

HANOI UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF POST-GRADUATE STUDIES

NGUYEN THI LE THU

USING ENGLISH SONGS
IN TEACHING LISTENING COMPREHENSION
TO FIRST-YEAR NON-ENGLISH MAJORS:
ACTION RESEARCH AT HOA LU UNIVERSITY

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN TESOL

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

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This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

The research reported in this thesis was approved by Hanoi University.

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ABSTRACT

How can I improve students' listening comprehension skill in an English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) setting? This question has always puzzled me during the time that I have been teaching students at Hoa Lu University (HLU). This thesis is to report the main results of a research project which aims to investigate the effectiveness of using songs in improving students' listening comprehension. This action research specifically examines the common problems that the students have in learning listening comprehension, and the extents to which songs can improve students' listening comprehension skills. The research was carried out through the use of questionnaires and tests. The data were analyzed using mainly descriptive statistics method to determine the best statistical technique to interpret the results. The results of the study reveal that the use of songs not only helps the students improve their listening comprehension but also stimulates and increases the students' interest to learn, enjoy and engage in the learning process. Furthermore, it accelerates students' confidence, learning ability and skills when activities are highly motivated and memorable. Further researchers should extend this study to other participants, larger scope in other training institutions. It is recommended that songs should be used to help improve students' listening comprehension skills.

Key words: listening problems, songs, English listening comprehension, students, effectiveness, attitudes

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AR	Action research
EFL:	English as a foreign language
ESL:	English as a second language
HLU:	Hoa Lu University

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of the study, the aims of the study. Also, this chapter states the scope, the significance and the organization of the study.

1.1. Background to the study

Inspired from some researches about teaching and learning English as a second and foreign language, especially in listening skills, there are some obstacles faced by students and teachers. The obstacles are such as using unsuitable methods by the teachers and lack of motivation from the students. Problem existing in students' poor mastery of English listening skills is most of them have very short attention span and lack of motivation (Tee & Fah, 2005). The teachers have to find the suitable methods to motivate the students in order to make them interested in learning English. So, the goal of teaching listening is hoped can be reached.

As we know we can speak sensibly only if we understand what is said. In fact, people cannot talk if they cannot hear other people's talk. That simply means there is not enough language input and there is no output. No deaf person can speak clearly because he cannot hear clearly.

Furthermore, listening skill is one of the basics of learning languages and acquiring them is very important in language learning. Moreover, with the development of high technology, we more and more rely on our ears to get information. There is no doubt that the speed of getting information is faster through listening than reading. Thus, it is crucial to improve the level of listening comprehension of the students.

In Vietnam, English as a foreign language has been taught at school, from elementary school to senior high school. Hoa Lu University (HLU) located in Ninh Binh town, which is famous for tourism, is also responsible for the training of skilled students to meet the demand of the society in the process of industrialization and modernization. Therefore, English in the role of a foreign language has become a compulsory subject at HLU as well as many other universities in Vietnam. Most of the HLU students are non –English major ones, using the same English course books, New English File (Elementary, Pre-

intermediate, and Intermediate Levels). Students learn English in the first three semesters. In each semester, they study 75 periods in 15 weeks (5 periods per week). In general, non –English major students have to study General English in the total of 225 periods before studying English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (applying to some majors). The participants in this study had just finished learning New English File elementary and prepared to learn New English File pre-intermediate.

As a foreign language, English has four skills (reading, listening, writing, and speaking) that have to be mastered by the students. From these skills, listening is a skill that felt difficult to be mastered, because it needs more attention and concentration to comprehend the sounds (listening material). It can be said that listening is not a passive skill; the process of listening is a complex process in which many things happen simultaneously inside the mind. Besides being complex, listening is far more difficult than many people can imagine (Mac Yin, 1990).

According to Yaqin (1996), there are some reasons why listening felt difficult to be mastered by the students. First, the students begin to learn English by the way of reading, instead of listening. In fact, reading is different from listening, like writing is different from speech. The biggest difference is that speech consists of sounds. Listeners must know the sound system; otherwise, they cannot understand speech. Moreover, writing uses different language. Written English consists of neat, correct sentences, while speech does not.

Second, the materials on the tape are usually read by English speaking people. There are different accents, difficult idioms and unfamiliar language chunks in their speaking. This is another difficulty. For the students, their English teachers are usually local people. So the students may not be used to the accents of the foreign people. It is hard for them to understand native speakers.

Third, when English-speaking people speak English, they usually speak at a normal speed. It is too fast for the students to follow. When listening, the students cannot choose a comfortable listening speed; they have to keep pace with the speaker's thinking process. So sometimes they have not even got the

meaning of the first sentence, before the second sentence has already passed. Their results show that they have missed the whole passage.

Fourth, the contents of the tape are not always familiar with the students. Some of them are not relevant to the students. The students may lack the background knowledge about foreign countries and cultures. So sometimes they cannot understand the material or they may misunderstand the meaning of it.

Based on the researcher's small observation at HLU, the researcher has found that most of the students who enroll in the English and Informatics Department of Hoalu University have serious deficiencies in listening comprehension. This is especially observable when the students take the listening lessons at first year level. The researcher observed that many students performed poorly in this course. They are unable to comprehend natural spoken English delivered at normal speed because they do not understand the spoken content of the lessons. Frequently such students lose all confidence as foreign language practitioners. They have difficulty in concentration and maintaining concentration for a long time. This problem was noticed even by other instructors who were offering the same course to different groups. The same problem has also been observed in many countries (Hayati, 2010).

The researcher has also found that it is very difficult for the students to understand English through listening. The problems are most students are from different minority areas. In some junior high schools, there are no language labs to train their listening skills. Listening activities are not common for the students. When they come to senior high school, they cannot adjust their study habits very quickly. They still rely on their eyes instead of their ears to learn English.

Usually, in the lab, the students feel at a loss when they listen to some new text. Many of the students could not understand the meaning of the material after playing the tape for the first time. Expecting them to understand the material, the teacher often gives them some instructions and to play the tape again, at least three times. Still, at least 20% of students might not understand it. Then, the teacher sometimes has to stop the tape to explain the difficult or unfamiliar

words and occasionally explain material sentence by sentence through the whole text. So, this is a serious problem because some students cannot understand the whole text after listening to it three times in class. Furthermore, the students might gradually lose their self-confidence. They are afraid to go to the lab to listen to English again. When they are face to face with listening material, they have little confidence in their listening comprehension abilities. Therefore, they may not understand them because they have to battle the psychological suggestion that they could not understand spoken English.

Beside of that, the teachers feel difficult to find the suitable method or technique to stimulate students in learning listening. If a teacher always uses the same teaching methodology, they may become predictable and, perhaps, less interesting for their students (Ross, 2006). The students have poor mastery of English listening skill because they have lack of motivation. The motivation is much needed in learning listening, because sometimes students have to hear the fast sounds or words more than one to be understood. Without high motivation, they will be bored and can stop learning, and the goal of education cannot be reached. It will be dangerous if there is no effort to reduce the problem.

In order to overcome those problems, it is better to look for an effective method in teaching listening. We can use some activities that can stimulate the students to improve their listening skill. The activities such as watching a film, listen to news report, and listen to English songs. In watching a film, we can cover the subtitle with a piece of paper for a few minutes and try to predict what is going to happen. In listen to news report, we can choose the topic that interests us such as about sport, fashion, or education. When listening, we can write the vocabularies that appear on the particular topic. In listening English songs, we can listen to the pronunciation of words and sing along with the songs.

Listening to English songs is felt more interesting from the other activities. English songs are a great language package that bundles culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar and a host of other language skills in just a few rhymes. Songs can also provide a relaxed lesson on a hot boring day. It can also form the basis for many lessons. It can be used for a wide variety of English for foreign

language learning and teaching activities. It can start discussions on a topic or even become the centre of debate (Futonge, 2005). Using songs in the classroom is a great way to live up listening activities. It can be added a couple of steps that have been used with success to the process though to make the listening activities more effective.

Therefore, the researcher tried to reduce the problems of the students' listening comprehension and to find out what could be done to help them improve their listening skill. So, in this research the researcher used songs to improve the first year students' listening comprehension skills at HLU in academic year 2016-2017.

1.2. Aims of the study

This study aims to find out whether using English songs in teaching listening can help develop students' listening comprehension skills at Hoa Lu University and to give some suggestions for applying the effective activities in teaching listening comprehension to first year non-English majors.

1.3. Research questions

The focus of the study is on the performance of the action research at HLU. This study was carried out to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What are common listening comprehension problems faced by the first-year non-English majors at HLU?
- 2) Is using English songs in teaching listening comprehension an effective solution to the problems identified?

1.4. Significance of the study

It is hopeful that the findings of the study will be useful for the researcher herself and other lecturers at Hoa Lu University in teaching listening comprehension effectively. The results of the study revealed the effectiveness of using English songs for the development of students' listening comprehension skills as well as their attitudes towards language learning.

1.5. Thesis organization

The thesis consists of five chapters: Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results and Discussion, and Conclusion.

- Chapter 1: **Introduction** presents the background of the study, the aims of the study. Also, this chapter states the scope, the significance and the organization of the study.
- Chapter 2: **Literature Review** reviews relevant literature focusing on the issues related to using English songs in teaching listening comprehension skills
- Chapter 3: **Methodology** describes the methodology used in the study including the subjects, the procedure, the data collection instruments and the data analysis.
- Chapter 4: **Results and Discussion** shows the finding of the study from tests, questionnaire. The discussion of the results is made to answer the research questions.
- Chapter 5: **Conclusion** summarizes the findings of the study, limitations and some recommendations for further research as well as recommendations for application of English songs in classes.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews relevant literature focusing on the issues related to using English songs in teaching listening comprehension skills

2.1. Listening skills

2.1.1. Definitions of listening skills

Listening is the act of hearing attentively. Research shows that 45% of our time is spent on listening. We listen more than speak. If this listening skill is used in a proper way, we can master the tools of communicative skills. Listening is difficult, as human mind tends to distract easily. A person who controls his mind and listens attentively acquires various other skills and is benefited.

Rost (1994) states that listening is an essential element of communication and it is also essential for interaction. A learner can express himself orally but never able to communicate with speakers of English if he is unable to understand what is said to him. In fact listening is used far more than any other single language skills in our daily lives (Rivers, 1981; Weaver, 1972).

The concept of listening is also defined by Underwood (1989) as the activity of paying attention to the speaker and subsequent attempt to understand what we hear. Even though listening may be seen as a passive process it is not true because we as listeners have to concentrate on the message to be able to decode it. Underwood argues that hearing can be thought of as a passive condition, listening is always an active process. On the other hand, listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent, pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary to grasp his or her meaning (Howatt & Dakin, 1974). They also emphasize that in listening carefully to spoken language, we need to be able to work out what speakers mean when they use particular ways and occasions, not simply understand words by themselves.

Listening has been traditionally considered a "passive skill". This is a false characterization, and Anderson and Lynch (1988) reject a nationalization of listening as a passive skill, calling it a "listener-as-tape-recorder" explanation of

listening. They say that such conceptualization of listening ignores the interpretations and their own background knowledge.

All in all listening involves a multiplicity of skills. It makes you successful in workplace, family and in the society. Good listening skill is mandatory to get into a profession in communications, management, planning, sales, etc. Listening skills involve a different set of etiquettes, questioning for explanation, showing empathy and providing a suitable response. Good listening skills include the understanding ability. Body language is also a part of listening skill. Eye contact with the speaker, sitting straight and alert are the good gestures of a good listener.

2.1.2. The importance of listening

The importance of listening in language learning has changed over the past years. Listening used to be overlooked and educators supposed that listening abilities would be acquired during the grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation practice (Hedge, 2001). This was quite surprising as abilities to listen play an equal role as abilities to speak in successful communication.

There are a lot of reasons why educators are now focused on the ability to understand and contribute to communication. Firstly, pupils at basic schools are encouraged to develop good listening abilities in their mother tongue so that they can be successful in everyday communication. Secondly, students have to develop effective listening strategies that will enable them to learn another language.

Underwood (1989) points out that listening is an activity of paying attention to the speaker and subsequent attempt to understand what we hear. Even though listening may be seen as a passive process it is not true because we as listeners have to concentrate on the message to be able to decode it. Underwood argues that hearing can be thought of as a passive condition, listening is always an active process.

There are three main stages involved in the auditory process. During the first stage sounds are structured into meaningful units. The process of organising the sounds into the units is based on learner's previous knowledge about the

language. During the second stage we work on the new information. This means that we compare and contrast words or phrases we heard with already known information. The last step includes transmitting the newly acquired information into the long term memory so that we can use this information later (Underwood, 1989).

The importance of listening in language learning is worth considering since when you do not listen you will never learn anything new.

2.1.3. Models of Listening

Although the distinction that Morley points out here was asserted in the early seventies, even more recent sources harbour the same complaint, suggesting little historical improvement in the issue. According to Janusik (2002), “Historically, more time has been spent on teaching speaking than listening, even though listening is the communication activity in which we spend most of our time” (P.8).

One of the problems teachers face is the lack of a single definition of model of listening. Mendelsohn (1998) argues that other scholars agree that there is no accepted definition of the construct of listening. Janusik (2002) also points out listening as the process of receiving, constructing meaning from, and responding to spoken and nonverbal messages. In addition to a lack of a single definition, two types of models have been used to explain listening. The dual models may cause confusion unless one states the perspective of listening under study. One model focuses upon a listener’s internal processing that occurs while he or she is listening. Therefore, as Janusik (2002) pointed out that the lack of a single definition and model is two of the difficulties in teaching listening.

Janusik (2002) also describes the first model as cognitive, as it focuses only on factors inside the listener and the second model as a behavioral one, since it involves factors outside the listener. Janusik (2002) uses these descriptors to point to the nature of listening as a complex process involving both behavioural and cognitive functions and also to point out the tendency of scholars to focus on different aspects of the process. This distinction makes a huge difference in how the skill is approached and studied, since the listening skill encompasses so

much. A complete picture of listening might involve at least an integration of these models discussed and others, in order to move toward a more complete model of the listening skill in ESL learning.

Recent models of listening tend to regard the skill as more active than models in the past have, due to changes in pedagogical thought and teaching trends. According to Anderson and Lynch (2003), one listening textbook states that the tape-recorder view of listening [is]... an inappropriate and inadequate view of the listening process.” This “tape-recorder” view ignores the fleeting nature of listening input, which prevents immediate verbatim reproduction of, but not necessarily internalization of, the input. In other words, much of the listening process occurs internally, such as quickly extracting main ideas and forming hypotheses about unfamiliar words. The “tape-recorder” view of listening does not provide for accurate assessment of many important listening skills, such as determining the speaker’s attitude. In contrast, Anderson and Lynch (2003) recommended the listener as active model builder, which requires the message to be coherent and an interpretation, thus giving a definition of listening as an active skill. This goal of listening is memorization of meaningful comprehension, with the listener and the environment each playing active roles, shaping the process. This is important because if language learning embraces the basic goal of the students’ functioning in the target culture, then tools like rote memorization are not sufficient to help execute the demanding process of listening to a second language. As opposed to reading and writing, the skill of listening is so closely involved with conditional factors such as environment and the speaker’s accent that it must be approached carefully.

2.1.4. Listening procedures

When listening to somebody or something we use different strategies in order to understand the message and that is why it is so important for teachers to help their students to learn how to listen.

There are two main views of listening bottom-up process and top-down listening process.

- Bottom-up listening process

This type of process is linear as the meaning is gained at the end of the process. Hedge (2001) points out that we use our knowledge of the language and our ability to process acoustic signals to make sense of the sounds that speech presents to us. In other words, we create the message from the individual parts e.g. from sounds to words to grammatical units to lexical meaning. And at the same time with this process we use any clues that can help us with the meaning. Hedge claims that there are several clues such as the stress implied on certain meaningful units, relationship between stressed and unstressed syllables; we also use our lexical and syntactic knowledge to get the meaning of the words.

- Top down process

Previous background knowledge of the topic of the conversation help the listener to explain and interpret what the speaker is talking about and this prior knowledge enables him or her to predict what may come next. The prior knowledge was also termed as schematic knowledge. The top down process also allows the listener to avoid some aspects of the bottom-up process (Celce-Murcia & McIntosh, 2001).

According to G. Brown and Yule (1983), the listener must put the language in a context of situation to get the meaning. Native speakers usually use their background and cultural knowledge; and their previous knowledge for listening situations as they expect that certain situations are connected with typical features and language. These above mentioned facts make the listening comprehension easier as they help them to interpret what is being spoken about and what will probably follow (Underwood, 1989).

It is teacher's responsibility to teach their students to pay attention to what they hear, to get the main idea and interpret it and subsequently respond to the information.

2.1.5. Major principles in teaching listening comprehension

According to Yaqin (1996), when teaching listening skill, the teachers have to know the principles. There are some principles of teaching listening skills, they are:

- Listening should receive primary attention in the early stage of ESL instruction
- Maximize the use of material that is relevant to students' real life.
- Maximize the use of authentic language
- Vary the materials in terms of speakers, gender, age, dialect, accent, topic, speed, noise, level, and genre.
- Always ask student to listen with a purpose and allow them to show their comprehension in a task.
- Language material intended to be use for training listening comprehension should never be presented visually first.

2.1.6. Listening Activities

Activities of students in learning English language competence encompass all the skills in the form of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Here are some examples of listening activities:

- a. Listen and imitate, students listen in advance what teacher say and then imitate the correct pronunciation
- b. Listen and repeat
- c. Listen and follow instructions, in this activity students listen carefully to the instructions given by the teacher later in the activity for appropriate follow instructions.
- d. Listen and Match, teachers and students read sentences linking the right image with the new sentence conveyed by teachers. (Kasihani KE Suyanto, 2010: p. 23)

2.1.7. Difficulties to acquire listening skills

Every day, students face many difficulties to understand the messages due to many factors or difficulties. According to Underwood (1989), there are seven causes or obstacles to efficient listening comprehension, but the researchers have taken into account five of them: First, students cannot control the speed of the delivery. It is the greatest difficulty students face in listening comprehension because the listeners cannot force or ask the speakers to speak slowly.

Second, students cannot always have words repeated; this is a serious problem in learning English as a foreign language because, in the classroom, students cannot say to the teacher to play the audio once again; for this reason, students fail to carry out their listening activities because there are words that they cannot understand clearly.

Third, students have limited vocabulary. In this case, sometimes the comprehension of a listening activity depends on students' knowledge of vocabulary because when students listen to new words, they stop listening trying to understand the meaning of the words. This situation causes students to miss what follows in the activity.

Fourth, the lack of contextual knowledge. The teacher needs to share the knowledge about the passage together with students before carrying out the listening task; this helps students to have knowledge of the passage in which they will work on. In other words, when students have previous knowledge about the passage that they are listening to, it is easier to comprehend the message completely.

Fifth, to achieve the concentration in listening activity, it is important for students to concentrate before starting it. Concentration helps them to receive, to construct meaning, and to respond regardless the different accents or pronunciation that students hear. When students achieve concentration, they are not distracted by what happens around and have success performing the tasks. In addition, listening comprehension difficulties such as the speed of speaker to talk, the misunderstanding of the message in the audio the first time it is played, and the lack of vocabulary that avoids the comprehension of unfamiliar topics and the achievement of concentration due to many distractors around are barriers that students have to face every day in each listening activity, whether in or outside of the classroom. But, if listeners face these difficulties, it does not mean that it is impossible to develop the listening comprehension skill. Students only have to adopt a positive attitude to overcome every obstacle and become good listeners so that effective communication takes place.

To fight these difficulties, there are some strategies that work as tools in making English listening comprehension less complicated. These strategies should be learnt either by the students themselves or from the teacher. Also, it is important to learn the proper use of listening strategies to achieve success in listening activities.

2.2. Using English songs in teaching listening skills

2.2.1. Definition of song

Song is very helpful in the language learning process. They are good not only for audiovisual but also for kinesthetic learners. They can give good training in listening and speaking activities. They are the best means to learn different accents and improve pronunciation, enrich vocabulary and listening skills.

There have been many definitions of songs. As defined by Oxford (1993), listening is a complex problem solving skill and it is more than just perception of the sounds. Listening includes comprehension of meaning words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and connected discourse. Furthermore, according to Hornby, Cowie, and Lewis (1974), a song is a piece of music with words that is sung. Song is also a great language package that bundles culture, vocabulary, listening, grammar and a host of other language skills in just a few rhymes. Songs can also provide a relaxed lesson. They can also form the basis for many lessons (Futonge, 2005). Besides, Hornby and Wehmeier (1995) defines songs as “a short poem or a number of verses set into music and intended to be sung”. It is good that a number of verses can be used for teaching purposes to develop English skills or that “short poem” can be served as a tool for listening purposes. In his definition of songs,

“No one knows why songs are powerful, but everyone knows from a personal point of view they are”, wrote Griffie (1992) and I absolutely agree with his statement. Songs contain the power of music as well as the power of lyrics. While music touches our hearts, the lyrics and their words flow into our minds and so they draw us into their own world. It “grasps our imagination, emotions, and intellect with equal force regardless of our language backgrounds” (Holmes & Moulton, 2001).

2.2.2. Rationales for using songs in ELTs

“Using English songs in EFL classrooms can successfully bring about affective learning through providing a harmonious classroom atmosphere, reducing students’ stress and anxiety, fostering their interests and motivating them to learn the target language. Students will enjoy the class, and they will consider English songs as part of entertainment rather than work and thus find learning English through songs amusing and relaxed.” stated by Dörnyei (2003).

Up to now, many researchers as well as authors have admitted songs as a good tool of teaching and learning English. Hancock (2013) rationalizes that people listen to music for pleasure. Teachers have for a long time recognized that they can use songs to motivate students and provide variety in a lesson. Variety is especially important for younger students, who often have very little internal motivation for entering a language classroom. There is a wide spread interest in pop songs among people of this age groups, and such songs can be very profitably exploited in language learning activities. Richards and Rodgers (2014) perceive songs as a melioration of text and may be an effective way to provoke language acquisition. They also strengthen the grammatical structures learned in class. Lynch (2009) points out that all children can undergo different types of accents. According to Reilly and Ward (1997), young children can imitate accents, intonation, and rhythm. Their pronunciation will greatly improve since they center on the sound, not meaning. In short, songs can enhance children’s language skills, linguistic knowledge and pronunciation.

As far as the research is concerned, most children are really fond of listening to songs since they were born or even when they were not still born, which is a good basis to use songs in teaching and learning (Block & Cameron, 2002). Furthermore, it is the children’s nature that they are easy to get bored with the activity that happens repeatedly in their class, so a variety of activities are really necessary for them to avoid the boredom as well as to make them involve in the lesson.

Krashen (1982), a well-known linguist and educational researcher, put forward the Effective Filter Hypothesis. In a nutshell, according to his theory, a blockage

that students develop toward their study is imagined because of a negative attitude that is emotional or affective. Distress, lack of motivation or lost self-esteem can increase this blockage, which stops language input from taking place. Krashen explains that to get maximum results, the filter must be weak.

Generally speaking, in order to help students back on track and trigger their interest again you need some useful resources, which is where songs become valuable tools. Students need to be interested in learning if they are to get maximum results and learners of all ages enjoy music activities, which cannot be a relaxing and well-deserved from textbooks, but also work to weaken their effective filter (Lokaverkefni, 2008). This is supported by York (2011) that music has positive effects on lowering the effective filter, provides the opportunity to practice pronunciation, can help improve acquisition of the target language, and can assist in the development of automaticity.

In summary, due to the above discussed contributions of using songs in teaching and learning listening skills, the researcher finds it significant to explore whether the use of songs really works at the HLU or not. At the same time, the study also highlights the important role of learning listening to students as well as suggests a way to break the common routines of teachers in teaching listening skills. Therefore, it is essential to find an innovative way (using English songs) to raise students' participation as well as attitudes towards listening skills. From the findings of the study, the researcher hopes that teachers and students at HLU will actually use English songs for listening skills in the future.

2.2.3. The Criteria of Song Selection

Lynch (2008) provides three principal song selection criteria, they are:

- a. Use songs that are popular with the students whenever possible. Unfortunately, students frequently select songs for classroom use which are objectionable in some way making the song unusable.
- b. Songs must have clear and understandable lyrics. Nothing is worse than a song almost nobody can understand. If you have trouble understanding the lyrics by listening, than another song needs to be selected.

- c. Songs should have an appropriate theme. There's enough bad news, negativity and violence in the world already. Songs with any type of negative theme should be avoided. There are plenty of positive, upbeat, even humorous songs available.

2.2.4. *The Role of Choosing Song*

According to Suyanto (2010), when the teaching English with the song, the teacher needs to consider several things, among others, as follows.

- Choose songs that fit with the characteristics of the students and the level of language development
- The lyrics do not be too long, so not difficult to memorize
- Song should be interesting, dynamic, and pitched excited.
- For certain purposes, such as teachers want to teach a particular language item then choose a song that contains the repetition of language items
- In selecting a song, it is necessary to consider simple words of song and easy to pronounce
- Short song with simple words and happily pitched would be quickly memorized (p. 144)

2.2.5. *The Benefits of Songs*

By using songs in the classroom, students can practice their listening skills and increase their cultural knowledge. Almost any song can be used in the ESL classroom. The pronunciation and rhythm lessons are the same as for the children's songs and the lessons may help students become more interested in different types of songs. Practicing lyric reading, studying the vocabulary, and listening to various songs can help students become more familiar with popular songs and make them more confident in their ability to listen and understand the world around them (J. L. Brown, 2006).

According to Yaqin (1996), the other benefits of using songs in the classroom are songs can be used:

- to present a topic, a language point, lexis, etc.
- to practice a language point, lexis, etc.

- to focus on common learner errors in a more direct way
- to encourage extensive and intensive listening
- to stimulate discussion of attitudes and feelings
- to encourage creativity and use of imagination
- to provide a relaxed classroom atmosphere
- to bring variety and fun to learning

From explanation above, it's considered that songs have much benefit. Some of them are songs can motivate the students and make them more confidence in their ability to listen the materials.

2.3. Previous empirical studies on using songs in teaching listening comprehension

There are some studies related with the use of songs in teaching listening. First, a research done by Fismar (2003) entitled "The Correlation between Delighting in Listening to English Songs and Students' Achievement in Listening Comprehension of First Semester of English Study Program at University Bengkulu Academic Year 2001-2002", where the result is the English songs are helpful in stimulating the development of students' listening comprehension.

Another study is a research done by Le (2015). She is a teacher at Kim Son A High School. In her writing, she uses Classroom Action Research as research method to find the result of English songs toward listening skill. While data collected by observation checklist, interview, documentation and test. And, she found that the song media is an effective way to enhance the students' listening skill and the students' achievement in English subject.

In this research, the researcher employed songs to improve first-year non-English majors' listening skills at HLU. There was no difference about research method that was applied by researcher. I also used Classroom Action Research to find the results of employing songs toward students' listening comprehension skills in my setting research. But, the school and the songs are different in this research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Action research

3.1.1. *Definitions of Action Research*

Action research (AR) is known by many other names, including participatory research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning, and contextual action research, but all are variations on a theme.

According to Dai Quang and Hang (2016), AR is characterized by spiraling cycles of problem identification, systematic data collection, reflection, analysis, data-driven action taken, and, finally, problem redefinition. The linking of the terms "action" and "research" highlights the essential features of this method: trying out ideas in practice as a means of increasing knowledge about and/or improving curriculum, teaching, and learning.

In terms of what AR was, having considered what it was not, AR had been defined in many different ways. It is Stephen Corey and others at Teachers College of Columbia University who introduced the term action research to the educational community in 1949. In Corey (1953)'s definition "Action research is a way in which teachers try to study their own problems scientifically, in an effort to evaluate, guide and correct their procedures" (p.48) . Tsui (1993)'s definition was more detailed and simpler: "Action research is a very effective way of helping teachers to reflect on their teaching and to come up with their own alternatives to improve their practice" (p. 171).

Very often action research is a collaborative activity where practitioners work together to help one another design and carry out investigations in their classrooms. According to John Elliott, teacher action research is "concerned with the everyday practical problems experienced by teachers, rather than the 'theoretical problems' defined by pure researchers within a discipline of knowledge" (Elliott, cited in Nixon, 1987). Research is designed, conducted, and implemented by the teachers themselves to improve teaching in their own classrooms, sometimes becoming a staff development project in which teachers establish expertise in curriculum development and reflective teaching.

In another way, AR was mentioned at two levels by Gebhard and Oprandy (1999): “At one level, action research is about teachers identifying and posing problems, as well as addressing issues and concerns related to the problem. It is about working toward understanding and possibly resolving these problems by setting goals and creating and initiating a plan of action, as well as reflecting on the degree to which the plan work. At another level, it can be about addressing educational practices that go beyond each teacher’s classroom” (p. 63).

In brief, action research is a kind of scientific study which is often carried out by a teacher or an educator in order to solve a practical problem in a classroom. As it was named, it focuses mainly on the actions of both students and teachers. So, it can solve the problems which are related to all actions and activities in a classroom. The problems which are solved by action research are often practical and useful for teachers.

3.1.2. What are purposes of teacher action research?

According to Dai Quang and Hang (2016), *Teacher Action Research* is research designed to help a teacher find out what is happening in his or her classroom, and to use that information to make wise decisions for the future. Methods can be qualitative or quantitative, descriptive or experimental.

Action research has been employed for various purposes: for school-based curriculum development, as a professional development strategy, in preservice and graduate courses in education, and in systems planning and policy development. Some writers (i.e., Jacullo-Noto, 1992; Lieberman, 1988; Sagor, 1992) advocate an action research approach for school restructuring. Action research can be used as an evaluative tool, which can assist in self-evaluation whether the "self" be an individual or an institution.

3.1.3. Why does a teacher need to do action research?

AR in schools, colleges or universities solves everyday practical problems experienced by teachers, rather than the “theoretical problems” defined by non-teaching researchers. It should be carried out by the teachers themselves or by someone they commission to carry out for them.

If the teacher was trained to conduct AR, he could solve his problems on his own or in collaboration with other teachers. Anders (1988) and Tsui (1993) gave three reasons why a teacher needs to do AR:

- To solve own problems in a scientific process and improve own practice
- To adapt theory (findings of conventional research) to practice (own problems)
- To share the results of action research with other teachers

Moreover, AR is also for a teacher's professional development. He would become a better teacher because he knew how to find out and solve his problems in teaching scientifically on his own. This also shows his dynamic, activeness and imagination in his teaching job.

3.1.4. When is action research used?

AR is used in real situations, rather than in contrived, experimental studies, since its primary focus is on solving real problems. It can, however, be used by social scientists for preliminary or pilot research, especially when the situation is too ambiguous to frame a precise research question. Mostly, though, in accordance with its principles, it is chosen when circumstances require flexibility, the involvement of the people in the research, or change must take place quickly or holistically.

It is often the case that those who apply this approach are practitioners who wish to improve understanding of their practice, social change activists trying to mount an action campaign, or, more likely, academics who have been invited into an organization (or other domain) by decision-makers aware of a problem requiring action research, but lacking the requisite methodological knowledge to deal with it.

3.2. Research Design

Having consulted a number of research papers on action research of various authors, the researcher decided to follow Stephen Corey's (1953) model of action research.

This research is a Classroom Action Research which is, according to Corey, a type of research oriented to enacting immediate changes in an educational setting.

AR is identify a “problematic” situation or issue that the participants-who may include teachers, students, managers, administrators, or even parents – consider worth looking into more deeply and systematically. Again, the term problematic does not mean that the teacher is an incompetent teacher. The point is that, as teachers, we often see gaps between what is actually happening in our teaching situation and what we would ideally like to see happening (Burns, 2011).

Classroom Action Research is research conducted by teachers in the classroom itself through self-reflection, in order to improve his performance as a teacher, so that the learning process can run well, and improve student learning outcomes (B. L. Brown, 2002).

3.3. Setting and Subjects of Research

This classroom action research was conducted in the second semester of the academic year 2016-2017 at Hoa Lu University where the researcher has been teaching for six years.

The subjects of this study consist of forty three students from class D9KTA at HLU in Ninh Binh Province. They are the first-year college students majoring in accounting, both male and female learners, at the age from 18 to 20. They all have studied English in Primary and Secondary school for an average of 10 years and they have just finished studying the New English File Elementary by Clive Oxenden in the previous semester without much difference in scores of the same achievement test done in the final examination. They used the same textbook, studies at the same university, and have the same major as accounting. The researcher was in charge of teaching this group in the first semester and continued teaching them New English File Pre-intermediate in the second semester with the frequency of 5 periods per week.

In previous semester, the researcher taught the students subject General English 1 and she did not use songs in teaching listening comprehension. Besides, the researcher also asked the participants if they had learned listening through songs.

They claimed that they only listened to English songs as an entertainment activity but not in their studying program. This helped the researcher make sure that the participants had not experienced this learning method before the research intervention.

3.4. Research Procedure

According to Corey (1953) and Burns (2011), there are four steps in action research: planning, actions, observation, and reflection. Based on this model, this study was conducted in the following procedure:

- 1) Pre-test, to know the score of students' listening skill before treatments.
- 2) Treatments, the effort to improve students' motivation in learning listening. There were two cycles in this step:
 - Cycle 1
 - Planning, making a plan what is needed and what will be done in action, and making a lesson plan.
 - Actions, applying of songs activity in teaching listening based on the lesson plan.
 - Observation, observing and writing the situation and condition during the action.
 - Reflection, analyzing to know the effect of action and fixing the planning for the next circle
 - Cycle 2
 - Planning, identifying the problem from action 1 and deciding the problem solving.
 - Actions, doing the program of action 2.
 - Observation, collecting data in action 2.
 - Reflection, evaluation of action 2.
- 3) Post-test, to know the score of students' listening skill after giving the treatments.

During ten-week study period, the researcher used ten English songs in teaching listening comprehension to students. Of these ten songs, seven

songs were used as extra listening activities, each activity lasted about 20 minutes and was integrated into a fifty-minute lesson. The other three songs were used as the main teaching content of three listening comprehension lessons.

(For detailed action implementation timeline, please see Appendix 5)

3.5. Technique of Data Collection

To obtain data for the study, two different instruments were employed: questionnaires and tests.

3.5.1. Questionnaires

Questionnaire is considered the most appropriate research instrument for gathering information relating to the attitudes of the respondents (Gillham, 2000). Moreover, questionnaires are an inexpensive way to gather data from a potentially large number of a large number of respondents in a very short time. Therefore, to collect data for the study, two questionnaires were administered with a view to identifying students' common problems in learning listening comprehension and to measuring any possible changes in students' attitudes towards listening skills after using English songs.

The questionnaires used in this study include five questions in each one, which are a mixture of closed and open-ended questions.

- The first questionnaire consists of five questions (Appendix 1), in which the first question is designed to investigate the students' opinions towards the listening skills, whereas the rest of the questionnaire is to collect information about the common listening comprehension problems of the students in class D9KTA as well as to investigate their opinion about issues related to listening lessons.
- The second questionnaire consists of five questions which were designed to investigate the students' opinions towards the use of English songs in learning listening skills and their opinion on the advantages of the use of English songs in learning listening as well as their frequency of listening to English songs. The questionnaire was printed in English and delivered to forty three students in class D9KTA at HLU after the intervention.

The information from the questionnaires helped the researcher identify students' common problems and evaluate the students' attitudes towards the use of English songs in learning listening comprehension skills.

3.5.2. Tests

Quantitative data was taken from the students' score in pre-test, two actions, and post-test. Both pre-test and post-test are from the tests library of HLU.

The pre-test was given to the students at the beginning of the course before they started leaning. The data in pre-test was taken to know the students' listening skill before treatment (see Appendix 3).

In actions, the data was collected twice; in action 1 and 2. The data was to know students' development during treatment. Then, post-test was taken to know students' ability in listening skills after giving the treatment (see Appendix 4). The format of the tests and the types of exercises are designed the same for each test. Only the topics of the listening tapes are different. Therefore, the researcher should be sure that two tests are relatively equal in the level of difficulty.

3.6. Data Collection Procedures

The process of collecting data lasted ten weeks from November 2016 to January 2017. Firstly, the class was given pre-test before the intervention. They were also given questionnaire 1, which was delivered at break time and collected after fifteen minutes. The researcher provided guidance for the students on how to complete the questionnaire as well as to be aware of the purpose of the study. Secondly, students were taught listening lessons by using English songs. In each lesson, the teacher observed the overall class motivation as well as their participation. After the intervention, the students were given a post-test and questionnaire 2. The information collected from tests and questionnaires was then summarized and presented in the form of statistic information (charts and tables) for analysis to make some recommendations on the use of English songs in teaching listening to first year non-English major students at HLU.

3.7. Technique of Data Analysis

In this study, the researcher used quantitative data analysis, which involves a numeric or statistical approach, to summarize and describe the data. Pie charts

and column charts were used to visualize the raw data collected from questionnaires and tests.

The researcher then compared individual student's initial (November 2016) listening level scores to their subsequent scores (January 2017) to prepare and present her quantitative data analysis. Cross-tabulation technique, also called Pivot Table in Excel, was used to compare the differences (improvement) in the scores of pre-test and post-test.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Pre-data

4.1.1. Data from questionnaire 1:

The researcher carried out the first questionnaire in order to get information about the students' attitudes toward listening and the use of songs in teaching listening to find out the causes of the students' low comprehension in listening lessons. Besides, other relevant information was also collected. The results of Questionnaire 1 were presented as follow:

Question 1: Students' opinion about the importance of listening comprehension in English study

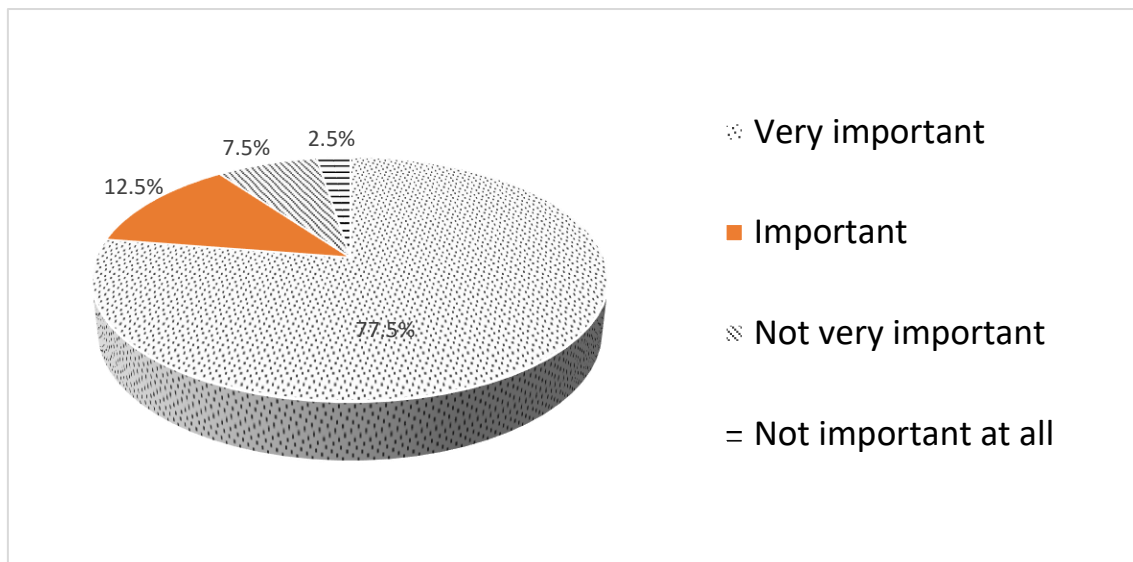


Chart 4.1: Students' opinion about the importance of listening comprehension

Question 1 explored the students' attitudes towards listening comprehension skill. The result showed that most of the students are aware of the importance of the listening comprehension in language study and the majority of students attached great importance to listening. 90% think that listening comprehension is important and very important. Only one tenth think it unimportant and not important at all. Perhaps students understand that listening comprehension is an input in language learning process. Moreover, if they want to achieve communicative approach, they have to improve this skill.

It is clear that listening comprehension is a hard skill for the students and most of them think that it is a very vital skill.

Question 2: Students' common problems in learning listening comprehension

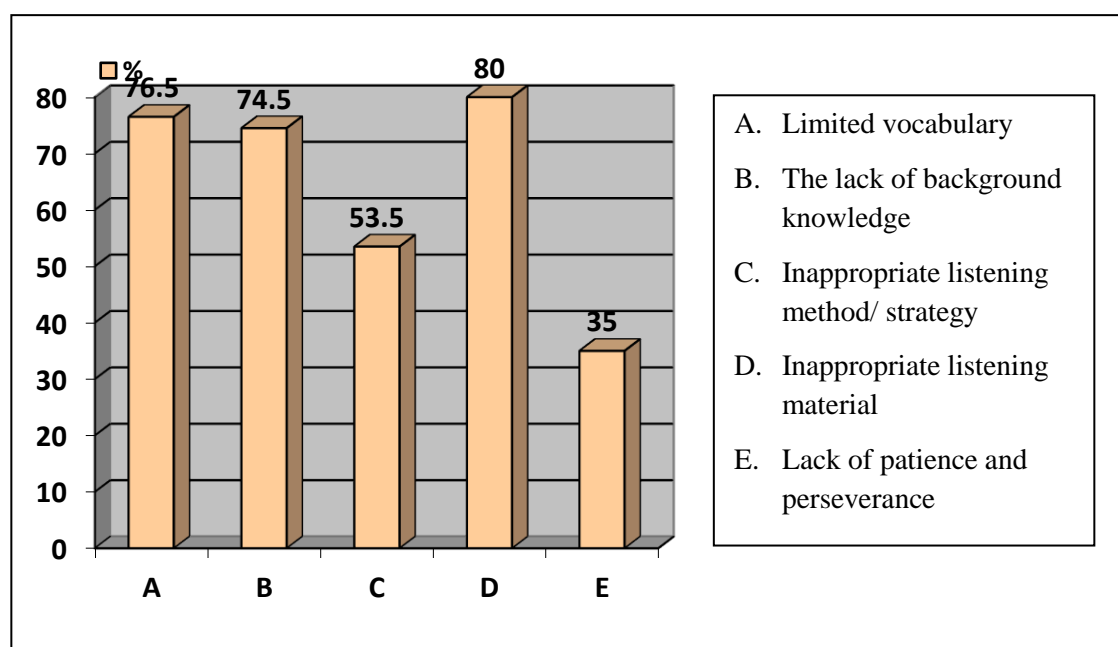


Chart 4.2: Students' common problems in learning listening comprehension

All of the participants reported the same pre-listening problems during the process of listening comprehension, which is the lack of adequate background knowledge (74.5%) and vocabulary (76.5%). This finding is consistent with Wu (2003) who reported that the students were provided with vocabulary and background knowledge merely from textbook and the knowledge of the English language was very limited. As a result, students without the background knowledge of the learning content fail to comprehend the meaning of the listening materials. Therefore, this study found that for the pre-listening for ESL course, students at HLU need to acquire some basic knowledge of the learning materials and enrich their English vocabulary as an important factor to foster their understanding in ESL.

In the step of during-listening, the students indicated four listening comprehension problems which are the problem of inappropriate listening materials, listening method problem, different accent problem and problem

caused by the lack of patience and perseverance. First, the highest figure (80%) from the chart shows that inappropriate listening material is the main reason why students do not do well in listening tasks. In listening class, teachers tend to choose passages, record news or broadcasts, or prepare lectures. All of them have value, but they are extremely difficult sources for early practice in selective listening. This may lead the students find the tapes boring and not emotive to listen any more.

Moreover, the researcher found that the inappropriate listening method was the big problem of the students. The students at HLU tend to translate every single word or sentence during the listening practice. This situation is worse when the students lost their direction to follow the lesson but they are trying to do the translation. Based on the responses from the questionnaire 1 as well as the researcher's observation during listening classes, the students cannot find the key words accurately and their attempting to do the translation for better understanding was effortless. Besides, because of the ignorance of the importance of listening teaching, the students have less listening practice for their foreign language learning, and the teaching purposes of listening lessons and most listening material which is selected in the class focus on checking the students' ability, instead of teaching necessary listening skills. Thus, the teaching models of most listening class confine to "listening and checking answers".

The fourth problem which is indicated by 35% of the participants is the problem in lack of patience and perseverance. If the listening content is very difficult, students will lose their interest and patience in the listening comprehension.

If students struggle with listening comprehension they will struggle to learn material presented orally. Having an awareness of the students' problems in listening comprehension helps teachers better address the needs of their students.

Question 3: Students' comments about the listening tasks in the textbook New English File Pre-intermediate

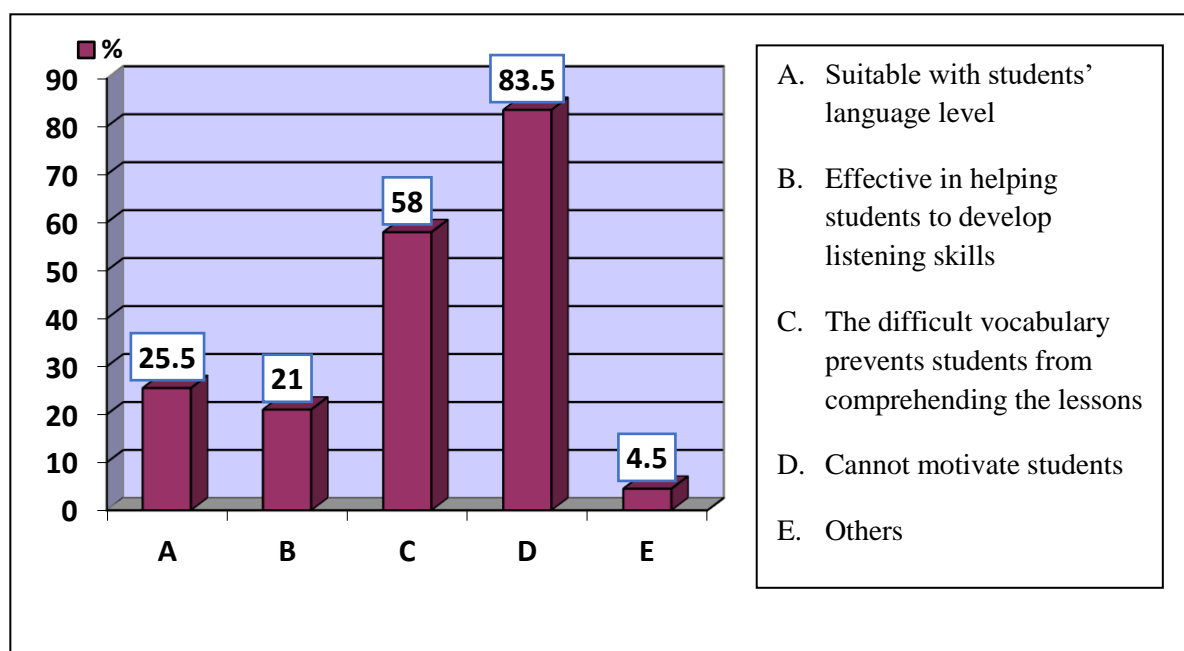


Chart 4.3: Students' comments about the listening tasks in the textbook

New English File Pre-intermediate

Question 3 asks students to give their opinion about listening lessons in the textbook New English File Pre-intermediate that they are learning. Most of the students (83.5%) believe that the topic and the tasks in the listening lessons make them depressed. More than half of the students (58%) claim that the difficult vocabulary prevents them from comprehending the lesson. 25.5% of the students find the listening texts and the tasks in the book suitable with their language level, and only 9 students (21%) say that the listening texts are effective in helping them to develop their listening skills. Besides, 4.5% of students said that the listening tasks are too long.

In conclusion, most of the students find that the listening texts and listening tasks in the book New English File Pre-intermediate contain difficult vocabulary and they are not interesting enough to motivate the students in listening lessons.

Question 4: Students' opinions about how to develop their listening comprehension skills

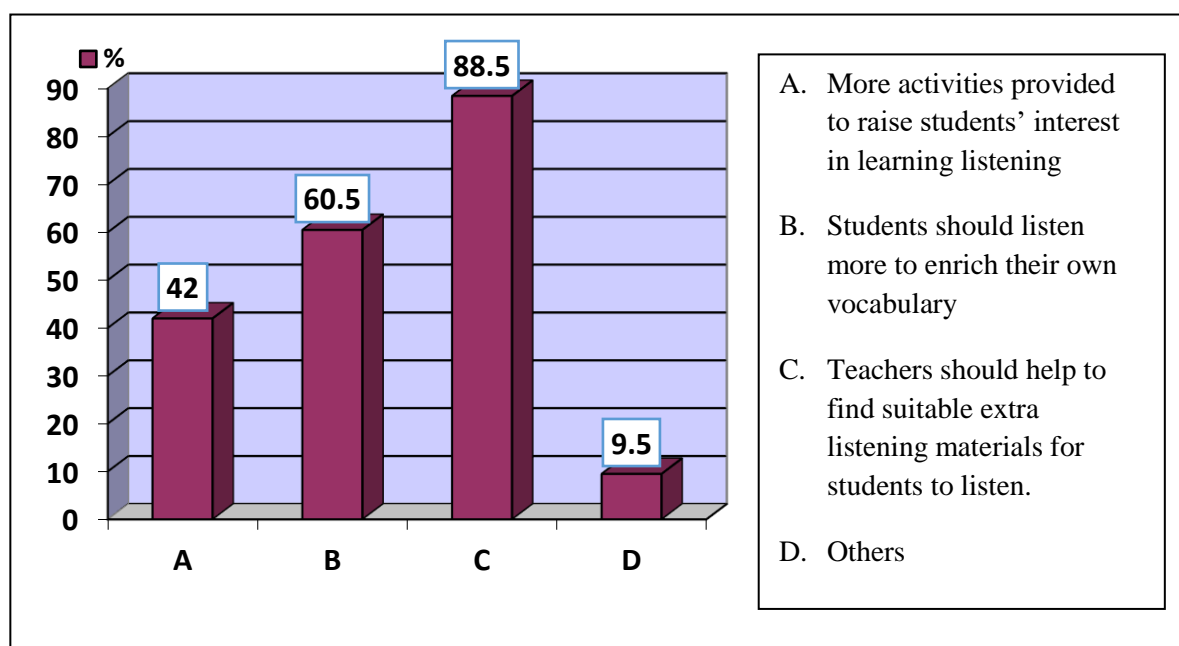


Chart 4.4: Students' opinions about how to develop their listening comprehension skills

Question 4 asks students for their opinions about what should be done to improve their listening comprehension skills. More than a half (60.5) of the students agree with the idea of students should listen more to enrich their own vocabulary. 42% of them approve the idea that teachers should provide more activities to raise students' interest in learning listening. However, the highest percentage (88.5%) believes that teachers should help students to find suitable extra listening materials to listen. Four students (equals to 9.5%) say that students should learn grammar well before learning listening.

The above numbers show that using the textbook New English File Pre-intermediate only is not enough to develop students' listening comprehension skills. Besides listening to the tapes and do tasks in the book, extra listening materials and extra tasks are also very important.

Question 5: Students' opinions about the benefits of using songs in learning listening

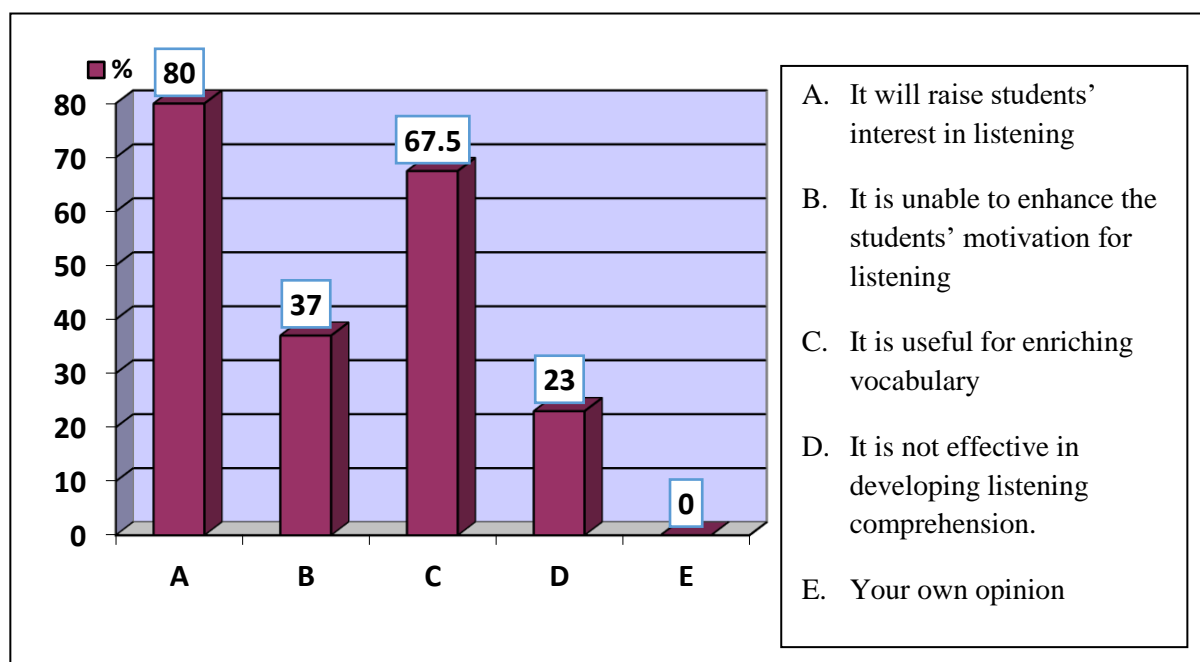


Chart 4.5: Students' opinions about the benefits of using songs in learning listening

Question 5 investigates information about students' opinions about the benefits of using songs in learning listening. Most of the students realize the importance and benefit of using songs in learning listening. However, 16 students (37%) think that using songs is unable to enhance the students' motivation for listening and 10 students (23%) say that it is not effective in developing listening comprehension. In fact, these students turn out to be poor performers in listening lessons, so they are afraid of listening lessons and they are often lazy and passive in doing listening tasks.

4.1.2. Pre-test

The pre-test is taken from HLU's test bank. In the test bank, there are many listening tests. The researcher chose a test which suited with students' level and covered the topics that the students had learnt in the first term. The results of the test were presented as follows:

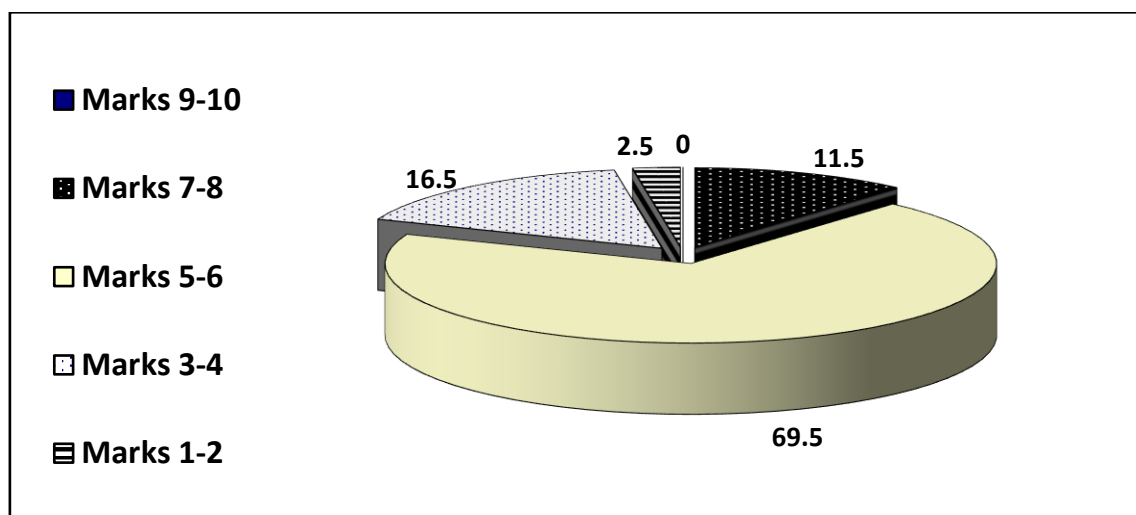


Chart 4.6: Students' results in pre-test

Chart 4.6 demonstrates the results of students from the pre-test. None of the students reached marks 9-10 while marks 1-2 were remained (2.5%). Besides marks 3-4 were even higher than the amount of marks 7-8 (15% compares with 12.5%). The number of students got mark 5-6 is highest (69.5%).

Summary

As can be seen from the information above, almost all of the students had positive attitudes towards listening comprehension skills. In their opinion, listening comprehension is very important. However, in the previous term, the students did not comprehend much in listening lessons and the main cause of the students' low comprehension in listening lessons was that they lack motivation and vocabulary for listening.

4.2. Post-data

4.2.1. Data from questionnaire 2

Below were the results of the second questionnaire.

Question 1: Students' opinions about using songs in learning listening that the teacher applied

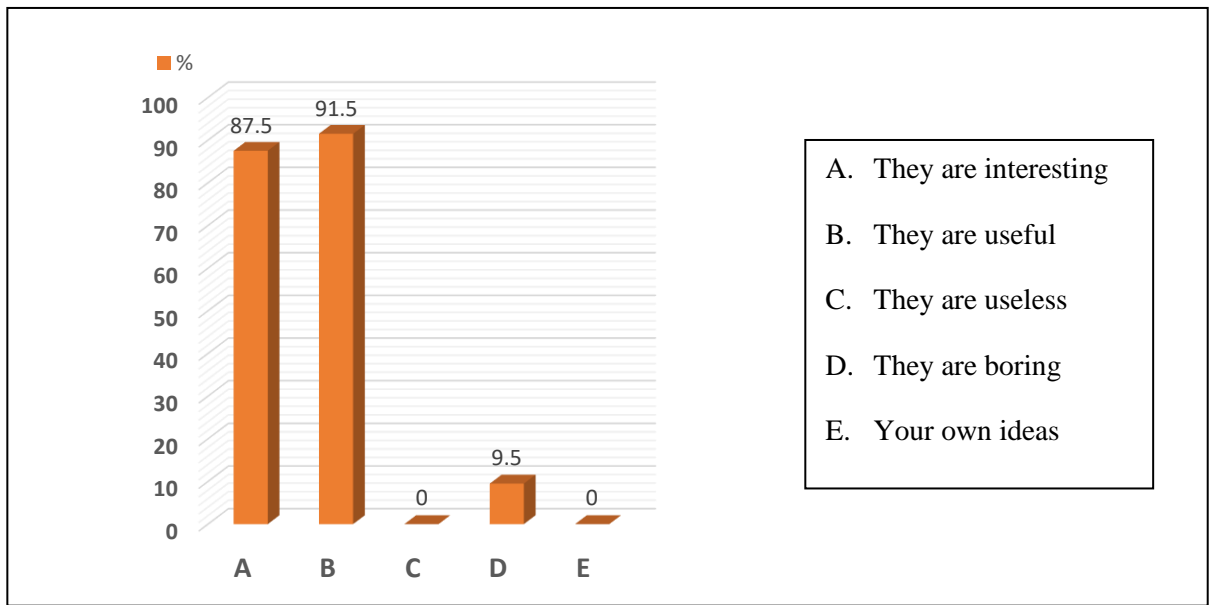


Chart 4.7: Students' opinions about using songs in learning listening that the teacher applied

Question 1 asks for students' opinions about using songs in learning listening that the teacher applied. The majority of the students found the use of songs in listening lessons was interesting and useful. Only four students (9.5%) thought that learning listening through songs was boring and none of them said that this activity was useless to comprehend the listening and do the listening tasks.

Question 2: The difficulties faced by the students towards songs as the media in teaching listening comprehension

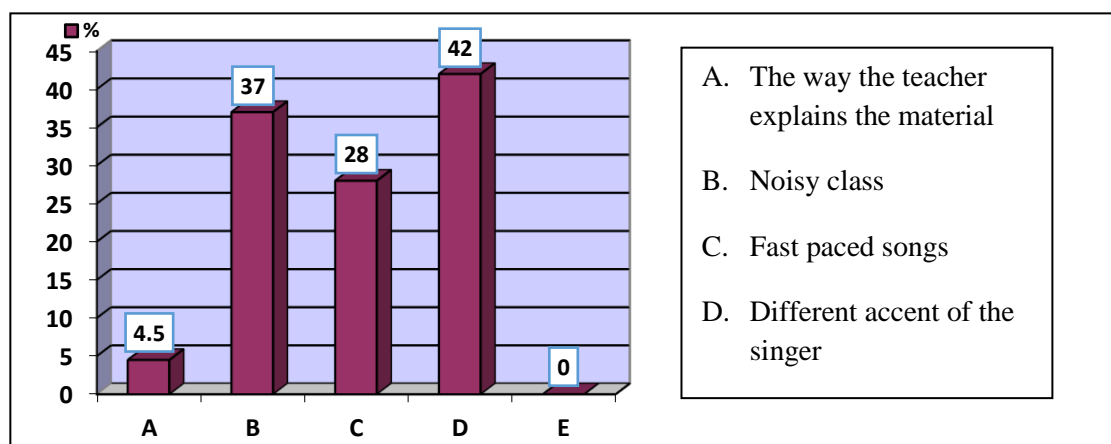


Chart 4.8: The difficulties faced by the students towards songs as the media in teaching listening comprehension

To answer the second question of the research about the difficulties faced by the students towards songs as the media in teaching listening comprehension, the data taken from questionnaire were analyzed. From 43 students, most of them agreed that how the teacher explains the material was not a problem for the students. It was evidenced by the amount of students who agreed with that statement (only 4.5%). Besides, the real situation in the classroom observed by the researcher had proven the statement that the teacher's way of teaching is not become the difficulties for the students. Since the learning activities held in the classroom, the difficulties may be faced by students in listening comprehension using songs is dealing with noisy classroom. It shows that the noisy classroom become one of the difficulties faced by the students (37%). In this research, the treatment given to the action implemental group took place in an ordinary class. As the result, the noises from other classes disrupted the classroom activities. Finding a way to overcome this situation also became challenge for the teacher when using songs for the media of teaching listening. The use of language laboratory would be necessary when the teacher wanted to use songs as the media of teaching listening.

The data gained from the questionnaire also showed that fast paced songs became another difficulty faced by the students (28%). The teacher's creativity

in developing the material, in this case song, is needed. The teacher may follow the principles criteria when they choose song as media of teaching listening. As it stated by Coromina (1993) and Lynch (2008), songs must have clear and understandable lyric. The teacher chose songs which are understandable; not too fast in term of rhythm so that the students could follow the material based on what they heard from the songs. Furthermore, the different accent of the singer became one of the difficulties faced by the students in listening comprehension using songs.

For that reason, it is important for the teacher to select appropriate songs which can help the students learn the language and gain learning objectives. To overcome this problem, the teacher should find the song which is not too fast and understandable. The finding was in line with Coromina (1993) and Lynch (2008), who stated that songs must have clear and understandable lyric and they suggested avoiding those kind of song in teaching listening ability through song. The researcher also believed that replaying the songs could overcome this difficulty.

Question 3: Students' satisfaction in doing listening tasks

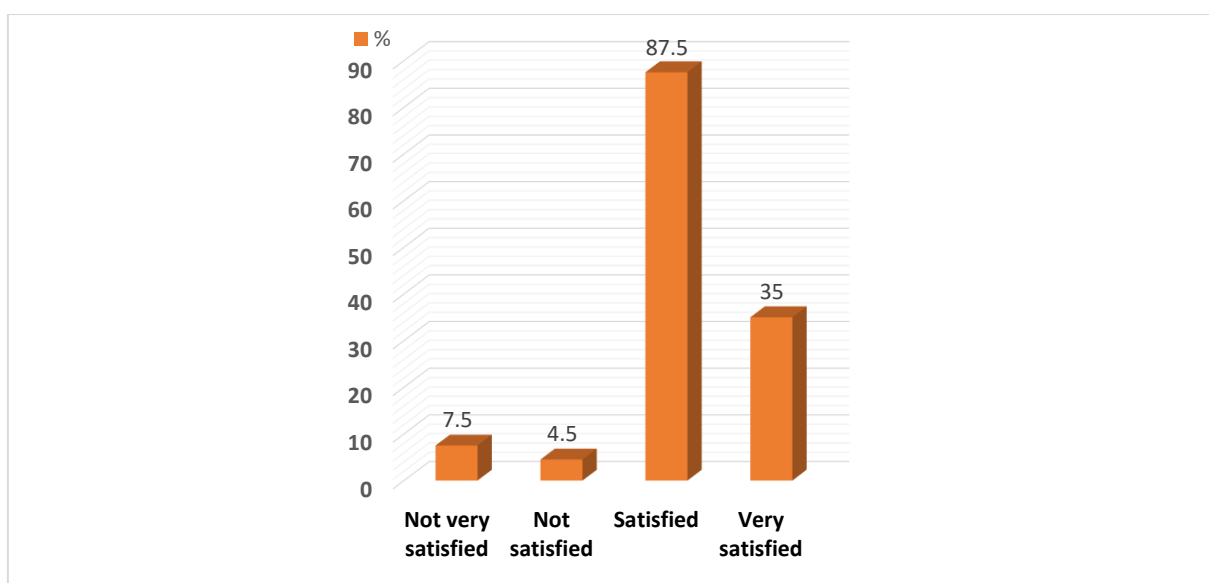


Chart 4.9: Students' satisfaction in doing listening tasks

Question 2 explores students' satisfaction in doing listening tasks when they listen to songs. Most of the students had positive attitude towards the tasks results they got. They were excited about the designing of the tasks. Only 4.5% of the students felt not satisfied with their results.

Question 4: Students' frequency in listening to English songs after learning listening through English songs

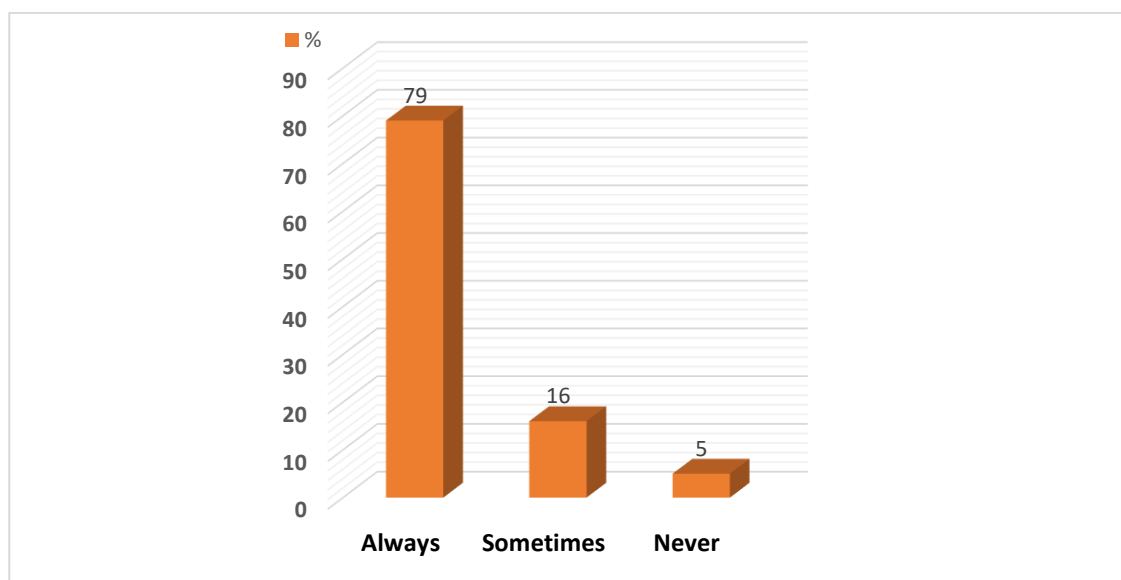


Chart 4.10: Students' frequency in listening to English songs after learning listening through English songs

Question 3 explores the students' frequency of listening to English songs outside classroom. Students had positive feedback on this activity. 79% of the students admitted that they did like listening to English songs in their free time. And this proves that listening to English songs has a great effect on students' listening habit. Students tend to listen to English songs as a means to improve their English. They feel learning English in this manner is more enjoyable and relaxing.

Question 5: Students' opinions on the advantages of learning listening through English songs

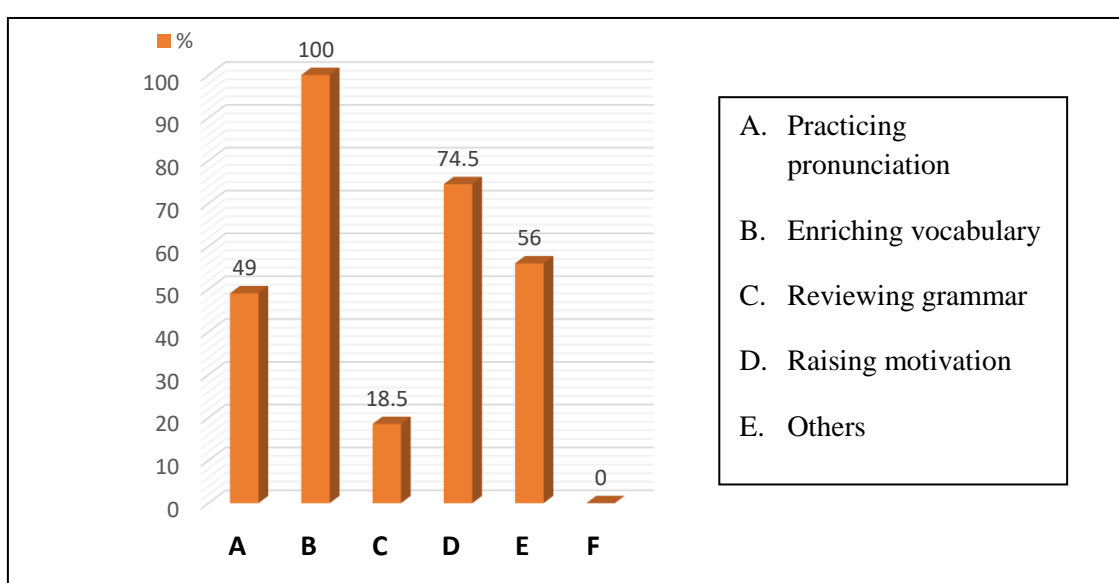


Chart 4.11: Students' opinions on the advantages of learning listening through English songs

Question 4 asks students about the advantages of learning listening through English songs. In general, most of the students considered this activity brought many benefits when they wanted to develop their listening comprehension skills. In details, the biggest advantage that students thought they got was raising their motivation (74.5%). According to Baoan (2008), popular songs touch the lives of students, and grow out of their natural experiences and interests. All popular songs are eternally occupied with variations on the same themes of Love, Friendship, Joy, Sorrow, Dream, and the rest, which are the common feelings of humans. Therefore, more time and attention to pop music in an English

curriculum would increase students' motivation because classroom activities would use their knowledge, their music, and their language.

The second benefit for students is enrichment of their vocabulary. All of the respondents claimed that they expanded their vocabulary. The students said that they expanded their vocabulary by working out the definitions of new words in context and/or looking up words in dictionaries. The students' view on the link between listening to vocal music and learning language correlates with Legg's (2009) statement that the process of memorization of words benefits from such an activity.

Another advantage of learning listening through English songs was also highly appreciated by students. Nearly half of the students admitted that listening to English songs helped them to practice pronunciation. Songs give listeners perfect pronunciation models. As you learn to sing them, you are practicing your pronunciation, you are imitating native speakers, and you are learning how to speak better. The rhythm naturally leads to better pronunciation, better intonation, and more fluency. Besides, 56% of the students claimed that they listened to English songs also for entertainment. The last advantage that the use of songs brought out was to reviewing grammar (18.5%).

Summary

The results from Questionnaire 2 interestingly revealed that the students like the use of songs in teaching and learning listening skills which researcher applied during the time of action plan implementation. Students also found that this activity was very useful to develop their listening comprehension skills. The students no longer had difficulty in doing listening tasks because of their improvement in motivation and vocabulary. Therefore, the way the researcher used English songs in teaching listening had great influence on developing students' listening comprehension skills and raising their interest in listening.

4.2.2. Post-test

The post test is also taken from HLU's test bank. In the test bank, there are many listening tests. The researcher chose a test which suited with students' level and covered the topics that the students had learnt in the second term. The post-test was the same level and format as the pre-test. The results of the test were presented as follows:

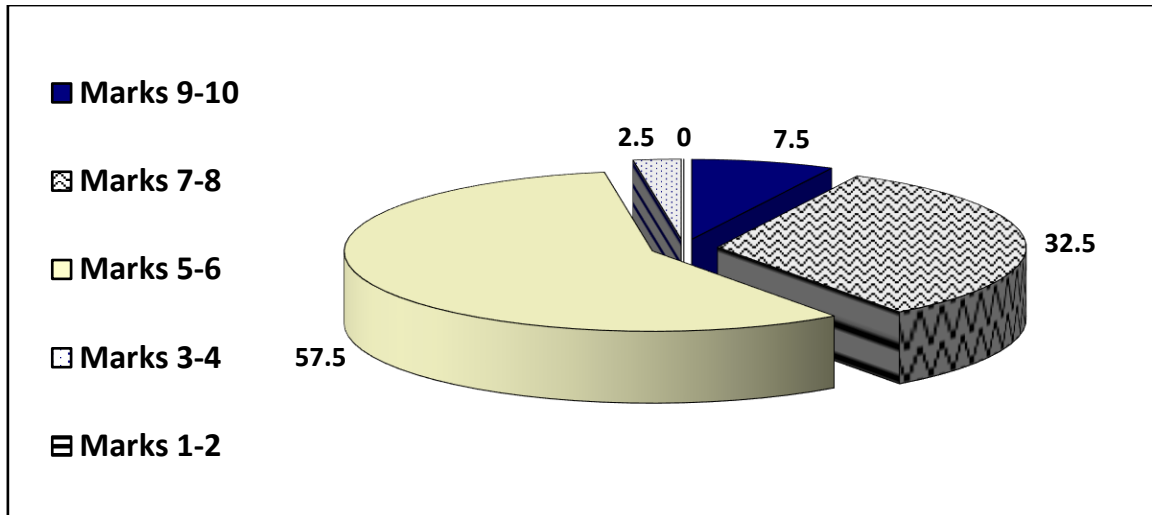


Chart 4.12: Students' results in post-test

The pre-test and post-test comparison

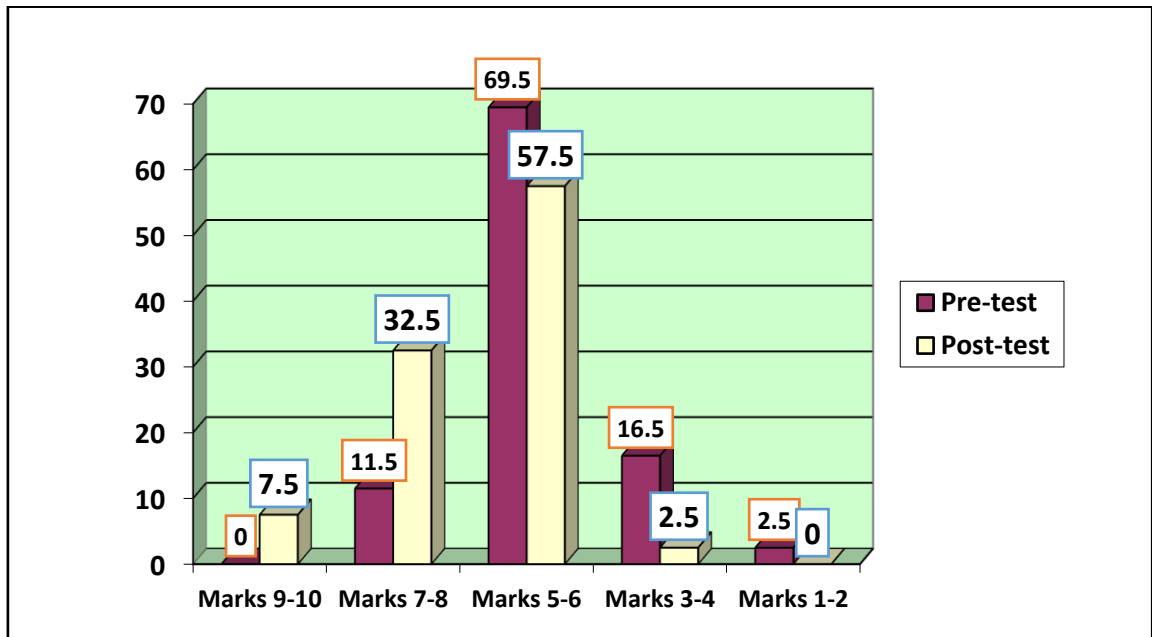


Chart 4.13: Comparison of the pre-test and post-test results of students in class D9KTA

It is obvious that there is a positive change in the scores of the students. The results from the pre-test and post-test showed that the students gained significant high level of listening comprehension thank to the use of English songs in teaching listening that the teacher applied in the action implementation. In the pre-test there were no marks 9 or 10 but in the post-test, 7.5% of students got marks 9 or 10. The number of students who had marks 7 or 8 increased strikingly from 11.5% to 32.5%. None of the students got marks 1 or 2, and only 5 students got marks 3 or 4. In conclusion, the scores from the two tests showed a big difference in the students' progress in listening comprehension as well as in developing their listening skills.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter concludes the study, discusses its limitations, draws conclusions from the findings and makes recommendations for using songs in teaching listening comprehension as well as further study.

5.1. Major findings of the study

5.1.1. Major findings from the pre-data

One of the significant findings to emerge from this study is that students' low comprehension in listening lessons comes from inappropriate listening method, the lack of students' background knowledge and vocabulary, and especially the inappropriate listening material. The listening contents in the textbook are not always familiar and interesting enough for students in class D9KTA, and therefore they need to be provided with suitable and preferable kinds of extra listening activities to widen their background knowledge, to enrich their vocabulary as well as to raise their interest in listening.

5.1.2. Major findings from the post-data

After ten weeks of action plan implementation, the results of this study show that the students had higher motivation in listening to the songs applied by the researcher. The students showed great interest in these activities. They are now more willing to share their knowledge and opinion in the listening topic or do the listening comprehension tasks. Consequently, the students' level of listening comprehension was higher.

5.2. Recommendations

Based on this study and its findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations for teaching and learning listening comprehension.

Firstly, as mentioned in the literature review, motivating students to get actively involved in listening lessons depends on several factors. Nevertheless, this study set out with the aim of assessing the impact of the teacher's teaching method through the use of English songs in teaching listening comprehension as extra listening activities. Based on the data gathered from the survey questionnaires and tests, major findings of this study match those observed in earlier studies and

help the researcher have an overview of the current situation of the use of songs in teaching listening comprehension to first-year non-English majors at HLU. The findings of this study also have a number of practical implications which help to improve the situation of teaching and learning listening comprehension for the sake of the students.

5.2.1. Using English songs in teaching listening comprehension as an extra listening activity

The empirical findings in this study indicate that it will be beneficial for the students when the songs are used in teaching listening and building a good habit of listening for them. Through frequently listening to the songs, students will have more chances to contact with the target language in many different fields, the students' background knowledge and vocabulary surely will get better and their listening comprehension will also be improved.

By listening outside classroom, students will establish themselves a habit of listening. This habit is very necessary for them in practicing their listening comprehension skills. Meanwhile, the listening content in New English File Pre-intermediate are not always interesting and familiar enough for students to comprehend, which is the reason why finding listening materials to help improve students' language level and interest becomes a very important task to both students and teachers. To this end, the teachers have a very important role because they are the ones who understand their students' need and know exactly what level their students are at.

Thus, the situation investigated in the research calls for the application of songs in teaching listening comprehension.

5.2.2. Using listening comprehension activities appropriately and flexibly to check students' outside class listening

From the experience of a teacher for six years at HLU, the researcher realizes that, sometimes, it is not the activity itself that makes the students have difficulties in listening comprehension but maybe because the teacher employs the activity in an inappropriate way or handing the activity out of their control or

interest. Thus the teacher should be able to make a good choice of listening comprehension activities to check students' outside class listening.

In addition to the criterion of appropriateness, the teacher should also take into consideration the flexibility of applying comprehension activities. This work is affected by the students' level of proficiency and their familiarity to the topic.

5.2.3. Encouraging the students' internal factors

Over and above the teacher's activities or the ways they carry out the activities, the students' personal traits, such as their feeling, interest, needs, etc., should be taken into consideration when investigating into the factors causing low listening comprehension. These sometimes affect the success of the lesson, especially for a lesson. Clearly, it is of significance to assist the students to build up their strong motivation for listening by raising their understanding as well as to facilitate their skill development. In addition, it is advisable to improve the students' realistic awareness of their personal strengths and weaknesses in such a challenging skill.

Another thing that can encourage the students' internal factors is that teachers' activities should meet the demands of the students. To help students to obtain high listening comprehension, teachers should consider their needs, interests or prior experience with any kinds of activity.

5.3. Limitations of the study

No research is perfect and complete in all aspects. Every research has got its own limitations. The researcher is aware that this study may have some weaknesses.

The most important limitation lies in the fact that this study was conducted with a rather small number of participants and in a short period of time. This may affect the general assertion of the research results. The study would have been more reliable and more generalized if it had been conducted with larger participants. Another limitation of the study is that the researcher was unable to control some variables such as topics of the lessons, absence of some students, etc. Finally, the study merely focuses on using English songs in teaching listening comprehension, not all other language skills.

5.4. Suggestions for further study

Due to paucity of participants and time at the disposal of the investigator, all the aspects of the problem cannot be expected to deal with. Therefore, the present study opens up certain avenues for further research on using songs in teaching other skills seems to be great usefulness.

In the present study only 43 subjects were selected for the study group. Further research may be planned on a larger population. This may help in generalizing the results of present study.

Present study considered only the effects of using songs in teaching listening comprehension. Further research can investigate the effectiveness of using songs in teaching other language skills such as reading, speaking, pronunciation, etc.

5.5. Conclusions

It is apparent the first-year non-English majors at HLU often encounter several problems when dealing with the listening comprehension skills. The most common problems are the lack of background knowledge and vocabulary, inappropriate listening methods and inappropriate listening material. Therefore, students often find it hard to comprehend the listening, which make them feel unmotivated in listening lessons. Consequently, students' listening comprehension level is rather low.

To improve the situation, teachers should take into consideration such things as teaching and learning condition, the listening materials, listening activities, learning strategies and students' preference, etc. In more details, using songs as extra listening activities appropriately and flexibly is feasible and effective solution to apply in teaching listening comprehension.

Finally, it is hoped that the study will make some meaningful contribution to the improvement and renovation of the current situation of teaching and learning English listening comprehension skills at HLU as well as other institutions in Vietnam.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE 1

This survey questionnaire is designed for my MA thesis: *“Using English songs in teaching listening to first-year non-English major students: An action research at Hoa Lu University”*

I am grateful for your good will and cooperation in truthfully completing the questionnaire, which hopefully takes you just little time. Please be assured that the information you provide will be treated in the strict confidence.

Thank you very much!

Please tick (✓) or write answer where necessary

1. Listening comprehension in English study is ?

- A. very important B. important C. not very important
D. not important at all

If it is “very important” or “important”, please write to show your reason

.....
.....

If it is “not very important” or “not important”, please write to show your reason

.....
.....

2. Which of following problems you face when dealing with listening comprehension tasks?

- A. Limited vocabulary
B. The lack of background knowledge
C. Inappropriate understanding methods (strategies)
D. Inappropriate listening material
E. Lack of patience and perseverance (due to the difficult listening content)
F. Others:

3. What do you think of the listening tasks in subject General English 2 that you are learning?

- A. Suitable with students’ language level

- B. Effective in helping students to improve listening comprehension skills
- C. The difficult vocabulary prevents students from comprehending the lessons
- D. Cannot motivate students

Other ideas:

4. In your opinion, what should be done to improve students' listening comprehension?

- A. More activities should be provided to raise students' interest in listening
- B. Students should listen more to enrich their own vocabulary
- C. Teacher should help to find suitable extra listening materials for students to listen.

D. Other ideas:

5. If your teacher use English songs in teaching listening (as an extra listening activity), what do you think can be the benefits?

- A. It will raise students' interest in listening
- B. It is unable to enhance the students' motivation for listening
- C. It is useful for enriching vocabulary
- D. It is useful for practicing listening comprehension
- E. It is not effective in improving listening comprehension

F. Your own opinion:

.....

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE 2

This survey questionnaire is designed for my MA thesis: “*Using English songs in teaching listening to first-year non-English major students: An action research at Hoa Lu University*”

I am grateful for your good will and cooperation in truthfully completing the questionnaire, which hopefully takes you just little time. Please be assured that the information you provide will be treated in the strict confidence.

Thank you very much!

Please tick (✓) or write answer where necessary

1. How do you find the use of English songs in teaching listening that your teacher often uses to teach you?
 - A. They are interesting
 - C. They are useless
 - B. They are useful
 - D. They are boringYour own ideas:
2. Which difficulties do you face when learning listening comprehension through English songs?
 - A. The way the teacher explains the material
 - B. Noisy class
 - C. Fast paced songs
 - D. Different accent of the singer
 - E. Others
3. How do you think about the accuracy when doing tasks after listening to English songs?
 - A. Not very satisfied
 - C. Satisfied
 - B. Not satisfied
 - D. Very satisfied
4. After learning English through English songs, how often do you like to learn listening at home (or in your free time)?
 - A. Always
 - B. sometimes
 - C. Never
5. In your opinion, what are the advantages of learning listening through English songs?
 - A. Practicing pronunciation
 - D. Raising motivation
 - B. Enriching vocabulary
 - E. For entertainment
 - C. Reviewing grammar
 - F. Others:

APPENDIX 3: PRE-TEST

Full name:

Mini Test (15 minutes)

Class: D9KTA

Part 1: Listen to five short conversations. Circle the correct answer A, B, or C

2. Her party is on?
A. Wednesday the 6th B. Saturday the 9th C. Friday the 8th
3. How old is her mother?
A. 59 B. 50 C. 60
4. Mr. Jarvis has a problem in?
A. his left leg B. his right knee C. his left knee
5. John doesn't like the painting of
A. the woman B. the boy C. the guitar
6. The girl wants to buy
A. A computer B. a digital camera C. a USB cable

Part 2: Listen and complete the form for the Milford Sports Centre.

Sport: (1)
Day: (2)
Time: from (3)
to (4)
Name: (5)

KEYS:

Part 1: 1. B 2. A 3. B 4. A 5. C

Part 2: 1. basketball 2. Thursday(s) 3. 6.00 4. 7.30 5. Susan Stevens

APPENDIX 4: POST-TEST

Full name:

Mini Test (15 minutes)

Class: D9KTA

Part 1: Listen and circle the correct answer:

1. What color sweater did the woman buy?
A. beige B. green C. brown
2. When does Karl want to go home?
A. June B. September C. October
3. How old is Jenny's brother?
A. 30 B. 35 C. 38
4. What's the best thing about the man flat?
A. the cheap rent B. the size C. the good view
5. How many rooms does he book?
A. 2 B. 3 C. 4

Part 2: Listen and complete the table with a number or one word

Ground floor:	A collection of (1) by Graham Richmond.
First floor:	children's (2)
Entrance hall:	the museum (3)
Price of guidebook:	(4)
Museum closes at:	(5)

Part 1: 1. A 2. B 3. C 4. C 5. B

Part 2: 1. pictures 2. toys 3. shop 4. £2.50 5. 5.30

APPENDIX 5: ACTION IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

University: Hoa Lu University
Teacher: Nguyen Thi Le Thu
Class: D9KTA

Action Implementation

November 2016 – January 2017

TIME		CONTENTS	OBJECTIVES
CYCLE 1	Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire 1 • Pre-test • Teaching – Song activity 1 - Song: <i>Don't cry Joni</i> - Time duration: 20 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To investigate the situation & collect data for 1st research question - To practice listening comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills (guessing, prediction, and descriptions)
	Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching – Song activity 2 - Song: <i>Every breath you take</i> - Time duration: 20 minutes 	To practice listening comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills (listening for gist, listening for specific information)
	Week 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching – Song activity 3 - Song: <i>An English man in New York</i> - Time duration: 90 minutes 	To practice listening comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills
	Week 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching – Song activity 4 - Song: <i>Our house</i> - Time duration: 20 minutes 	To practice listening comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills
	Week 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching – Song activity 5 - Song: <i>Sealed with a kiss</i> - Time duration: 20 minutes 	To practice listening comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills
REFLECTION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student's motivation was higher • Student's difficulties in cycle 1: the pace of the songs "<i>Every breath you take</i>" and "<i>An English man in New York</i>" was a little too fast ⇒ researcher's adjustment in song selection ⇒ preparation for cycle 2 	
CYCLE 2	Week 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching – Song activity 6 - Song: <i>Always on my mind</i> - Time duration: 90 minutes 	To practice listening comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills
	Week 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching – Song activity 7 - Song: <i>And I love her</i> - Time duration: 20 minutes 	To practice listening comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills
	Week 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching – Song activity 8 	To practice listening

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Song: <i>Beautiful day</i> - Time duration: 20 minutes 	comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills
	Week 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching – Song activity 9 - Song: <i>You get me</i> - Time duration: 20 minutes 	To practice listening comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills
	Week 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching – Song activity 10 - Song: <i>All about that bass</i> - Time duration: 90 minutes • Questionnaire 2 • Post-test 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To practice listening comprehension, i.e. listening micro skills - To collect data for the 2nd research question
REFLECTION		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students had positive attitudes towards learning listening comprehension through songs • Preparation for data analysis 	

APPENDIX 6: LESSON PLAN SAMPLE

Objectives

1. General: To practice listening comprehension, guessing, prediction, and descriptions.

2. Specific:

- ✓ To identify pronunciation differences between British and American English.
- ✓ To describe differences between English and American culture.
- ✓ To reflect, critique and defend his/her point of view orally.

Topic: Cultural aspects about England and the United States.

Language Focus: Simple present, present continuous.

Material and Equipment: Video clip of the song “An English man in New York”, lyrics

of the song, TV, DVD, handouts, markers, paper.

Previous knowledge: At this point students know how to use the simple present and the present continuous in active voice as well as countries’ names, and facts about American families.

Student organization: Whole group, individual work, and pair work.

Time: 90 minutes.

Procedure

❖ Warming-up: Runners and secretaries

The group will work in pairs sitting face to face and having enough space around them. A short biography of the singer “Sting”, the author of the song to work on, will be stuck on the board. One of the students of each pair is going to receive the name of “runner”. He/She is going to be in charge of going to the board, reading and remembering as much as possible in order to dictate to the “secretary”, who is the person that copies accurately what his/her partner says. Then, the teacher is going to read and correct the biography and the group with the best quality and quantity of information will be the winner. Then, students guided by the teacher are going to clarify vocabulary from the biography. This activity will help students to contextualize their knowledge with the new knowledge they are going to construct.

❖ Presentation

• Activity one: Debate

In this activity the whole group is going to reflect and answer some questions according to the title, vocabulary, and sayings taken from the song.

Questions:

What does the title of the song suggest?

What do these words have in common?

- modesty
- propriety
- sobriety
- gentleness

Which of these two sayings do you agree more with and why?

- “Be yourself no matter what they say”
- “When in Rome, do as Romans do”

- **Activity two: Silent viewing (Predicting)**

In this activity students are going to predict what is happening in the early part of the video by answering some questions while they see the video without sound.

Questions:

What can you see?	What are the colors?	What is he wearing?
Where is this person?	Can you guess?	What is in the background?
What expression is on the person’s face?		What is he doing?
What kind of personality do you think this person has?		

❖ **Practice**

- **Activity one: Listening for the gist**

At this point, students are going to listen to the song while they answer some general questions about its content.

Questions:

What is Sting singing about?

Write words that you understand.

- **Activity two: Selective Listening**

1. In this activity, the students are going to be given a photocopy of the lyrics with some words and phrases left out. In parentheses, the number of words left out is indicated. They first read the text together for overall comprehension, trying to think of words which might fit the blanks.

The teacher will explain any words the students do not know.

2. Then, the teacher plays the video and asks the students to fill in the missing words. There is a glossary of the missing words at the bottom of the worksheet.
3. Finally, the teacher asks them to tell their answers. If there is disagreement or doubt over a given word or phrase, the video will be played again.

❖ **Production**

• **Activity one: Discussion**

In this stage, the students are going to answer some questions about the cultural content of the song.

Questions:

1. What do these phrases mean? Can you explain with daily life examples?
 - Be yourself no matter what they say.
 - “Manners make the man”
 - “At night a candle’s brighter than the sun”
 - Takes more than combat gear to make a man.
2. What are some of the challenges of being yourself in a foreign country? Why is it good to be yourself sometimes?
3. What are the pronunciation differences between British and American English?
What sentence in the song clearly captures the idea of differences in accents?

• **Activity two: Post-listening**

1. In this stage, the students are going to prepare and present next class a poster session in which they explain with examples some of the main differences between English and American cultures. This activity will be in pairs.
2. The students are also going to prepare and explain a comparison between Colombian culture and American culture by answering the following question:
If you were a Colombian in New York, what would be your greater challenges?

APPENDIX 7: HANDOUT 1- Students' guide

An Englishman in New York (by Sting)

I don't drink coffee _____ (3) my dear

I like my toast done on one side

And you can hear it in _____ (2) when I _____ (1)

I'm an Englishman in New York

See me walking down Fifth Avenue

A walking cane here _____ (3)

I take it everywhere I walk

I'm an Englishman in New York

I'm an _____ (1), I'm a legal _____ (1)

I'm an Englishman in New York

I'm an _____ (1), I'm a legal _____ (1)

I'm an Englishman in New York

If "manners make the man" as someone said

Then he's the hero of the day

It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile

Be yourself no matter _____ (3)

I'm an _____ (1), I'm a legal _____ (1)

I'm an Englishman in New York

I'm an _____ (1), I'm a legal _____ (1)

I'm an Englishman in New York

_____ (1), propriety can lead to notoriety

You could end up as the only one

Gentleness, _____ (1) are rare in this society

At night a candle's brighter than the sun

Takes more than combat gear to make a man

Takes more than _____ (4)

Confront your enemies, avoid them when _____ (2)

A gentleman will walk but never run

If "manners make the man" as someone said

Then he's the hero of the day

It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile

Be yourself no matter _____ (3)

I'm an _____ (1)

I'm a legal _____ (1)

I'm an Englishman in New York

I'm an _____ (1)

I'm a legal _____ (1)

I'm an Englishman in New York

APPENDIX 8: Teachers' guide

An Englishman in New York (by Sting)

I don't drink coffee I take tea my dear
I like my toast done on one side
And you can hear it in my accent when I talk
I'm an Englishman in New York
See me walking down Fifth Avenue
A walking cane here at my side
I take it everywhere I walk
I'm an Englishman in New York
I'm an alien, I'm a legal alien
I'm an Englishman in New York
I'm an alien, I'm a legal alien
I'm an Englishman in New York
If "manners make the man" as someone said
Then he's the hero of the day
It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile
Be yourself no matter what they say
I'm an alien, I'm a legal alien
I'm an Englishman in New York
I'm an alien, I'm a legal alien
I'm an Englishman in New York Modesty, propriety can lead to notoriety
You could end up as the only one
Gentleness, sobriety are rare in this society
At night a candle's brighter than the sun
Takes more than combat gear to make a man
Takes more than license for a gun
Confront your enemies, avoid them when you can
A gentleman will walk but never run
If «manners make the man» as someone said
Then he's the hero of the day
It takes a man to suffer ignorance and smile
Be yourself no matter what they say

I'm an alien, I'm a legal alien
I'm an Englishman in New York
I'm an alien, I'm a legal alien
I'm an Englishman in New York.

APPENDIX 9: HANDOUT 2- Students' guide

You get me

(Duet by Seal and Buika)

A) Choose the correct option

If/ when I say **yes/ no**, if I resist

If /when I don't give in to **this /that**

Would it **become/ be**

a lesson /a session or a loss?

B) Put the lines in order

- Suddenly I'm not killing time.
- It's all over now
- Suddenly I know what it's about
- Thoughts come in and words come out.

C) Fill in the blanks

You ____ me, you get ____

Like a _____

You've heard a _____ times

Like that rainbow's _____

You can _____

You ____ me, you ____ me

C
H
O
R
U
S

D) Cross out the extra words

If I don't say yes, if I let it go away

And face the real consequence I've known

Would it ever lead to

Living a life with regret?

E) Complete the lines

Suddenly the walls are coming _____

I won't be the same when I come _____.

Suddenly I've _____

But it's all over _____

F) Correct the mistakes

You get us, you get us
Just like a yellow sunset
Where the moon meets the river
Like nobody alive
You appear in my sleep
You get us, you get us

CHORUS

G) Cross out the extra words

It's very hard to ignore,
Is Undeniable too
But, there's this feeling inside me
When I first look at you
You just get me, you just get me

APPENDIX 10: HANDOUT 3- Students' guide

"All About That Bass"

Chorus:

Because you know I'm all about that bass

About that bass, no trouble

I'm all about that bass (X3)

About that bass... bass... bass... bass

1. Fill in the gaps with the right word

Yeah, it's pretty _____, I ain't no size two

But I can shake it, shake it, like I'm _____ to do

'Cause I got that boom boom that all the _____ chase

And all the right _____ in all the right places

2. Choose the correct word

I **feel/see** the magazine working that Photoshop

We know that shit ain't real, come on **wow/now**, make it stop

If you got beauty, beauty, just **raise/praise** them up

'Cause every inch of you is perfect from the **bottom/button** to the top

3. Order the following sentences from 1 to 4

___ Yeah, my mama she told me "don't worry about your size" (Shoo wop wop, sha-oooh wop wop)

___ So if that what you're into, then go 'head and move along

___ You know I won't be no stick figure silicone Barbie doll

___ She says, "Boys like a little more booty to hold at night" (That booty, uh, that booty booty)

Chorus:

Because you know I'm all about that bass

About that bass, no trouble...

4. Cross out the extra word in each line

I'm bringing my booty back

Go ahead and tell them skinny little bitches that

No, I'm just playing, I don't know you think you're fat

But I'm here to tell you today...

Every inch of you is most perfect from the bottom to the top

Yeah my mama she told me, "don't worry about your size"(Shoo wop wop, sha-oo
wop wop)

She says, "Boys like a little more booty to hold at night" (That booty booty, uh, that
booty booty)

You know I won't be no stick figure, silicone Barbie doll

So if that's what you're into, then go 'head and move along

Chorus:

Because you know I'm all about that bass

About that bass, no trouble