved it to their smartphones. In the next class, the students sent the songs they recorded to their partners via LINE application. After listening to the peer's songs by headphones, they gave feedback on pronunciation to each other, in comparison with the original song. Finally, the

researcher randomly chose one of the songs from the students, played it over the classroom speaker to give comments and to be used for classroom discussion.

After using the songs and karaoke application, the students had to verbalize an excerpt of the song lyrics that they had sung in class into a speech synthesis program. Then they made a screenshot and uploaded it to the Facebook group. The posts could be seen by all classmates and the researcher as well. The researcher went over the posts and spotted some common mistakes made by most students. In the next class, they examined the common mistakes and practiced the pronunciation of the words together. By this time, the researcher could assess the students' pronunciation improvement and English pronunciation practice at the same time.

## **Data Analysis**

According to analyze the statistical data, the SPSS version 23 computer program computed the change in the students' English connected speech production and their attitudes towards the use of English songs. The following analysis was conducted to answer the research questions:

1. Research Question 1: Do English pop songs with karaoke application improve connected speech production?

Firstly, the pre-test mean scores of both groups were calculated. Then, the differences in pre-test mean scores between control and experimental groups were compared using the independent sample t-test to determine if there is any significant difference in connected speech production. After the experiment, the change in the students' English connected speech production was analyzed. The mean scores from the post-test of the two groups were calculated. Again, the independent sample t-test was used to compare the post-test mean scores between the two groups to compare with the improvement of the connected speech production to see if the experimental group improved significantly after using the English songs accompanied with karaoke application or not.

2. Research Question 2: What are the students' attitudes towards using English songs with karaoke application?

The data derived from a two-part questionnaire were calculated for means and percentages. For the first part of the questionnaire, the data obtained were analyzed and grouped according to the similarity of the students' responses. Then, they were recorded for frequency and finally calculated for percentages. For the second part, the five-level rating scale, the data were interpreted according to the levels of agreement: strongly agree, agree, not sure, disagree, and strongly disagree. The level of agreement was interpreted as follows:



Table 1. Criteria for Rating Scale Interpretation

Ranges of the Total Mean Value (x)	Interpretation of Preference	Level of Agreement
4.50 – 5.00	Most	Strongly Agree
3.50 – 4.49	Much	Agree
2.50 – 3.49	Moderate	Not Sure
1.50 – 2.49	Slightly	Disagree
1.00 – 1.49	Least	Strongly Disagree

The results were also derived from the semi-structured interview. They were transcribed and done through thematic analysis.

## Finding and Discussion

The aim of the study is to figure out whether using English songs with karaoke application could improve connected speech production and what the attitudes towards that technique. The results of the pre-test and post-test, the questionnaire, and the semi-structured interview are reported as follows:

### *Improvement after Using English Songs with Karaoke Application*

At the very beginning of the study, the students in both the control and experimental groups were asked to take the pre-test. There were 25 short sentences to read aloud. Their voices were recorded and graded by the researcher and two native speaker instructors. In each sentence, if the students showed the connected speech at the intended spot, the grader gave them one point. The item which was found correct in two-thirds of the graders would be scored as one point. Finally, all items were calculated for the mean scores as follows:

Table 2. Comparison of Pre-test Mean Scores

Mean (n=23)		Std. Deviation	t-value	Significance (two-tailed)
Pre-test	Control Group	6.22	-1.375	0.176*
	Experimental Group	7.52		

As displayed in Table 2, the pre-test mean scores of the control group and the experimental group were 6.22 and 7.52, respectively. The independent sample t-test was used to confirm that these two groups share the same level of connected speech production prior to the study. The independent sample t-test shows that there was not any significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) between the control group and the experimental group. It can be concluded that these two groups are homogeneous in terms of their abilities in connected speech production prior to the study.

At the end of the experiment, the post-test was conducted to figure out if there were any improvements in their abilities of connected speech production. The post-test mean scores of both groups were computed, and the results are showed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Comparison of Mean Scores between Pre and Post-test

Mean ( $n=23$ )		Std. Deviation	t-value	Significance (two-tailed)	
Post-test	Control Group	7.17	1.99	7.99	0.000*
	Experimental Group	13.48	3.22		

According to Table 3, the post-test mean scores of the control group and the experimental group were 7.17 and 13.48, respectively. The independent sample t-test was used to find out if the differences in post-test mean scores show any significant improvement ( $p<.05$ ). It clearly presents that the post-test mean scores between the control group and the experimental group after utilizing English songs with karaoke application are significantly different ( $p<.05$ ).

#### ***Attitudes towards Using English Songs with Karaoke Application***

After the experiment, the students answered the two sections of the questionnaire, open and closed-ended questions. First, the students answered the open-ended questions. There are two main questions: 1) the benefits received from using the technique, and 2) the problems which occurred during the use of the technique. It can be concluded that the students liked this technique the most (24.05%) because they believed that English songs with karaoke application improved their English pronunciation. The result also indicated that this technique was fun and relaxing since they could learn and do activities with friends (22.78%). Some respondents (10.13%) claimed that listening to songs helped enhance their listening skills. Another 10.13% of the occurrences noted that they learned English with karaoke application anywhere and at any time. Expanding vocabulary (6.33%) and acquiring native accents (6.33%) were also listed as benefits of listening and singing English songs in the classroom. Some respondents indicated that they practiced speaking skills (3.80%), learned from their mistakes (3.80%), and increased their interests in English (3.80%) after using this technique. Additionally, some students (2.53%) said they liked the karaoke application. However, there are some problems with using songs through innovative devices detected by the students. Most of the students (33.33%) said that they could not define the words since the song was too fast and confusing. Some (27.78%) reported that they did not know how to pronounce the word, so they could not understand enough of the lyrics. Sometimes, the karaoke application was found problematic (16.67%), and they could not access the Internet efficiently (11.11%). The rest of the students said they lacked effective listening skills, so filling in the missing lyrics was difficult for them.

The second part of the questionnaire was made up of 13 questions. After the experiment, their attitudes towards using English songs with karaoke application were collected, and the mean score and standard deviation were computed and calculated. The

total average mean score was 4.53, representing the “strongly agree” level. The highest mean score (4.83) was in the item saying the students thought their skills in listening improved the most after using English songs with karaoke application. In contrast, the lowest mean score (4.09) was in the “agreed” level stating that using songs improved their grammar.

Besides the questionnaire, the findings from the interview showed that students had positive attitudes towards using English songs with karaoke application tools. They can be summarized as follows:

- All students thought they improved their English skills such as listening, speaking, and vocabulary after using this technique.
- Students tried to imitate the sound like the original version.
- Students fell in love with English pop songs and sought more chances to listen to them after they had sung those songs in the classroom.
- Most students found the karaoke application useful and fun. They also used it to practice English in their free time.

## **Discussion of Findings**

The analysis from the independent sample t-test indicated that the mean score of the experimental group showed the statistical improvement ( $p < .05$ ) in connected speech production in various aspects: assimilation, elision (deletion), vowel reduction, contraction, intrusion and linking of sounds among young adult learners after using songs with karaoke application. In the post-test, they inserted, reduced, weakened, or linked the sound more naturally with almost native-like ability. This is because songs and speech share some common features of language. Moreover, if the students keep singing and listening to songs throughout the semester, it could lead them to near-native-like pronunciation. The results of this study corroborated that of previous studies in the same light. Farmand & Pourgharib (2013) stated that English songs had a positive effect on the language learners, especially in terms of pronunciation and their oral skills. Similarly, the study of Aini & Widyawati (2014) showed that the students improved their pronunciation of alveopalatal sounds after utilizing English songs in the classroom. These two studies advanced that when the students listened to songs repeatedly, they pronounce the words based on what they have heard unconsciously. In addition to the relaxed atmosphere through songs, the students felt more comfortable to sing and produce words. Karaoke application was another tool that helped motivate the students to improve their pronunciation and a native-like accent (Rengifo, 2009).

### ***Attitudes towards Using Pop Songs in the EFL Classroom***

Using songs with karaoke application play three key roles in improving the students linguistic, affective, and cognitive abilities. First of all, songs might have affected their linguistic function in that most students (19%) accepted this learning method because they thought it improved their pronunciation. These findings are consistent with Ulate’s (2008)

study; the students accepted that English songs helped improve their pronunciation. Moreover, some students (5%) admitted that this technique expanded their vocabulary background, similar to the results of some other studies (Li & Brand, 2009; Alipour et al., 2012). Secondly, using songs affected their affective function. The second highest score (18%) on what the students liked about the technique is all about it being “fun.” Krashen’s theory concluded that when they have reduced anxiety, they have an increased ability to acquire new things. The students had opportunities to work with friends and the teacher. They sang songs together, shared comments, spoke with the teacher, and even interacted online. This teaching-learning method may brighten the traditional English class which only focuses on textbooks. Thirdly, for cognitive reasons, songs provided an ideal circumstance for students to learn automatically. With the repetitive song lyrics, the students were able to acquire and memorize the words, pronunciation, accent, and sentence structure without noticing it (Schoepp, 2001; Shen, 2009; Arevalo, 2010).

According to the results from the interview, one of the students purposed that English songs helped him improve a lot of English skills as seen in the following extract.

*Researcher: How often do you listen to English pop songs?*

*Respondent: Hardly ever.*

*Researcher: In what skills do you think the English songs helped you improve the most?*

*Respondent: pronunciation.*

*Researcher: Could you give me more explanation?*

*Respondent: The songs I sing in class and in the karaoke application get stuck in my head and my mind. I think I have improved my English skills such as connected speech production and vocabulary. When I see a new vocabulary in the song lyrics, I search for its meaning on the Internet. Sometimes, I used those new words to write on my Facebook status.*

This respondent hardly ever listened to English pop songs. However, after he had experienced the songs in class, he was more interested in English pop songs and started to learn English by himself. It was clear that the phenomenon of the “song-stuck-in-my-head” (Murphey, 2010) had happened to him. He constructed his own meaning of the songs and tried to use it more frequently in his daily life. Similarly, one more student who does not love English songs stated that:

*“In the past, I preferred Thai songs to English songs because I could not understand English. But when I experienced this song activity in the classroom, I tried to listen to English songs. If I was interested in the lyrics, I will search the lyrics on the websites and see the song translation in Thai.”*

From these two excerpts above, it is clear that the students' interest in the English language increased by listening to English pop songs. Furthermore, they created their own ways to learn and use more English. This self-initiative is related to Alipour, Gorjian, and Zafari's (2012) study stating that after the experiment, the students practiced with more songs to learn new vocabulary by themselves.

### ***Attitudes towards Integrating Karaoke Application***

Noticeably, the highest mean score of the questionnaire fell in the section of activities and tools. This may be due to the fact that the students are in the era of technology, and that they are constantly being exposed to innovation and ICT. Integrating the karaoke application into their language learning could encourage them to pay more attention to the lessons. Moreover, Lee (2014) concluded that the students could use their mobile devices to review and repeat what they have learned in the class, as this is extremely convenient for the students and can be used anywhere and at any time.

In addition to the interview about the use of tools, most of the students had positive attitudes toward using the karaoke application in their free time. Three students who felt the same way stated as follows:

*Respondent I: I love to sing karaoke in the application in solo and duet. I found it fun and relaxed. My friends and I usually sing karaoke and recorded it to see who has more score in the singing application.*

*Respondent II: I repeatedly sing karaoke for fun and record the songs until I found my voice was nearly like the original songs.*

*Respondent III: At first, I thought singing karaoke was difficult. Later, I tried to use it and joined the unknown people online. I think it's fun and I have more confidence in singing English songs.*

This result is similar to Baker's study (2012), noting that classroom karaoke is the icebreaker activity. It could build enjoyment, fun, and a sense of community. Karaoke application also promotes a good learning environment in terms of academic and social integration. That is, the students learn English language and interact with peers at the same time.

## **Conclusion and Implications**

The summary of the study can be drawn from two research questions. First, using song and karaoke application helped enhance connected speech production in the young adult learners. The independent sample t-test confirmed the significant improvement after using the technique. Moreover, listening to English songs every week gradually developed their pronunciation without them realizing the changes. As it can be seen from the findings, the students in the experimental group significantly improved their connected speech

production such as assimilation, elision, vowel reduction, intrusion, contraction, and linking of sounds. The next research question aimed to figure out what the students' attitudes toward using such a technique in the teaching-learning process would be. The result from the questionnaire and interview showed that the students liked and accepted the songs combined with the karaoke application because it increased enjoyment and improved some linguistic aspects such as pronunciation, vocabulary, and listening skills. Furthermore, the students reported that they felt it was fun and relaxing using this teaching method. They also said that they liked to use karaoke application because they can use it anywhere and at any time. From the results of the study, it can be concluded that using songs in the EFL/ESL classroom are not only applicable for children and young learners but also among the young adult learners. Shaffer (2004) claimed that the song-based EFL instruction should be included in the curriculum since it benefits students' linguistic function. However, the instructors should add this teaching technique into their lesson plan and carefully organize them. Abbott (2002) proposed that incorporating music activities: pre-listening, listening, and post-listening activities, by the teacher, would help the students to accomplish the learning goals. In conclusion, integrating songs and karaoke application in language learning may well make the classroom more lively and meaningful.

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## Appendix A Pre and Post Test

### A: Intrusion

1. That picture is so ugly. /soo'wʌgli/
2. What do you want to eat? /'tuw'i:t/
3. Please do it by yourself. /'du:wɪt/
4. Let's try again. /'traɪyə'gen/
5. I can't find my way out. /'weɪyaʊt/

### B: Assimilation

6. We can go anywhere. /kəŋgou/
7. You can do what you want. /wɒtʃu:/
8. Would you like a drink? /wɒdʒu:/
9. She met a bad girl. /bæggɜrl/
10. I miss you all the time. /mɪsʃu/

### C: Elision and Vowel Reduction

11. That's an interesting idea. /'ɪntrəstɪŋ /
12. They grew up in different families. /'dɪfrənt/



13. I wish you could lie to me. / laɪ tə mi /
14. I will love you forever. /fə'revər/
15. All of my friends text. / əl əv maɪ /

D: Contraction

16. I'll write your name. /aɪm/
17. You've been there once. /ju:v/
18. I didn't warn you. /dɪdnt/
19. They'll tell you tomorrow. /ðeəl/
20. I'd like to watch a movie. /aɪd/

E: Linking of sounds

21. A big girl walks to school. /bɪgɜrl/
22. I had a great trip. /greɪtrɪp/
23. You should leave early today. /liv'ɜrli/
24. It's such a lovely place. /sʌtʃə/
25. I did it all over again. /əl'əʊvər/