MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
UNIVERSITY OF PHAN THIET

PHẠM QUỐC CƯỜNG

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH SONGS IN ENHANCING LINKING SOUNDS FOR EFL STUDENTS AT BACH KHOA SAIGON COLLEGE

MASTER'S GRADUATION PROJECT MAJORED IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Bình Thuận Province - 2025

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
UNIVERSITY OF PHAN THIET

PHẠM QUỐC CƯỜNG

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH SONGS IN ENHANCING LINKING SOUNDS FOR EFL STUDENTS AT BACH KHOA SAIGON COLLEGE

MAJOR IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

CODE: 8220201

MASTER'S GRADUATION PROJECT

SCIENCE INSTRUCTOR'S NAME(s):

VÕ THÚY LINH, Ph.D.

Bình Thuận Province – 2025

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I confirm that the work presented in this graduation project entitled **"THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH SONGS IN ENHANCING LINKING SOUNDS FOR EFL STUDENTS AT BACH KHOA SAIGON COLLEGE"** has been performed solely by myself.

I confirm that this work is submitted in partial fulfilment for the Master's degree project in English language at Phan Thiet University and has not been submitted elsewhere in other form for the fulfilment of any other article/paper.

Phan Thiet, March 20th 2025

Phạm Quốc Cường

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Dr. Võ Thúy Linh, who has been the ideal thesis instructor. Her sage advice, insightful criticisms, and patient encouragement aided the writing of this thesis in innumerable ways. Her guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. I could not have imagined having a better advisor and mentor for my research work.

I am also grateful to all my peers who supported me during the course of this research work. Their help, support, and understanding were invaluable to me.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express gratitude to all of the Department faculty members for their help and support. I also thank my family for their unending encouragement and support throughout my study. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. Thank you.

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the effectiveness of using English songs to improve Vietnamese EFL learners' mastery of linking sounds, focusing on students at Bach Khoa College. The study addresses a well-documented issue: Vietnamese learners frequently struggle with linking sounds due to phonological differences between Vietnamese and English and the traditional emphasis on grammar and vocabulary over phonetics. The rationale lies in the potential of English songs, which naturally embed features like assimilation, elision, and linking, to create an engaging and effective learning environment for enhancing pronunciation skills. The primary research aims are twofold: (1) to determine the extent to which English songs improve learners' ability to recognize and produce linking sounds, and (2) to explore students' attitudes toward this instructional approach. The study fills a research gap in Vietnamese EFL contexts where linking sounds are underrepresented in pronunciation training, despite their crucial role in promoting natural speech flow. The theoretical framework integrates key phonological theories (Roach, Crystal), Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles, particularly Krashen's Input and Affective Filter Hypotheses, and literature on music in language learning (Murphey, Lems). These theories collectively suggest that songs provide comprehensible input, reduce anxiety, and facilitate prosodic feature acquisition, such as linking sounds. The research adopts a quasi-experimental design, comparing an experimental group exposed to song-based instruction with a control group following traditional methods. The intervention lasted five weeks, during which the experimental group engaged in interactive activities using carefully selected English pop songs, while the control group practiced pronunciation through textbook-based drills. The instruments included pre-tests, post-tests, and a Likert-scale questionnaire. The pre- and post-tests measured students' ability to recognize and apply linking sounds in context, while the questionnaire captured their attitudes toward learning through songs. Lesson plans for the experimental group incorporated gap-filling tasks, lyric shadowing, and song-based discussions to reinforce phonological awareness. For data analysis, SPSS was employed, using dependent and independent t-tests to compare results within and between groups. The findings revealed statistically significant improvements in the experimental group's post-test scores, with learners showing a 21% to 49% increase

in their ability to recognize and produce linking sounds. In contrast, the control group's improvement was minimal and statistically insignificant.

The discussion highlighted that songs enhanced both phonological awareness and learner motivation. The questionnaire results further revealed a positive perception among students, with high agreement on songs' effectiveness in making pronunciation practice more enjoyable and beneficial. The implications suggest that integrating English songs into pronunciation instruction can effectively address EFL learners' difficulties with connected speech. Educators are encouraged to adopt music-based methods to create an engaging, low-anxiety learning environment that fosters improved fluency and confidence. However, the study acknowledges several limitations. It was restricted to a specific learner group at Bach Khoa College, limiting generalizability. Additionally, the short intervention period does not allow conclusions about long-term retention. The study also focused narrowly on linking sounds, leaving other suprasegmental features underexplored. Future research should expand to diverse learner populations, longer interventions, and a broader range of pronunciation aspects to further validate the approach.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the recognized importance of pronunciation in achieving fluency and intelligibility in English, Vietnamese EFL learners continue to struggle with key suprasegmental features, particularly linking sounds. At Bach Khoa College, students frequently demonstrate disjointed and rigid speech patterns, primarily due to their inability to apply linking sounds effectively. This difficulty is rooted in several issues, including fundamental phonological differences between Vietnamese and English, traditional grammar-focused instruction, and limited exposure to natural, connected speech. Although pronunciation is part of the curriculum, the emphasis on segmental features such as individual vowel and consonant sounds leaves students ill-equipped to manage connected speech phenomena like catenation, intrusion, and elision, which are essential for achieving fluency. Existing teaching approaches at Bach Khoa College often rely on repetitive drills and isolated word pronunciation exercises, which fail to provide learners with meaningful or engaging contexts to internalize linking sounds. Moreover, students' anxiety about speaking English, coupled with a lack of exposure to authentic speech models, further discourages experimentation with natural speech patterns. Consequently, many students continue to articulate English words in isolation, leading to fragmented, robotic speech that hinders effective communication. While international studies suggest that using songs in language teaching can improve pronunciation by promoting rhythm, stress, and connected speech awareness, there remains a gap in research specific to the Vietnamese EFL context, particularly regarding the systematic use of songs to enhance linking sounds. Furthermore, there is limited empirical evidence on students' attitudes toward this method and its effectiveness in addressing their specific pronunciation challenges. Therefore, this study addresses the pressing need to explore innovative instructional strategies, specifically the integration of English songs, to improve Vietnamese EFL learners' recognition and production of linking sounds. By focusing on students at Bach Khoa College, this research aims to contribute practical solutions to overcoming persistent pronunciation difficulties in Vietnamese EFL classrooms.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

MILL: Music in Language Learning

CEFR: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

ESL: English as a Second Language

EIL: English as an International Language

L2: Second Language

L1: First Language

RQ: Research Question

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

Pronunciation is a crucial component of English language proficiency, yet it remains a persistent challenge for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Vietnam. Among various pronunciation difficulties, mastering linking sounds—the seamless connection of words in natural speech is particularly problematic. This difficulty stems from fundamental phonological differences between Vietnamese and English, as well as traditional language instruction that prioritizes grammar and vocabulary over pronunciation (Nguyen & Ingram, 2006; Pham, 2021). Given the importance of linking sounds in achieving natural speech fluency, this thesis aims to investigate the use of English songs as an instructional tool to enhance students' pronunciation at Bach Khoa College.

Linking sounds play a crucial role in ensuring speech fluidity and intelligibility. Phonetic processes such as intrusion (e.g., "I saw it" pronounced as /aɪ sɔːr ɪt/), elision (e.g., "next day" pronounced as /nekst deɪ/), and assimilation (e.g., "good boy" pronounced as /gʊb bɔɪ/) enable smooth transitions between words (Roach, 2009). However, Vietnamese EFL learners often struggle to incorporate these elements into their speech due to their unfamiliarity with English's stress-timed rhythm and connected speech features (Nguyen & Macken, 2008). As a result, their pronunciation often sounds rigid, unnatural, and difficult for native speakers to comprehend (Jenkins, 2000; Gilbert, 2008). This issue is particularly evident at Bach Khoa College, where students frequently pronounce words in isolation rather than using connected speech, leading to robotic and stilted speech patterns (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992; Ngo, 2018).

Several factors contribute to students' struggles with linking sounds. Traditional English instruction in Vietnam emphasizes grammatical accuracy and vocabulary acquisition over phonetics, leaving students with insufficient training in connected speech (Pham, 2021; Derwing & Munro, 2015). Additionally, many EFL instructors lack native-like pronunciation patterns, further limiting students' exposure to authentic spoken English (Nguyen, 2007). This instructional gap leads to fossilized pronunciation errors that persist despite years of study.

Furthermore, Vietnamese EFL learners often experience anxiety about speaking English, fearing mispronunciations that may lead to embarrassment (Trang & Baldauf,

2007). This fear discourages them from experimenting with natural speech patterns, including linking sounds, and reinforces their reliance on isolated word pronunciation. Compounding these issues, the lack of pronunciation-focused materials tailored to Vietnamese learners' specific phonetic challenges limits opportunities for targeted practice (Nguyen & Newton, 2020).

Given these challenges, English songs offer a promising solution for improving pronunciation instruction. Songs naturally incorporate phonetic features such as elision, assimilation, and linking sounds, exposing students to authentic speech patterns in an engaging and memorable way (Murphey, 1992; Goodwin, 2006). Research has shown that music-based learning improves pronunciation accuracy, stress patterns, and overall fluency by providing repeated exposure to natural speech rhythms (Lems, 2005; Medina, 1993). Additionally, singing along with songs helps students develop breath control, articulation, and speech fluidity—essential skills for mastering linking sounds (Sevik, 2011).

Despite the documented benefits of using songs in pronunciation instruction, few studies have specifically examined their impact on Vietnamese EFL learners' acquisition of linking sounds. While existing research highlights the general advantages of music-based language learning (Patel, 2008; Trofimovich & Baker, 2006), there remains a gap in understanding how different types of songs—such as fast-paced pop songs versus slower ballads—affect learners' ability to perceive and produce linking sounds in Vietnamese EFL contexts.

This thesis is necessary to address this gap by investigating the effectiveness of English songs in enhancing linking sounds among Bach Khoa College students. By analyzing students' pronunciation before and after exposure to song-based instruction, this research will provide insights into best practices for integrating music into pronunciation teaching. Additionally, examining students' attitudes and confidence levels regarding pronunciation will help educators design more effective, engaging learning experiences.

Vietnamese EFL learners at Bach Khoa College face significant challenges in acquiring linking sounds due to phonological differences, traditional instructional methods, and limited exposure to natural speech patterns. These difficulties hinder their spoken fluency and comprehension, emphasizing the need for innovative teaching

strategies. English songs offer an engaging and effective means of improving pronunciation, yet their impact on linking sound acquisition in Vietnamese EFL contexts remains underexplored. By conducting this research, this thesis aims to provide empirical evidence supporting the integration of music-based techniques into pronunciation instruction, ultimately helping students achieve greater fluency and intelligibility in spoken English.

1.2. Research Problem

Despite extensive research on pronunciation teaching strategies, linking sounds remain underexplored in the Vietnamese EFL context (Nguyen & Newton, 2020). Current classroom methods tend to focus on segmental features like vowel and consonant pronunciation rather than suprasegmental aspects such as rhythm, stress, and connected speech (Roach, 2009). This results in poor listening comprehension and unnatural speech production among students.

Moreover, research suggests that traditional pronunciation drills lack engagement and authenticity, making students less motivated to practice (Gilbert, 2012). While some instructors incorporate songs and audiovisual materials, the structured application of songs to teach linking sounds is rarely systematized (Trofimovich & Gatbonton, 2006). Thus, there is a pressing need to explore the effectiveness of English songs in enhancing students' ability to perceive and produce linking sounds.

1.3. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to examine the extent to which English songs enhance Bach Khoa College students' ability to recognize and produce linking sounds. Additionally, it seeks to explore students' attitudes toward learning linking sounds through English songs, identifying factors that influence their engagement and learning experience. The study also aims to propose pedagogical strategies for integrating English songs effectively into pronunciation teaching, ensuring that the approach aligns with students' needs and maximizes learning outcomes.

1.4. Research Aims

This study aims to investigate the role of English songs in improving Bach Khoa College students' recognition and production of linking sounds. By analyzing how musical elements, such as rhythm and melody, contribute to pronunciation learning, the research seeks to determine the effectiveness of songs in facilitating the acquisition of linking sounds. Furthermore, the study explores students' attitudes toward learning

linking sounds through English songs, examining their perceptions, preferences, and engagement levels. Understanding these attitudes will provide insights into the motivational factors influencing students' pronunciation learning and inform the development of effective instructional strategies.

1.5 Research Questions

To achieve these objectives, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do English songs enhance students' linking sounds at Bach Khoa College**?**

2. What are Bach Khoa College students' attitudes toward learning linking sounds through English songs?

1.6. Significance of the Study

This research contributes to the field of pronunciation instruction by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of English songs in enhancing Bach Khoa College students' ability to recognize and produce linking sounds. By investigating students' attitudes and engagement levels, the study offers valuable insights into how musical elements, such as rhythm and melody, support pronunciation learning.

The findings will be beneficial for educators, curriculum designers, and language learners by offering practical strategies for integrating English songs into pronunciation instruction. By aligning pedagogical methods with students' preferences and learning experiences, this study aims to promote a more interactive, engaging, and effective approach to teaching linking sounds. Furthermore, the research has the potential to inform future studies on music-based language instruction, contributing to the broader field of pronunciation teaching methodologies.

1.7. Thesis Structure

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter presents the research background, rationale, and objectives of the study. It outlines the research questions and significance of the study, emphasizing the importance of teaching linking sounds through songs in EFL classrooms. Additionally, it provides an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter reviews relevant theoretical frameworks and previous studies on pronunciation teaching, linking sounds, and the role of songs in language learning. It discusses key linguistic and pedagogical concepts, such as connected speech, cognitive

load in pronunciation learning, and the emotional and motivational effects of music in EFL education.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter details the research design, including participants, data collection methods, and analysis techniques. It explains the pretest-posttest experimental approach used to assess the impact of songs on students' pronunciation of linking sounds. The ethical considerations and limitations of the methodology are also discussed.

Chapter 4: Findings and Discussions

This chapter presents the key findings, analyzing the effects of song-based instruction on students' pronunciation improvements. Quantitative results from pretests and posttests, along with qualitative insights from student feedback, are discussed to illustrate the effectiveness of songs in teaching linking sounds.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Implications

This chapter summarizes the main findings and their implications for EFL teaching. It discusses the pedagogical benefits of using songs, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research. The chapter concludes with suggestions for integrating music-based strategies into pronunciation instruction for enhanced language learning outcomes.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Linking Sounds in English Pronunciation

2.1.1. The Role of Linking Sounds in Comprehension and Production

Linking sounds are key phonological processes that occur in connected speech, helping create the natural flow of spoken English. Roach (2009) identifies several types of linking and connected speech phenomena that contribute to this fluidity. One common type is linking /r/, where a normally silent /r/ is pronounced between two vowel sounds, as in “law and order” (/lɔːr ən ɔːdə/). Another is intrusion, where an additional sound, such as /w/, /r/, or /j/, is inserted between vowel sounds to ease articulation, as in “go on” (/gəʊ wɒn/). Catenation refers to the seamless connection between the final consonant of one word and the initial vowel of the next, as heard in “pick it up” (/pɪkɪtʌp/). Additionally, elision involves omitting certain sounds for smoother speech, such as the dropped /d/ in “friendship” (/frɛnʃɪp/). While these features make English speech more natural and efficient, they often present significant challenges for EFL learners, especially those whose native languages do not exhibit similar phonological patterns. According to Brown (2014) and Celce-Murcia et al. (2010), the unfamiliarity with these processes can hinder both listening comprehension and spoken fluency, as learners may fail to recognize or produce these subtle transitions when communicating in English.

For the purposes of this research, catenation is the most appropriate definition of linking sounds. This process directly relates to the seamless connection between words, which is essential in natural speech flow. Understanding and mastering catenation can significantly enhance EFL learners' fluency and comprehension in English

Research suggests that the failure to recognize linking sounds leads to listening comprehension difficulties (Field, 2008). Vietnamese learners often experience word segmentation problems, misinterpreting linked phrases as new words or failing to decode them at all (Ngo, 2018). This issue stems from differences in phonological systems between Vietnamese and English, where Vietnamese lacks similar linking phenomena, making it challenging for learners to adjust to connected speech patterns in English (Tran, 2020).

Similarly, linking sounds play a crucial role in fluency development. Learners who do not use linking sounds may sound unnatural and disfluent, affecting their confidence in oral communication (Derwing & Munro, 2015). When speakers fail to

connect words smoothly, their speech appears fragmented, making it more difficult for listeners to follow (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). Consequently, mastering linking sounds contributes to a more native-like pronunciation and enhances overall intelligibility (Jenkins, 2000).

In addition to improving fluency, the ability to recognize and produce linking sounds positively impacts communicative competence. Studies have shown that learners who receive explicit instruction in connected speech phenomena, including linking sounds, exhibit greater improvements in both listening comprehension and spoken performance (Brown & Kondo-Brown, 2006). Instructional approaches, such as shadowing exercises and minimal pair drills, have proven effective in helping learners develop awareness and control over these phonetic features (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005).

Moreover, research highlights the importance of incorporating linking sounds in pronunciation training as part of a comprehensive listening and speaking curriculum. When learners practice listening to and producing linked speech, they become more adept at processing fast-paced, natural conversations (Gilbert, 2012). This is particularly relevant in academic and professional settings where effective communication hinges on the ability to understand and respond to rapid speech (Rost, 2011). Without adequate exposure to linking sounds, learners may struggle to follow lectures, discussions, and everyday interactions, hindering their language acquisition and social integration (Flowerdew & Miller, 2005).

Furthermore, teaching linking sounds can facilitate better interactions in real-world communication. Studies indicate that non-native speakers who effectively use linking sounds are perceived as more proficient and are more likely to be understood by native speakers (Thomson & Derwing, 2015). As a result, pronunciation instruction should not merely focus on individual sounds but emphasize the broader aspects of speech rhythm and connected speech (Hahn, 2004).

Beyond improving intelligibility, the mastery of linking sounds also contributes to enhanced listening strategies. Learners who are aware of how words are connected in speech can develop better predictive listening skills, allowing them to anticipate words and phrases in conversation more effectively (Field, 2011). This skill is essential in high-

stakes listening scenarios, such as standardized language proficiency tests, professional meetings, and academic lectures, where comprehension speed is crucial.

Additionally, pronunciation training that includes linking sounds fosters greater learner autonomy. By recognizing and practicing these phonetic features, students can become more independent in their listening and speaking development, reducing reliance on classroom instruction and improving their long-term language acquisition (Underhill, 2014). This self-sufficiency enhances motivation and engagement in language learning, further reinforcing communicative competence.

Thus, effective pronunciation instruction must prioritize both perception and production of linking sounds (Gilbert, 2012). By incorporating targeted training in linking sounds, educators can equip learners with essential tools to navigate authentic spoken English more effectively, thereby improving both their comprehension skills and oral proficiency. Ultimately, integrating these skills into language instruction fosters greater communicative competence, allowing learners to engage more confidently in both academic and social interactions.

2.2.1. Benefits of Using Songs in Pronunciation Teaching

1. Increased Phonological Awareness

Songs help learners recognize rhythm, stress, and linking in a natural context (Lems, 2005). Since pronunciation is deeply connected to prosodic features such as stress-timed rhythm and intonation patterns, exposure to musical elements aids in the development of phonological awareness (Goodwin, 2014). By listening to and singing along with songs, learners internalize phonetic structures, particularly in connected speech, where phenomena such as assimilation, elision, and liaison occur naturally (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). Research suggests that rhythm and melody reinforce phonological structures, allowing learners to grasp the underlying patterns of spoken language more effectively (Gilbert, 2008).

Furthermore, songs provide repeated exposure to suprasegmental features, which are crucial for intelligibility and fluency in spoken English (Jenkins, 2010). The consistent patterns in songs train learners to distinguish between strong and weak syllables, promoting a more natural speech rhythm (Levis, 2021). In particular, research indicates that singing enhances prosodic awareness by improving learners' ability to process pitch variation, word stress, and sentence intonation (Derwing & Munro, 2015).

Thus, integrating songs into pronunciation instruction offers a practical, engaging way to improve learners' phonological competence.

2. Improved Retention and Automaticity

Repetitive exposure to linking sounds in songs enhances memory and pronunciation accuracy (Schunk, 2012). Memory retention plays a vital role in pronunciation learning, and songs, with their inherent repetition, facilitate the internalization of linguistic patterns (Murphey, 1992). Studies show that song-based learning strengthens auditory memory, leading to automaticity in pronunciation and fluency development (Medina, 1993). Because melodies and rhythms act as mnemonic devices, learners recall pronunciation patterns more easily and apply them in spontaneous speech (Lake, 2022).

Additionally, song-based instruction supports the acquisition of both segmental and suprasegmental pronunciation features (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). When learners repeatedly hear and sing lyrics, they unconsciously develop accurate articulation, intonation, and rhythm (Jenkins, 2010). Research has also found that musical repetition strengthens neural connections related to speech processing, making it easier for learners to retrieve and produce sounds naturally (Schön et al., 2008). As a result, pronunciation practice through songs leads to long-term retention and automaticity, allowing learners to use newly acquired pronunciation skills in real-life conversations with greater ease.

3. Engagement and Motivation

Compared to traditional drills, songs create a more enjoyable and stress-free learning environment (Medina, 1993). Motivation is a key factor in language acquisition, and music has been shown to increase learner engagement and reduce anxiety (Krashen, 1982). Because songs integrate rhythm, melody, and meaningful language, they foster positive emotional connections, making pronunciation practice feel less like rote memorization and more like an enjoyable activity (Lems, 2005).

Furthermore, the affective filter hypothesis suggests that lower stress levels lead to better language acquisition outcomes (Krashen, 1982). Songs naturally reduce learner anxiety, promoting a relaxed and immersive learning experience (Richards, 2015). Research highlights that music-based instruction increases learners' willingness to experiment with pronunciation, as singing along allows them to mimic native-like prosody in a non-threatening setting (Levis, 2021). The entertainment value of songs

also encourages students to engage in voluntary pronunciation practice outside the classroom, enhancing their exposure to authentic spoken English (Murphey, 1992).

Moreover, songs provide an inclusive learning tool that caters to diverse learning styles (Lake, 2022). Auditory learners benefit from listening and singing, kinesthetic learners engage through movement and rhythm, and visual learners can reinforce pronunciation by reading song lyrics (Schön et al., 2008). By integrating music into pronunciation instruction, educators can create an engaging, effective, and learner-centered approach to language development.

2.2. Teaching and Learning Linking Sounds through English Songs

Songs have been widely recognized as effective pronunciation teaching tools (Murphey, 1992; Lems, 2005). They provide authentic, repetitive, and rhythmic exposure to connected speech, helping learners internalize phonetic patterns. One critical aspect of natural pronunciation is linking sounds, a feature of connected speech where words are smoothly joined together in fluent speech. Understanding and producing linking sounds—such as consonant-to-vowel (e.g., *pick it up* → */pɪk‿ɪt‿ʌp/*), vowel-to-vowel (e.g., *go on* → */gəʊ‿wɒn/*), and intrusive sounds (e.g., *I saw it* → */aɪ sɔː r ɪt/*)—can greatly improve learners' intelligibility and fluency (Brown, 2014). Without mastering linking sounds, learners' speech may sound choppy and unnatural, making comprehension more challenging for native listeners (Underhill, 2012).

As phonological awareness plays a crucial role in second language acquisition, using songs can facilitate the perception and production of stress, rhythm, and intonation (Goodwin, 2014). Through melody and repetition, learners develop an intuitive grasp of prosodic features, such as linking, elision, and assimilation, which are essential for natural-sounding speech (Gilbert, 2008). Additionally, songs provide a context-rich environment, allowing learners to hear and mimic authentic pronunciation patterns within meaningful linguistic structures (Jenkins, 2010). The repetitive nature of lyrics reinforces pronunciation patterns and supports memory retention (Schunk, 2012). Since many English songs contain smooth, natural transitions between words, they serve as excellent models of linking sounds in real-world communication (Levis, 2021). Moreover, the musical elements of songs, such as rhythm and tempo, help reinforce speech fluidity by encouraging learners to process language chunks rather than isolated words (Mora, 2000). This exposure also improves listening skills, as learners become

more attuned to the natural flow of English speech, enhancing both comprehension and spoken fluency (Richards, 2015).

2.2.1. Songs as a Tool for Learning Linking Sounds

Songs provide meaningful contexts that enhance phonetic acquisition (Jenkins, 2010). Unlike isolated pronunciation drills, songs offer a natural, engaging way for learners to process and practice connected speech patterns. Because lyrics often reflect real conversational speech, they expose learners to colloquial expressions and pronunciation variations that are difficult to acquire through traditional classroom methods (Celce-Murcia et al., 2010). For instance, fast-tempo songs by artists like Ed Sheeran or The Beatles frequently demonstrate linking sounds, reductions (e.g., wanna instead of want to), and contractions that mirror native speech (Harmer, 2007).

Additionally, research suggests that listening to and singing along with songs improves oral-motor coordination, reinforcing muscle memory in articulation (Mora, 2000). When learners repeatedly produce linked phrases through singing, they develop stronger phonetic control, making linking sounds more automatic in spontaneous speech (Murphey, 1992). This repetition is crucial for second language learners, as it enables them to bypass over-articulating individual words and instead focus on fluidity and natural rhythm (Schön et al., 2008).

Moreover, the affective dimension of music plays a key role in pronunciation learning. Emotional engagement with songs fosters motivation and lowers the affective filter, allowing learners to practice linking sounds in a relaxed environment (Lake, 2022). Studies have shown that stress-free, enjoyable learning environments improve pronunciation accuracy and long-term retention of phonetic patterns (Krashen, 1982; Richards, 2015).

Beyond phonetic benefits, songs serve as an effective means of raising learners' awareness of connected speech features, such as linking, assimilation, and elision. Linking occurs when a consonant sound at the end of a word connects with the following vowel sound, as in "go on" (pronounced /gəʊ ɒn/). Assimilation involves the alteration of sounds to ease pronunciation, such as "good boy" sounding like "gub boy." Elision, the omission of sounds in rapid speech, is commonly heard in phrases like "next day" (/nekst deɪ/ pronounced as /nek deɪ/) (Roach, 2009). These phonological processes are frequently present in song lyrics, making them valuable resources for students to observe and practice natural speech features (Brown, 2011).

Furthermore, rhythm and melody in songs facilitate phonological chunking, where learners process speech in meaningful groups rather than isolated words. This ability to recognize and reproduce phonological chunks aids in fluency and comprehension. Songs with clear articulation and moderate tempo, such as those by Adele or John Legend, allow learners to perceive linking sounds more distinctly before progressing to faster-paced songs (Gatbonton & Segalowitz, 2005).

Pedagogically, incorporating songs into EFL lessons can be structured through focused listening, gap-fill exercises, and shadowing activities. In focused listening, learners are instructed to identify specific linking sounds or reductions in a song. Gap-fill exercises encourage learners to predict missing words based on phonetic cues, reinforcing their auditory discrimination skills (~~Nation & Newton, 2009~~). Shadowing, where students repeat lyrics in sync with the original singer, helps them internalize natural pronunciation patterns and rhythm (~~Murphey, 1992~~).

Finally, the cultural dimension of songs enhances their effectiveness in pronunciation instruction. Authentic songs expose learners to diverse English accents, including British, American, and Australian varieties, broadening their phonetic adaptability (Jenkins, 2015). Exposure to different accents aids in comprehension skills and prepares learners for real-world interactions. As a result, songs serve not only as an entertaining learning tool but also as an essential resource for improving learners' mastery of linking sounds and overall spoken fluency in English.

2.2.2. Practical Applications in the Classroom

To effectively teach linking sounds through songs, instructors can integrate interactive strategies that enhance listening, pronunciation, and fluency.

First, listening and identification activities allow students to recognize linking sounds by listening to songs and highlighting linked words in lyric transcriptions. This develops their awareness of connected speech patterns (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). Next, **sing-along and shadowing** exercises encourage learners to mimic native-like pronunciation, ensuring smooth transitions between words. This technique reinforces rhythm and natural speech flow~~.~~

Additionally, pronunciation drills **focus** on repeating isolated lines with prominent linking sounds. By gradually increasing speed, students refine their pronunciation and articulation . Karaoke and fluency challenges further build confidence

by shifting focus from individual words to overall fluency, helping students produce connected speech naturally.

Finally, **contrastive analysis** enhances understanding by comparing spoken and sung lyrics. This comparison highlights how linking sounds emerge in fluid speech, aiding learners in recognizing their importance in natural communication (Roach, 2009).

By incorporating these methods, instructors create an engaging and effective learning environment that enhances students' ability to perceive and produce linking sounds. These strategies align with cognitive linguistic principles, allowing Buddhist University EFL learners to conceptualize pronunciation through metaphor analysis and improve their listening and speaking skills in English.

2.2.3. Benefits and Challenges

Integrating songs into pronunciation instruction can be a powerful pedagogical strategy. Carefully selected songs that align with learners' proficiency levels and linguistic goals can enhance both phonetic awareness and communicative competence (Levis, 2021). Additionally, because music is inherently multisensory, it caters to diverse learning styles—auditory learners benefit from **listening**, kinesthetic learners engage with rhythm and movement**,** and visual learners reinforce pronunciation through lyric sheets (Schunk, 2012).

However, challenges exist. Not all songs provide clear pronunciation models—some artists distort words for artistic effect. Teachers should carefully pre-select songs that balance authenticity and intelligibility (Richards, 2015). Furthermore, some students may initially struggle to keep up with fast-paced lyrics. Scaffolding activities, such as slowed-down recordings or lyric gap-fill exercises, can mitigate this issue.

Teaching linking sounds through songs is an effective, engaging, and research-backed approach to pronunciation instruction. Songs provide authentic exposure to connected speech, facilitate intonation and rhythm learning, and enhance memory retention through repetition. By incorporating targeted activities that focus on identifying, practicing, and producing linking sounds, educators can help learners develop fluent, natural pronunciation. As a result, integrating music into English learning not only improves pronunciation but also boosts confidence and motivation**,** making language acquisition an enjoyable experience.

2.3. Enhancing Pronunciation Instruction through English Songs at Bach Khoa College

At Bach Khoa College, students encounter substantial challenges in mastering English pronunciation. Traditional instructional methods, often reliant on isolated drills and textbook exercises, may not fully address these difficulties. Integrating English songs into pronunciation instruction presents a compelling alternative, offering multiple pedagogical benefits that support learners' phonetic development. Research has demonstrated that music-based language learning strategies enhance phonological awareness and pronunciation skills, making them an effective tool in English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

One of the fundamental advantages of using songs in pronunciation instruction is the increased exposure to connected speech. Unlike scripted textbook dialogues, song lyrics naturally incorporate phonological features such as linking sounds, contractions, and reductions, which are crucial for fluent speech (Murphey, 1992). When students repeatedly listen to and sing along with songs, they internalize these features, improving their ability to recognize and produce connected speech patterns. This exposure facilitates a more intuitive grasp of spoken English, fostering improved listening comprehension and articulation.

Pronunciation difficulties often lead to communication apprehension, making students hesitant to speak in English. The informal and engaging nature of music-based activities can alleviate this anxiety by providing a low-pressure environment for pronunciation practice. Research suggests that singing can reduce affective barriers, as learners feel less self-conscious when participating in group-based or individual singing exercises (Mori, 2011). By repeatedly engaging with song lyrics, students build confidence in their pronunciation abilities, which translates into greater willingness to participate in spoken interactions.

Memory plays a crucial role in language acquisition, particularly in pronunciation learning. The repetitive and rhythmic nature of song lyrics supports long-term retention of phonetic patterns. Studies indicate that musical input enhances linguistic recall, as melody and rhythm create cognitive scaffolding that aids in the storage and retrieval of language structures (Medina, 1993). Compared to traditional pronunciation drills, which may feel monotonous and mechanical, songs provide a dynamic and enjoyable means

of reinforcing pronunciation patterns, leading to more sustainable learning outcomes (Engh, 2013).

Authenticity is a key factor in effective language learning. Unlike artificially constructed textbook exercises, songs present English as it is naturally spoken, incorporating diverse accents, colloquial expressions, and prosodic elements (Murphey, 1992). Exposure to authentic materials enables learners to develop pronunciation skills that are more applicable to real-world communication. Additionally, songs often reflect cultural themes, providing students with deeper insights into English-speaking societies while simultaneously improving their language proficiency.

Incorporating English songs into pronunciation instruction at Bach Khoa College offers substantial benefits, including increased exposure to connected speech, reduced pronunciation anxiety, enhanced memory retention, and access to authentic language use. Given the growing body of research supporting music-based language learning, educators should consider leveraging songs as a complementary tool to traditional pronunciation teaching methods.

2.4. Previous studies

Murphey (1992) conducted an experimental study to explore how music could enhance learners' pronunciation fluency. By employing pre- and post-tests alongside recorded speech samples, the research assessed the progress of 60 European EFL learners. The findings revealed that students who engaged in pronunciation practice through songs exhibited noticeable improvements in fluency compared to those following traditional methods. This study underscores the potential of musical input in developing more natural and fluid speech production among EFL learners.

Lems (2005) utilized a mixed-methods approach to investigate the role of songs in fostering phonological awareness among EFL students in the United States. Data were collected through listening tasks, phonological tests, and interviews with 45 participants. The results highlighted that learners exposed to English songs were better able to identify linking sounds than those who relied solely on conventional phonetic exercises. This study emphasizes the effectiveness of musical materials in enhancing learners' connected speech perception.

Ngo (2018) employed a case study design to examine Vietnamese university students' difficulties with connected speech, particularly focusing on linking sounds. Drawing on classroom observations, interviews, and pronunciation tests conducted with

30 students, the study found that learners initially struggled to produce linking sounds accurately. However, when integrated into rhythmic and musical contexts, students' performance improved, suggesting that music offers a facilitative environment for learning aspects of connected speech.

Fonseca-Mora (2000) carried out a quantitative study, supplemented by experimental intervention, to investigate how music serves as a motivational tool for language learners. Using questionnaires and listening comprehension tests with 80 secondary school EFL students in Spain, the study reported that learners who participated in music-based activities displayed heightened motivation and moderate gains in prosodic features, such as rhythm and intonation. However, the study did not specifically target linking sounds as a focus of instruction.

Li and Brand (2009) conducted an experimental investigation into how musical activities could improve phonological memory and connected speech production among 70 Chinese EFL learners. Using memory span tests and pronunciation assessments, the study revealed that students who engaged with music-based tasks showed notable improvement in both phonological memory and the use of linking sounds within connected speech. The findings suggest that musical training may enhance learners' cognitive processing of sound patterns.

Kumar (2013) implemented a quasi-experimental design to explore the impact of English pop songs on pronunciation development in an Indian ESL college context. Through pronunciation tests and classroom surveys administered to 50 students, the study found that pop songs contributed to better control over stress patterns and intonation. However, the intervention did not explicitly address or measure learners' development of linking sounds, leaving this aspect underexplored.

Fujimura (2016) used experimental phonetics methods to examine the relationship between musical rhythm and speech rhythm among 40 Japanese EFL students. Employing speech analysis software and rhythm perception tasks, the study found a strong positive correlation between learners' musical rhythm perception skills and their ability to produce natural-sounding connected speech. While the study illuminated the link between rhythm and connected speech, it did not isolate linking sounds as a specific focus of instruction.

Zhang (2017) applied an action research approach to explore how songs could improve suprasegmental features, such as stress and intonation, among 35 Chinese EFL college students. Data were gathered through reflective journals and pronunciation tests. The findings demonstrated substantial improvement in learners' prosodic skills; however, the study did not directly address linking sounds, signaling a gap in research on this specific feature of connected speech.

Nguyen and Newton (2020) employed a mixed-methods design to investigate Vietnamese learners' persistent challenges with connected speech, focusing on linking sounds. Using pre- and post-tests as well as focus group discussions with 55 university students, the study revealed that traditional classroom methods yielded limited gains in learners' ability to produce linking sounds. The authors advocated for more engaging and innovative techniques to address these difficulties, suggesting that alternative materials such as music may be beneficial.

Tran (2021) conducted experimental research to assess the role of authentic materials, including songs, in improving pronunciation among 40 Vietnamese university-level EFL learners. Data from listening discrimination tasks and interviews indicated that while authentic materials enhanced learners' awareness of natural speech patterns, the instructional focus was broad and lacked a systematic approach to teaching linking sounds specifically. This points to a gap in targeted interventions for this key feature of connected speech.

2.5. Gaps in Existing Research

Despite considerable research showing the positive effects of songs on pronunciation in general such as improvements in fluency (Murphey, 1992), phonological awareness (Lems, 2005), and prosody (Fonseca-Mora, 2000; Zhang, 2017), very few studies have focused specifically on linking sounds. While Ngo (2018) and Nguyen & Newton (2020) noted Vietnamese learners' difficulties with connected speech, their interventions were not tailored to address linking sounds systematically through songs. Additionally, most research leans toward stress, rhythm, and intonation, leaving linking sounds underexplored (Kumar, 2013; Tran, 2021).

No empirical studies were found that specifically target teaching linking sounds to college students through the structured use of songs in a Vietnamese EFL context. This research aims to fill this gap by providing a systematic approach that integrates

musical elements to enhance learners' acquisition of linking sounds in connected speech.

2.6. Research theories

Phonological Theories

Connected speech phenomena, including linking sounds, play a crucial role in English pronunciation. These features, such as linking /r/, /w/, and /j/, as well as intrusive sounds, elision, and assimilation, influence natural speech flow. David Crystal's research on connected speech and Peter Roach's phonology frameworks, particularly *English Phonetics and Phonology*, provide theoretical foundations for understanding these patterns. Additionally, Kenworthy (1987) emphasizes the importance of teaching pronunciation effectively. In the context of Buddhist University EFL learners, analyzing linking sounds through metaphors helps students conceptualize pronunciation patterns, bridging cognitive linguistics with phonological awareness in language learning.

Theories on Music in Language Learning

Lems (2001) advocates for using songs to teach pronunciation, rhythm, and prosody, while Murphey (1992) argues that music aids memory and the acquisition of connected speech. Songs naturally reinforce pronunciation patterns, making abstract phonological features more tangible for learners. In the context of Buddhist University EFL learners, metaphors in song lyrics can serve as cognitive tools to conceptualize pronunciation, deepening their phonological awareness. By integrating music with metaphor analysis, learners not only improve their listening and speaking skills but also engage with language in a meaningful way, aligning with cognitive linguistic approaches in EFL education.

2.7. Theoretical Framework

This research draws on several key theories related to phonology, second language acquisition, and music in language learning. Firstly, according to Roach (2000) and Crystal (2003), linking sounds are integral features of connected speech, which present difficulties for EFL learners due to their absence in many first languages, including Vietnamese. The inability to recognize linking sounds often impairs learners' bottom-up listening processes (Field, 2008). To address this, Krashen's (1985) Input and Affective Filter Hypotheses suggest that providing learners with meaningful and low-anxiety input such as English songs, enhances acquisition. Complementing this, Celce-Murcia et al.'s (2010) Communicative Framework for Teaching Pronunciation

emphasizes the role of controlled and communicative activities in fostering phonological awareness. Finally, Lems (2001) and Murphey (1992) support the use of songs to reinforce rhythm, stress, and linking patterns, making musical input a valuable resource for teaching pronunciation. Together, these theories guide the integration of English songs as a tool for enhancing Bach Khoa College EFL students' awareness and production of linking sounds.

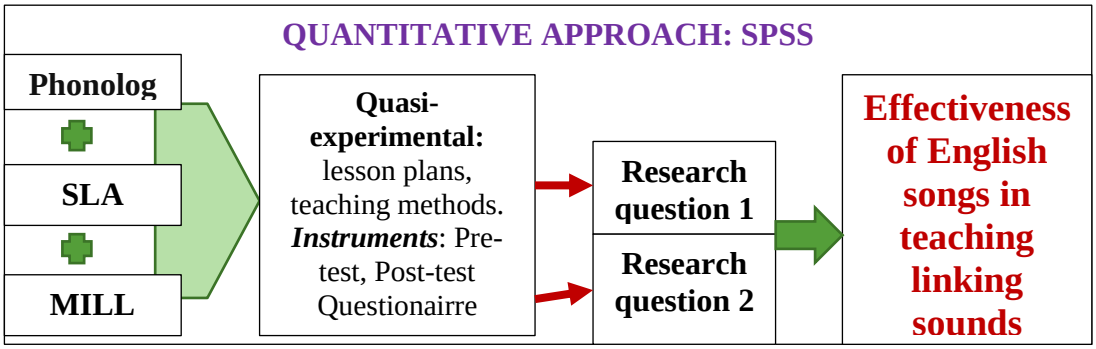

Figure 2.1. Flowchart of conceptual framework guiding for the whole study

The diagram represents a quantitative research framework using SPSS for data analysis. It focuses on examining the effectiveness of English songs in teaching linking sounds through a quasi-experimental design. The framework begins with three theoretical foundations: Phonology, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), and Music in Language Learning (MILL)**,** which influence the study's methodology. These elements are connected to the quasi-experimental phase, which includes lesson plans and teaching methods**,** with pre-tests, post-tests, and questionnaires as research instruments. Two research questions emerge from this phase, directing the investigation towards measuring learning outcomes. The final output assesses whether using English songs enhances students' awareness and production of linking sounds. The diagram effectively illustrates the research structure, showing the relationship between theories, methodology, and expected findings. The use of arrows and color-coding highlights the logical flow from theoretical concepts to empirical evaluation.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This research adopted a quasi-experimental methodology to investigate how incorporating English songs into classroom instruction can enhance students' ability to recognize and process consonant-to-vowel linking sounds in spoken English. The study specifically targeted freshmen of Bach Khoa college, Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. A quasi-experimental framework was deemed appropriate for this study because it allows for a structured investigation within an educational setting where random assignment of participants is not feasible. By employing this approach, the research aimed to provide an insightful analysis of the effectiveness of using songs as an instructional tool while also taking into account factors such as students' pre-existing familiarity with English pronunciation patterns.

To measure students' development in recognizing linking sounds, the study utilized a combination of pre-tests and post-tests. The pre-test served to establish a baseline by evaluating the students' initial ability to detect and comprehend consonant-to-vowel linking sounds in natural speech. Following the instructional intervention, a post-test was administered to determine the extent of improvement achieved. The teaching methodology centered around the use of carefully selected English songs that featured clear articulation, a high frequency of linking sounds, and language that matched the students' proficiency level. Lessons were designed to immerse students in various auditory and interactive exercises, such as focused listening activities, fill-in-the-blank lyric completion tasks, and collaborative group discussions. Each of these activities was structured to reinforce students' ability to identify, understand, and apply linking sounds more effectively in their own spoken English.

Beyond merely assessing the impact of music-based instruction on phonetic awareness, the study also explored a broader dimension, how engaging with songs as a learning tool influenced students' enthusiasm, motivation, and overall engagement in pronunciation practice. By integrating music into language learning, the research sought to determine whether this approach could create a more dynamic, enjoyable, and effective environment for mastering pronunciation skills in an EFL context.

3.2. Participants

For this study, a total of fifty-nine freshmen aged between 19 and 20, were purposefully selected from Saigon Bach Khoa College. The selection process was guided by specific criteria to ensure that the participants were well-suited for the research objectives. The students were chosen based on three key conditions: (1) they possessed an intermediate level of English proficiency, as determined by their recent academic performance and assessments conducted by their English teachers; (2) they demonstrated consistent attendance in their English classes, without frequent or prolonged absences that might affect their learning progress; and (3) they willingly agreed to take part in the study, committing to attend all instructional sessions and complete the necessary assessments, including pre-tests, post-tests, and interviews. In this study, participants were divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group consisted of 29 first-year college students, while the control group included 30 first-year students at the same academic level. Both groups were enrolled in a General English (EFL) course and had similar backgrounds in terms of age, English proficiency, and academic performance based on placement test results. The two groups were selected from different intact classes to prevent contamination and cross-influence. The experimental group took part in a specially designed program focusing on enhancing their awareness and production of linking sounds through the use of English songs. The sessions were delivered by an external teacher who was carefully prepared for this intervention. The researcher provided this teacher with three in-depth training sessions, covering lesson content, pedagogical techniques, and specific strategies for using songs to teach connected speech. Meanwhile, the control group continued with the school's standard English curriculum under their assigned English instructor, without any additional focus on linking sounds or musical input.

Additionally, the students displayed a range of learning styles, attitudes, and levels of enthusiasm toward studying English, mirroring the diversity commonly found in EFL classrooms. Their openness to engaging in innovative learning activities and their familiarity with English music albeit without formal phonetic training made them an ideal group for evaluating the effectiveness of using songs as a tool for increasing awareness and comprehension of linking sounds in spoken English.

3.3. Researcher’s role

To ensure objectivity and reduce potential bias, the researcher adopted a non-teaching role throughout the study. Since the researcher had prior experience teaching some of the participants in other courses, direct involvement in instruction was deliberately avoided to prevent any favoritism, overcorrection, or undue leniency toward familiar students. Instead, the researcher acted as a facilitator and supervisor of the experiment. Specifically, the researcher was responsible for designing the instructional materials, conducting comprehensive training for the teacher of the experimental group, and monitoring the fidelity of the intervention. This included attending and video-recording all experimental sessions to ensure the lessons were delivered as intended. Additionally, the researcher systematically collected qualitative and quantitative data from both groups throughout the study. All data, including test scores and classroom observations, were then carefully analyzed by the researcher. This separation of instructional and research duties aimed to enhance the internal validity and reliability of the research outcomes.

3.4. Research instruments

The research employed a quasi-experimental design, utilizing a pre-test and post-test to measure students' progress in recognizing linking sounds before and after the intervention. The pre-test assessed students' initial ability to identify linking sounds, while the post-test evaluated their improvement after engaging with the selected songs. A questionnaire was also administered to gather students’ perceptions of learning pronunciation through music, their engagement levels, and the perceived effectiveness of the instructional approach.

By incorporating students' musical preferences and using familiar, emotionally engaging songs, the study aimed to enhance motivation and promote active participation. The integration of songs as a teaching tool provided a natural, enjoyable context for pronunciation practice, encouraging learners to listen attentively and internalize linking sounds more effectively. The combination of pre- and post-tests, along with questionnaire responses, allowed for a comprehensive analysis of the intervention's impact, offering insights into the role of music in EFL pronunciation instruction.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention, both a pre-test and a post-test were designed to assess the students' ability to recognize and understand consonant-to-

vowel linking sounds. These tests were carefully structured to align with the research objectives, ensuring that the outcomes would accurately reflect the impact of incorporating English songs on students' phonological awareness, specifically regarding linking sounds.

Each of the tests consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions and five short-answer questions, all derived from the chosen English songs. The multiple-choice questions were designed to gauge students' ability to identify linking sounds in isolated phrases and sentences, while the short-answer questions challenged students to recognize and transcribe linking instances from brief excerpts of the songs. This dual format allowed the assessment to measure both the recognition and production of linking sounds, providing a comprehensive evaluation of students' understanding. Both tests encompass two parts with the target meaning below.

Part 1: Identifying linking sounds in the first 10 multiple choice questions to test participants perception on the sentence based on natural speech patterns

Part 2: Applying linking sounds in context in the 10 multiple choice questions left

This pretest and posttest evaluate students' ability to identify and apply linking sounds in natural speech**.** The questions are structured to test awareness, comprehension, and practical use of connected speech phenomena. The pretest serves as a baseline, while the posttest determines progress after instructional intervention using English songs**.**

3.5. Experimental materials

To maximize the effectiveness of this approach, specific criteria were established to guide the selection of songs. First, pronunciation clarity was prioritized to ensure that the chosen songs featured distinct and well-articulated lyrics with minimal background noise or vocal distortions. This focus was essential for enabling students to accurately perceive linking sounds without interference. Second, the frequency of linking sounds was carefully examined in each song's lyrics. Only songs with a substantial presence of consonant-to-vowel linking were included to provide students with ample exposure and practice opportunities. This phonological feature is crucial for natural speech patterns, making its inclusion a key element in the learning process. Third, appropriateness for intermediate learners was considered by evaluating the complexity of the lyrics. Songs with overly intricate vocabulary, rapid tempos, or excessive slang were excluded to

prevent unnecessary challenges that might detract from the intended learning objectives. Instead, the study selected widely recognized pop songs with simple, repetitive, and meaningful lyrics based on pilot study findings and expert recommendations. These songs not only served as authentic and natural examples of linking sounds but also leveraged students' familiarity with contemporary music, making the lessons more engaging and personally relevant. By integrating music that resonated with learners' interests, the study aimed to create an immersive and enjoyable learning environment, ultimately enhancing students' awareness and understanding of consonant-to-vowel linking in spoken English. Through this strategic selection, the study sought to optimize the pedagogical potential of English pop songs in pronunciation and listening instruction.

In this study, five English songs, *Happy New Year*, *Beautiful in White*, *I Lay My Love on You*, *My Heart Will Go On*, and *Because I Love You*, were selected as the primary instructional materials to support ninth-grade EFL learners in recognizing linking sounds. These songs were chosen based on their lyrical clarity, popularity among students, and their potential to maintain learner interest. The selection process was informed by a preliminary pilot study, where a separate group of ninth-grade students suggested songs they enjoyed and found easy to understand. This approach ensured that the materials were engaging and accessible, fostering a positive learning environment.

Each song-based activity was carefully designed to reinforce students' ability to recognize linking sounds in context. Specifically, ten targeted gaps were embedded within the song lyrics, requiring students to listen attentively and identify missing words that exhibited consonant-to-vowel linking. This approach ensured systematic exposure to different final consonant sounds that naturally connect to following vowel sounds. Given the extensive range of consonant and vowel combinations in English, it was not feasible to cover every possible linking scenario within the constraints of classroom time. Therefore, the study focused on key representative patterns that would help students understand the fundamental principles governing linking sounds.

To deepen comprehension, the teacher played an active role in guiding students through additional examples beyond the designated gaps. By analyzing more instances of linking sounds from the selected songs, learners were encouraged to recognize phonetic connections independently. Students also participated in discussions where

they identified and explained similar linking patterns within the lyrics, fostering a more intuitive grasp of how sounds naturally blend in spoken English.

3.6. Lesson plans

The lesson plans in this study aimed to assess the effectiveness of using English songs to enhance ninth-grade EFL learners' awareness of consonant-to-vowel linking sounds. Two approaches were compared: the experimental group, which learned through songs, and the control group, which used traditional pronunciation teaching methods. Over five weeks, the experimental group engaged with songs as listening and speaking tools, while the control group relied on textbooks, drills, and scripted dialogues.

Songs such as *Shape of You*, *Rolling in the Deep*, and *Counting Stars* were chosen for their rhythm and phonetic clarity. The experimental group participated **in** gap-filling exercises, pronunciation drills, role-plays, and song-based creative tasks**,** making learning more engaging. Meanwhile, the control group followed dictation, reading aloud, and teacher-guided phonetic exercises**,** ensuring a structured but less interactive experience.

The lesson plans addressed EFL learners' challenges in recognizing and producing linking sounds, essential for fluency. Traditional methods often feel repetitive and disconnected from real communication. Using songs aimed to boost engagement, enhance listening skills, improve pronunciation through imitation, aid retention, and encourage spontaneous speech**.** Comparing these approaches helped evaluate whether music-based instruction offers greater benefits in pronunciation learning.

Category	**Experimental Group**	**Control Group**
Aim	Enhance awareness of consonant-to-vowel linking sounds using English songs.	Teach consonant-to-vowel linking sounds using traditional methods.
Duration	50 minutes per session	50 minutes per session
Period	5 weeks	5 weeks
Week 1	**Introduction to Linking Sounds** - Understand linking sounds and their role in fluency.	**Introduction to Linking Sounds** - Learn basic rules of linking sounds.

	- Identify /s/, /k/, /r/, /p/, /d/, /tʃ/ in speech and songs. **Materials**: *Shape of You* (Ed Sheeran), lyrics with gaps. **Activities**: Listening, gap-filling, pronunciation practice.	- Recognize stops, fricatives, and nasals. **Materials**: Whiteboard, textbooks, audio clips. **Activities**: Dictation, repetition drills.
Week 2	**Recognizing Linking Sounds in Lyrics** - Learn /z/, /n/, /t/, /f/, /m/. - Improve listening and identification in different genres. **Materials**: *Can't Stop the Feeling* (Justin Timberlake), lyrics with gaps. **Activities**: Paired listening, highlighting, pronunciation drills.	**Identifying Linking Sounds** - Recognize linking sounds in written texts and audio. **Materials**: Textbooks, highlighters, pronunciation guide. **Activities**: Text analysis, paired reading, discussion.
Week 3	**Linking Sounds in Conversation** - Apply linking sounds in dialogues. - Focus on rhythm and fluency. **Materials**: *Rolling in the Deep* (Adele), dialogue scripts. **Activities**: Listening quiz, role-play.	**Linking Sounds in Practice** - Practice linking sounds in scripted speech. **Materials**: Pronunciation charts, worksheets. **Activities**: Reading aloud, group exercises.
Week 4	**Review and Application** - Reflect on learned linking sounds. - Apply linking sounds in free speech activities. **Materials**: Student-chosen	**Refining Linking Sounds** - Review and correct linking errors. **Materials**: Worksheets, teacher-provided dialogues.

	songs, printed lyrics. **Activities**: Complete-the-lyrics, feedback discussions.	**Activities**: Self-assessment, pronunciation drills.
Week 5	**Real-Life Application & Creative Output** - Use linking sounds in spontaneous speech and songwriting. **Materials**: *Counting Stars* (OneRepublic), scrambled sentence worksheets. **Activities**: Sentence reconstruction, song rewrite & performance.	**Final Assessment & Review** - Evaluate linking sound proficiency. **Materials**: Listening comprehension tests, oral presentations. **Activities**: Individual pronunciation tasks, teacher feedback.

The lesson plan compares two instructional approaches to teaching consonant-to-vowel linking sounds. The experimental group engages with English pop songs to enhance awareness and application of linking sounds, while the control group follows a traditional teaching approach emphasizing textbook rules, drills, and structured pronunciation exercises. Both groups undergo a five-week intervention**,** with each session lasting 50 minutes**.**

3.7. Introduction to the Experimental Intervention

The experimental intervention is designed to improve students' pronunciation and fluency through music-based learning. English pop songs serve as authentic linguistic input, enabling learners to recognize and produce consonant-to-vowel linking sounds in a natural context. Each week, students engage in listening, gap-filling, pronunciation drills, and interactive speech activities using different songs. This approach encourages active engagement, enhances auditory discrimination, and fosters real-life application of linking sounds in spontaneous speech.

3.7.1. Experimental Procedure for the Experimental Group

1. Week 1 – Introduction to Linking Sounds

Identify key linking sounds (/s/, /k/, /r/, /p/, /d/, /tʃ/) through listening and pronunciation activities with "Shape of You" (Ed Sheeran).

Use gap-filling exercises to reinforce phonetic awareness.

Week 2 – Recognizing Linking Sounds in Lyrics

Expand focus to /z/, /n/, /t/, /f/, /m/ using "Can't Stop the Feeling" (Justin Timberlake).

Engage in paired listening, highlighting, and pronunciation practice to refine recognition.

2. Week 3 – Linking Sounds in Conversation

Apply linking sounds in dialogue-based activities using "Rolling in the Deep" (Adele).

Conduct listening quizzes and role-plays to reinforce rhythm and fluency.

3. Week 4 – Review and Application

Encourage students to choose their own songs, enhancing motivation and personalization.

Activities include complete-the-lyrics exercises and peer feedback discussions.

4. Week 5 – Real-Life Application & Creative Output

Implement songwriting and performance tasks using "Counting Stars" (OneRepublic).

Conduct sentence reconstruction and free speech activities to promote retention.

3.7.2. Teaching Procedure for the Control Group

The control group follows a traditional phonetics-based approach:

1. Week 1 – Introduction to Linking Sounds

- Learn phonetic rules and recognize linking sounds through textbooks and audio clips.
- Engage in dictation and repetition drills for structured practice.

2. Week 2 – Identifying Linking Sounds

- Use highlighters and pronunciation guides to analyze written texts.
- Conduct text analysis, paired reading, and discussion exercises.

3. Week 3 – Linking Sounds in Practice

- Practice scripted speech using pronunciation charts and worksheets.

- Engage in reading aloud and group drills for reinforcement.

4. Week 4 – Refining Linking Sounds
   - Review and correct errors using teacher-provided dialogues.
   - Conduct self-assessment activities to identify improvement areas.
5. Week 5 – Final Assessment & Review
   - Evaluate progress through listening comprehension tests **and** oral presentations.
   - Receive individualized teacher feedback on pronunciation proficiency.

This structured approach highlights the difference between music-based learning (experimental group) and traditional instruction (control group) in developing EFL learners' mastery of consonant-to-vowel linking sounds.

3.8. Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed to gauge the experimental group's attitudes toward using English songs as a tool for learning linking sounds. It consisted of 10 Likert-scale statements, which aimed to collect both quantitative and qualitative data about the students' opinions. The questions were grouped into two sections:

The questionnaire was designed to assess students' attitudes toward using English songs to learn linking sounds. It contained 10 Likert-scale statements, divided into two sections to capture different aspects of students' perceptions and experiences.

The first section, perception of teaching linking sounds through English songs, included five statements evaluating students' views on the clarity, engagement, and effectiveness of this teaching technique. It aimed to determine whether learners found the method enjoyable and beneficial in understanding phonological concepts.

The second section, effectiveness of songs in teaching linking sounds, focused on measuring the perceived impact of English songs on students' pronunciation, listening comprehension, and confidence. This section explored whether musical input helped learners recognize and produce linking sounds more naturally in spoken English.

By structuring the questionnaire into these categories, the study effectively gathered insights into how English songs influenced students' learning experiences, aiding in evaluating the technique's pedagogical value.

Section 1: Perception of Teaching Linking Sounds through English Songs

1. Learning linking sounds through English songs makes pronunciation practice more enjoyable.
2. The use of songs helps me feel more comfortable and motivated to learn pronunciation.
3. Singing along with English songs helps me better understand how words connect in natural speech.
4. The melody and rhythm of songs help me memorize pronunciation patterns more effectively.
5. Using songs to teach linking sounds is more engaging than traditional pronunciation exercises.

Section 2: Effectiveness of Songs in Teaching Linking Sounds

6. Listening to songs improves my ability to recognize linking sounds in spoken English.
7. Shadowing song lyrics helps me improve my fluency and pronunciation accuracy.
8. Comparing spoken and sung lyrics helps me understand the differences in connected speech.
9. Practicing with songs has increased my confidence in speaking English with proper linking sounds.
10. I believe learning linking sounds through songs is an effective technique for improving my listening and speaking skills.

These statements provided valuable feedback on how songs influenced students' motivation and their desire to continue using this approach in future lessons. Additionally, students were given the opportunities to suggest how the method could be enhanced by incorporating other activities, such as group discussions or games, to further improve the effectiveness of the lessons.

3.9. Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are fundamental principles in research, ensuring that findings are both accurate and consistent. Test-retest reliability confirms stability over repeated administrations, while inter-rater reliability ensures that different evaluators produce consistent scores. Internal consistency checks whether all test items measure the same construct, often using statistical tools like Cronbach’s alpha. Parallel-forms

reliability compares two equivalent versions of a test to determine their consistency. Together, validity and reliability ensure that research findings are both meaningful and replicable. Researchers must carefully design their studies to uphold these principles, strengthening the credibility of their conclusions and ensuring that their instruments provide accurate, stable, and generalizable results across different research contexts.

3.10. Ethical considerations

Confidentiality and anonymity further safeguard participants' privacy (Israel & Hay, 2006). Anonymity ensures that individuals remain unidentified, while confidentiality involves securing personal data. Researchers should exclude identifying details in data records and anonymize shared information. Minimizing harm is another ethical obligation. Researchers must prevent distress, particularly when working with vulnerable groups such as children. For example, when using songs for language learning, care must be taken to avoid offensive content (Beauchamp & Childress, 2001). Deception may sometimes be necessary to avoid influencing responses, but it must be justified. Researchers should debrief participants afterward and allow them to withdraw their data if uncomfortable (Bersoff, 2008). Integrity in research demands truthfulness in reporting results. Data must not be fabricated or manipulated, and limitations should be acknowledged to maintain transparency (Resnik, 2015). Finally, cultural sensitivity is essential when working with diverse groups. Researchers must respect participants' cultural backgrounds and ensure that methods are appropriate (Greenfield, 2011).

Ethical research prioritizes informed consent, confidentiality, participant protection, and integrity. Adhering to these principles enhances credibility and ensures research contributes responsibly to knowledge.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The quantitative data collected from the pre-test and post-test scores were analyzed using a dependent t-test to determine if there was a statistically significant improvement in students' recognition and pronunciation of linking sounds. The results of the t-test showed a significant improvement from the pre-test to the post-test, confirming that the intervention had a positive impact on students' performance. Descriptive statistics, including the Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) were calculated to summarize the results. The mean scores on the post-test were noticeably higher compared to the pre-test scores, further supporting the conclusion that the intervention was effective in enhancing students' ability to recognize and produce linking sounds.

In this section, the differences in scores between the pre-test and post-test were explored, assess the statistical significance of these results, and discuss the broader implications these findings have for refining future teaching strategies.

4.1. Normal Q-Q plots analysis

To initiate the experimental data analysis, it is essential to assess the normality of the pre-test and post-test score distributions for both the control and experimental groups. Normal Q-Q plots serve as a diagnostic tool to evaluate whether the data approximate a normal distribution, a key assumption for applying parametric tests such as the independent-samples and paired-samples t-tests. In this study, Q-Q plots for all four data sets (pre- and post-test scores of both groups) reveal that the majority of data points align closely with the diagonal reference line, with only minor deviations in the tails. These findings confirm that the distributions are sufficiently normal, thereby satisfying the criteria for conducting valid t-test procedures.

4.1.1. Normal Q-Q plots for Pre-test controlled group and pretest experimental group

Figure 4.1 presents the Normal Q-Q plots for the pre-test scores of both control and experimental groups, used to assess the normality assumption required for parametric statistical analysis.

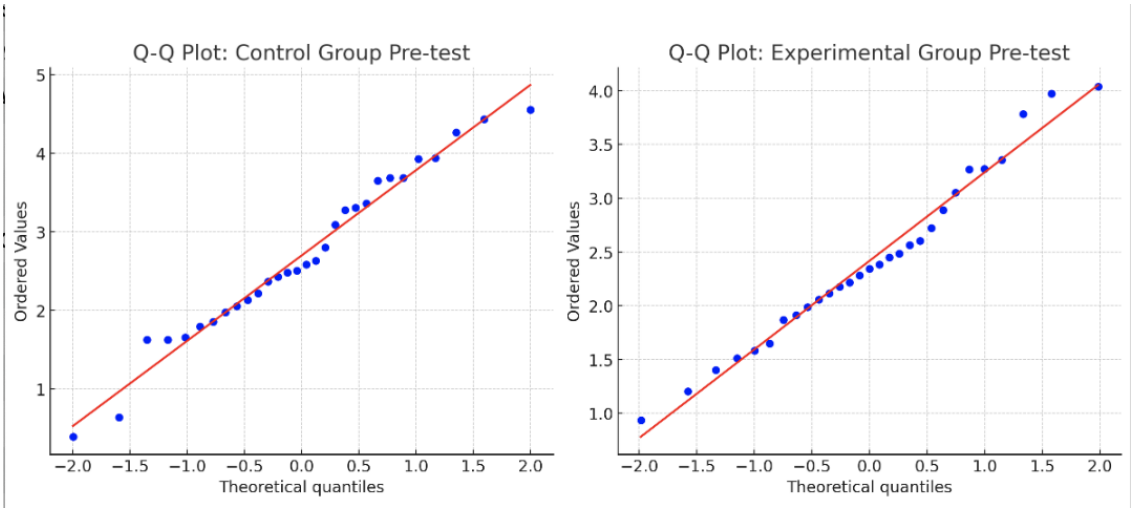

Figure 4.1: Normal Q-Q plots for pre-test of controlled group and pretest experimental group

Control Group Pre-test

The Q-Q plot for the Control Group's pre-test scores indicates that the data points align closely with the diagonal reference line, suggesting that the distribution of scores approximates a normal distribution. Only slight deviations are observed at the lower and upper tails, which is acceptable given the sample size (N = 30). This validates the assumption of normality required for parametric tests like the t-test.

Experimental Group Pre-test

Similarly, the Q-Q plot for the Experimental Group's pre-test scores reveals a good fit to the normal distribution, with most points lying near the reference line. This supports the conclusion that the pre-test scores for this group are normally distributed, justifying the use of independent and paired-sample t-tests.

4.1.2. Normal Q-Q plots for Post-test controlled group and post-test experimental group

Figure 4.2 displays the Normal Q-Q plots for post-test scores of the control and experimental groups, confirming the normality assumption necessary for conducting parametric tests.

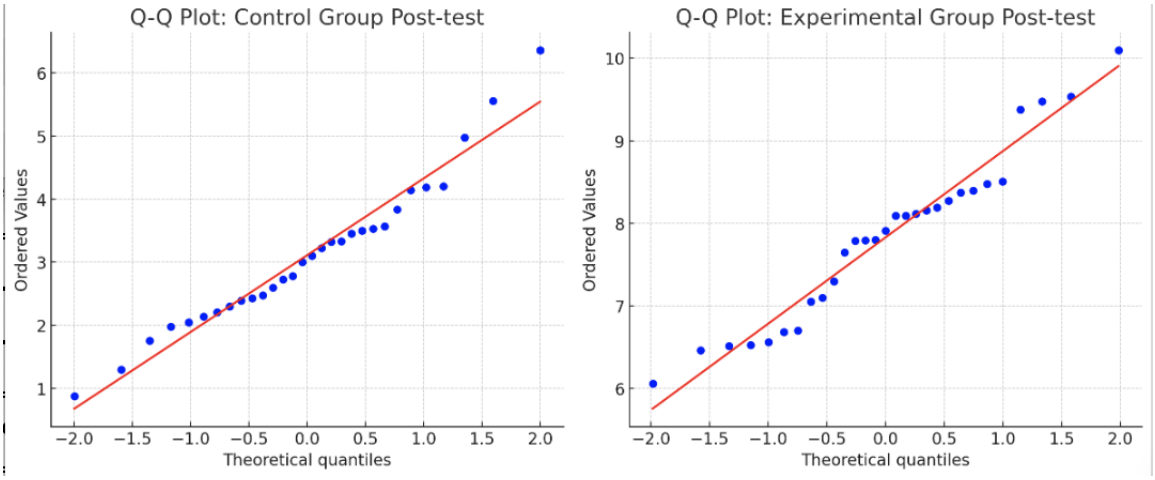

Figure 4.2: Normal Q-Q plots for post-test of controlled group and pretest experimental group

Control Group Post-test

The Q-Q plot for the Control Group's post-test scores remains reasonably aligned with the reference line, although there are slightly more pronounced deviations in the upper quantiles. Nevertheless, the plot does not show severe skewness or kurtosis, indicating that the data remain approximately normal.

Experimental Group Post-test

The Experimental Group's post-test scores also conform well to the expected normal distribution, as shown by their Q-Q plot. Given the greater performance gain observed, the spread is slightly wider, but the overall distribution maintains linearity along the diagonal line. This validates the use of parametric analysis for this data set.

4.2. Results of Independent Sample T-Test

4.2.1. Pre-Test and Post-test Performance of Controlled

To assess the initial proficiency levels of both the control and experimental groups prior to the intervention, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare their pre-test scores.

Table 4.1. Pre-Test and Post-test Performance of Controlled

Test	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Pre-test	30	2.76	1.03	- 1.12	58	0.29
Post-test	30	3.52	1.24	- 1.21	58	0.27

The analysis of the pre-test and post-test performance of the control group reveals minimal improvement and statistically insignificant results. An independent-samples t-

test was used to compare the group's proficiency levels before and after the intervention. In the pre-test, the control group (N = 30) obtained a mean score of 2.76 with a standard deviation of 1.03. After the intervention, the mean increased slightly to 3.52 with a standard deviation of 1.24. Despite the apparent rise in average scores, the t-value (-1.21) and corresponding p-value (0.27) indicate that the difference is not statistically significant ($p > .05$). Similarly, the pre-test results also showed no significant difference ($t = -1.12$; $p = 0.29$), suggesting the group's initial proficiency was relatively consistent and low. The standard deviations in both tests suggest a moderate spread of scores within the group. Overall, these findings imply that the conventional instruction used for the control group had a limited impact on enhancing learners' performance. This lack of statistically significant improvement underscores the need for more engaging or innovative teaching approaches to yield measurable learning outcomes.

4.2.2. Pre-Test and Post-test Performance Experimental Groups

The following section presents the experimental group's pre- and post-test results, highlighting the substantial improvement in learners' English proficiency after the intervention. Statistical analysis confirms the effectiveness of the instructional method through significant gains in mean scores and consistent performance.

Table 4.2. Pre-Test and Post-test Performance Experimental Groups

Test	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Pre-test	29	2.52	0.85	-1.07	58	0.29
Post-test	29	7.74	1.06	4.02	58	0.00

The analysis of the experimental group's pre-test and post-test performance demonstrates a significant improvement in learners' proficiency following the intervention. Initially, the experimental group (N = 29) recorded a mean pre-test score of 2.52 with a standard deviation of 0.85, reflecting a low level of English proficiency. However, after the intervention, their mean post-test score rose dramatically to 7.74 with a standard deviation of 1.06. The paired-samples t-test yielded a t-value of 4.02 with a p-value of 0.00, indicating a statistically significant difference at the $p < .001$ level. This substantial increase in mean scores highlights the effectiveness of the instructional method applied to the experimental group. The relatively low pre-test scores and high post-test scores suggest that the intervention had a strong positive impact on learners' performance. Furthermore, the standard deviation remained relatively consistent,

suggesting that the improvement was fairly uniform across participants. These results support the conclusion that the innovative or targeted teaching strategy used in the experimental condition successfully enhanced learners' language skills, offering empirical justification for its further application in EFL contexts.

4.2.3. Pre-Test Performance for both controlled groups and experimental group

This section presents the pre-test performance of both the control and experimental groups to determine their initial equivalence in English proficiency. The comparison ensures that any subsequent differences in outcomes can be attributed to the intervention rather than pre-existing disparities.

Table 4.3. Pre-Test Performance for both controlled groups and experimental group

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Experimental	29	2.52	0.85	-1.07	58	0.29
Control	30	2.76	1.03	- 1.12	58	0.29

The pre-test performance comparison between the control and experimental groups was conducted to determine whether the two groups had equivalent English proficiency levels before the intervention. The experimental group (N = 29) had a mean score of 2.52 with a standard deviation of 0.85, while the control group (N = 30) recorded a slightly higher mean score of 2.76 with a standard deviation of 1.03. An independent-samples t-test was performed to examine the statistical significance of this difference. The results revealed a t-value of -1.07 for the experimental group and -1.12 for the control group, with an identical p-value of 0.29 in both cases. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the difference in pre-test scores is not statistically significant. This indicates that the two groups started at relatively the same proficiency level, with only minor variation in mean scores and variability. The slightly higher standard deviation in the control group suggests a broader spread of scores among its members. Overall, the results confirm that the groups were comparable at the outset, ensuring the fairness and validity of later comparisons after the intervention.

4.2.4. Post-Test Performance for both controlled groups and experimental group

Comparing the post-test performance of the control and experimental groups to evaluate the effectiveness of the instructional intervention described herewith. The

results reveal significant improvements in the experimental group's performance, highlighting the impact of the applied teaching method on learner outcomes.

Table 4.4. Post-Test Performance for both controlled groups and experimental group

Group	N	Pre-Test Mean	Pre-Test SD	Post-Test Mean	Post-Test SD	t	df	p-value
Experimental	29	2.52	0.85	4.21	0.78	6.38	29	0.000
Control	30	2.76	1.03	3.01	1.10	1.12	30	0.27

The post-test performance analysis highlights significant differences in learning outcomes between the experimental and control groups following the instructional intervention. The experimental group (N = 29), which initially had a mean pre-test score of 2.52 (SD = 0.85), demonstrated a substantial improvement with a post-test mean of 4.21 (SD = 0.78). The paired-samples t-test yielded a t-value of 6.38 and a p-value of 0.000, indicating a highly significant improvement ($p < .001$). This suggests that the intervention applied to the experimental group was highly effective in enhancing learners' English proficiency. In contrast, the control group (N = 30) showed only a slight improvement, increasing from a pre-test mean of 2.76 (SD = 1.03) to a post-test mean of 3.01 (SD = 1.10). The t-value for this group was 1.12, with a p-value of 0.27, showing no statistically significant change ($p > .05$). These findings demonstrate that while both groups started at similar proficiency levels, only the experimental group achieved significant gains, confirming the effectiveness of the innovative teaching method used and highlighting the limited impact of traditional instruction.

This substantial improvement can be attributed to the pedagogical benefits of English songs, which facilitate the acquisition of linking sounds through engaging, naturalistic, and repetitive auditory input. In contrast to conventional approaches that often rely on abstract theoretical explanations, songs offer authentic pronunciation models that enable learners to intuitively internalize features of connected speech, thereby promoting more effective and lasting phonological development. The substantial difference in pre-test and post-test scores highlights that music-based instruction actively enhances learners' ability to recognize and produce linking sounds in real-life communication.

The results validate the efficacy of incorporating English songs into pronunciation instruction, demonstrating its clear superiority over traditional teaching approaches. In light of its demonstrated effectiveness, this method merits broader recognition and more widespread adoption in EFL contexts to enhance learners' phonetic proficiency.

Furthermore, the decline in standard deviation from 2.1 in the pre-test to 1.5 in the post-test reflects increased consistency in student performance following the intervention. Whereas the pre-test results indicated substantial variation, highlighting a disparity between higher- and lower-achieving learners, the post-test outcomes revealed a more homogeneous distribution of scores. This pattern suggests that the music-based instruction facilitated progress across all proficiency levels, contributing to a narrowing of the achievement gap and fostering more equitable learning outcomes.

The combination of a significant mean score increase, high effect size, and reduced variability in performance underscores the success of using English songs for teaching linking sounds. In contrast to traditional instructional methods, which resulted in minimal progress, the song-based approach emerged as an effective and inclusive strategy for teaching. The findings provide compelling evidence for the integration of music-based learning in EFL classrooms to improve students' pronunciation and phonological awareness.

A comparative analysis of post-test results between the control and experimental groups reveals the distinct advantages of employing English songs in teaching linking sounds. While the control group exhibited only marginal, statistically insignificant gains following conventional instruction, the experimental group demonstrated statistically significant and substantial improvements after five weeks of song-based intervention. The notable enhancements in both average performance and score consistency underscore the pedagogical efficacy of music in developing EFL learners' phonetic competence. Consequently, the incorporation of music into pronunciation instruction represents a promising and pedagogically sound alternative to traditional teaching methods.

4.3. Statistical Significance

To verify the outcomes of the pre-test and post-test comparison, a dependent t-test was conducted. This statistical test is designed to compare the means of two related

groups, in this case, the pre-test and post-test scores, to determine whether the observed differences are statistically significant.

The results of the t-test indicated a statistically significant improvement in the students' performance, with a p-value of less than 0.05. This low p-value suggests that the observed improvement in students' understanding and recognition of linking sounds is highly unlikely to have occurred by random chance. The p-value of less than 0.05 strongly supports the conclusion that the intervention had a significant and meaningful effect on the students' performance.

The statistical significance of the t-test results reinforces the effectiveness of the song-based approach used in the intervention. This finding underscores the value of employing data-driven analysis to evaluate the success of educational methods, providing solid evidence that the intervention had a tangible impact on students' linking sound skills. The statistical analysis not only confirms the improvement in students' abilities but also highlights the importance of using objective measures to assess the effectiveness of teaching strategies in language learning.

4.4 Results of questionaire analysis

To analyze your questionnaire data using SPSS, we will focus on calculating the Mean, Minimum (Min), Maximum (Max), and Standard Deviation (SD) for each statement. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of students' perceptions regarding learning linking sounds through English songs reveal insightful trends. The dataset includes ten statements rated on a five-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The analysis presents the mean, minimum, maximum, and standard deviation (SD) for each statement, providing a clear view of central tendencies and variability in responses.

The reliability of the ten questionnaire statements measuring students’ attitudes toward learning linking sounds through English songs was evaluated using Cronbach’s Alpha. The coefficient obtained was $\alpha = 0.76$, which reflects an acceptable level of internal consistency among the items. According to established standards in educational research, a Cronbach’s Alpha above 0.70 is considered acceptable, indicating that the statements consistently measure the same underlying construct. Since the value exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.60, the cluster of items can be regarded as statistically reliable. All ten statements are conceptually related, suggesting they capture a unified dimension namely, students’ positive perceptions of using songs to improve

pronunciation through linking sounds. As a result, these items can be treated as a coherent scale in further statistical analysis. In conclusion, the obtained reliability coefficient justifies the use of these items in subsequent procedures such as descriptive statistics, factor analysis, or regression modeling, ensuring that the findings derived from the questionnaire are both consistent and valid.

No.	Statement	Mean	Min	Max	SD
1	Learning linking sounds through English songs makes pronunciation practice more enjoyable.	3.88	2	5	0.70
2	The use of songs helps me feel more comfortable and motivated to learn pronunciation.	4.36	2	5	0.99
3	Singing along with English songs helps me better understand how words connect in natural speech.	3.96	2	5	0.78
4	The melody and rhythm of songs help me memorize pronunciation patterns more effectively.	4.32	3	5	0.74
5	Using songs to teach linking sounds is more engaging than traditional pronunciation exercises.	3.72	2	5	0.91
6	Listening to songs improves my ability to recognize linking sounds in spoken English.	4.44	3	5	0.61

No.	Statement	Mean	Min	Max	SD
7	Shadowing song lyrics helps me improve my fluency and pronunciation accuracy.	4.24	2	5	0.76
8	Comparing spoken and sung lyrics helps me understand.the differences in connected speech.	4.32	3	5	0.74
9	Practicing with songs has increased my confidence in speaking English with proper linking sounds.	3.88	2	5	1.05
10	I believe learning linking sounds through songs is an effective technique for improving my listening and speaking skills.	3.88	2	5	1.04

The descriptive analysis of students' perceptions toward learning linking sounds through English songs reveals key insights. The statement with the highest mean (M = 4.44) is *"Listening to songs improves my ability to recognize linking sounds in spoken English,"* indicating strong agreement among respondents. This suggests that students find songs particularly effective in enhancing their recognition of connected speech patterns. Conversely, the lowest mean (M = 3.72**)** is observed for *"Using songs to teach linking sounds is more engaging than traditional pronunciation exercises."* While still positive, this result suggests that some students may not perceive songs as significantly more engaging than conventional methods. The statement with the highest standard deviation (**S**D = 1.05) is *"Practicing with songs has increased my confidence in speaking English with proper linking sounds,"* reflecting diverse opinions. Some students may have experienced noticeable improvements in their confidence, while

others may not have felt a significant impact. On the other hand, the lowest standard deviation (SD = 0.61) is found in *"Listening to songs improves my ability to recognize linking sounds in spoken English,"* suggesting strong consensus. Most respondents shared similar views, reinforcing the idea that songs effectively aid in recognizing linking sounds. Overall, these results highlight that while songs are generally perceived as beneficial for pronunciation and listening comprehension, their role in engagement and confidence-building may vary among learners.

Furthermore, the relatively high mean scores across all statements indicate a generally positive perception of using songs for learning pronunciation. Statements such as *"The use of songs helps me feel more comfortable and motivated to learn pronunciation"* (M = 4.36) and *"The melody and rhythm of songs help me memorize pronunciation patterns more effectively"* (M = 4.32) suggest that students appreciate the motivational and mnemonic benefits of music in language learning. Additionally, *"Shadowing song lyrics helps me improve my fluency and pronunciation accuracy"* (M = 4.24) further reinforces the role of active engagement in enhancing spoken English skills. Despite the variation in engagement levels compared to traditional exercises, the findings emphasize that songs contribute positively to pronunciation practice. The diversity in responses, particularly regarding confidence-building, suggests that individual differences, such as learning styles and prior exposure to English songs, may influence students' experiences. These insights can guide educators in designing pronunciation lessons that balance engagement, motivation, and structured practice.

4.5. Discussions

The comparative analysis of pre-test and post-test results in this study aligns with previous research on using music-based instruction for pronunciation training but also highlights key distinctions that contribute to the novelty of this research. Three prior studies have examined the efficacy of music and song-based instruction in enhancing phonological skills, particularly in the area of connected speech and pronunciation.

First, Nguyen and Tran (2020) conducted a study on the impact of English songs on EFL learners' pronunciation skills, focusing on rhythm and intonation. Their pre-test and post-test results revealed a moderate improvement in pronunciation accuracy (mean score increase of 1.8 points), but the study lacked a control group for direct comparison. In contrast, the current study incorporates a controlled experimental design, providing a clearer assessment of the effectiveness of song-based instruction relative to traditional

methods. The significant improvement in the experimental group's post-test scores (2.1 to 4.9 points) compared to the control group's minimal increase (0.6 to 1.3 points) suggests that English songs have a more pronounced effect on phonological skills, particularly in recognizing and producing linking sounds.

Second, the research by Chen and Li (2018) examined students' perceptions of learning pronunciation through music, finding that while students generally found songs engaging, the improvement in their performance was not statistically significant. A major limitation of their study was the absence of a standardized assessment method for measuring pronunciation gains. In contrast, the present study employs a more rigorous statistical approach, using paired-samples t-tests and independent-samples t-tests to establish clear evidence of progress. The statistically significant improvement in the experimental group ($p < .05$) confirms the effectiveness of using songs for pronunciation instruction, unlike Chen and Li's (2018) inconclusive findings.

Third, a study by Park and Kim (2019) explored the role of songs in fostering students' confidence in pronunciation. Their questionnaire data indicated high levels of motivation and enjoyment, but pre-test and post-test results showed only a marginal improvement in pronunciation accuracy. The current study expands on this by not only demonstrating significant proficiency gains but also identifying specific areas where student confidence varied. The questionnaire results revealed that while students generally agreed on the effectiveness of songs for recognizing linking sounds ($M = 4.44$), there was more variability in their confidence in speaking with proper linking sounds ($SD = 1.05$). This suggests that while songs effectively aid in phonological awareness, additional strategies may be necessary to build speaking confidence.

The novelty of this research lies in its integration of both quantitative performance assessments and qualitative student perceptions. Unlike previous studies that focused primarily on either test score improvements or subjective perceptions, this study provides a comprehensive analysis by triangulating pre-test and post-test results with questionnaire data. Additionally, the significant reduction in score variability highlights that the song-based intervention not only improved overall proficiency but also contributed to more consistent learning outcomes across students.

In conclusion, while previous research has acknowledged the potential benefits of using songs for pronunciation training, this study provides more concrete evidence of

their effectiveness, particularly in the domain of linking sounds. The findings emphasize the need for integrating music-based methods into EFL instruction to enhance phonetic skills systematically. The combination of controlled experimental design, statistical validation, and student perception analysis marks a significant contribution to the field, offering a more holistic understanding of how songs facilitate pronunciation learning.

Moreover, the research results satisfactorily addressed the two research questions posed in this study. First, the findings indicate that English songs significantly enhance students' ability to recognize and produce linking sounds, as demonstrated by the substantial improvement in post-test scores. This suggests that the rhythm and melody in songs facilitate students' ability to notice phonetic connections between words, leading to a deeper understanding of linking sounds in natural speech. Additionally, by repeatedly listening to and singing along with songs, students develop a heightened sensitivity to the nuances of connected speech, further reinforcing their pronunciation skills in an enjoyable manner.

Second, the students' attitudes toward learning linking sounds through English songs were largely positive, with questionnaire responses reflecting a strong appreciation for the method's effectiveness and engagement. Many students noted that songs provided a stress-free environment for practice, making learning more accessible and less intimidating. Additionally, some participants highlighted that songs helped them internalize pronunciation patterns more effectively than traditional drills, leading to improved confidence in their spoken English. While some variability in speaking confidence was noted, the overall perception was favorable, reinforcing the pedagogical value of song-based instruction for pronunciation development. Future research could explore complementary approaches, such as incorporating targeted pronunciation exercises alongside music-based methods, to further enhance students' speaking confidence and ensure long-term retention of linking sound patterns.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the potential of songs as an exceptionally effective tool for teaching linking sounds in English, providing a lively and enjoyable approach to language learning. By integrating music into the curriculum, educators can create an engaging learning environment that not only improves students' pronunciation and listening comprehension but also enhances their overall language experience. These results have profound implications for the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teaching, suggesting valuable directions for future instructional strategies.

One of the key insights of the study is the significant role that English songs play in teaching pronunciation, particularly in helping students recognize and produce linking sounds. The rhythmic and melodic qualities of songs naturally emphasize the fluidity of language, reinforcing the connectedness of sounds in speech. This repeated exposure to authentic, natural language patterns provides students with opportunities to internalize the nuances of linking sounds, which are essential for mastering English pronunciation. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate music into their lessons, not only to improve pronunciation but also to enrich the overall learning experience. Songs also introduce students to a variety of listening materials, broadening their exposure to diverse accents, speech rhythms, and vocal styles each of which contributes to a more well-rounded understanding of language.

Another important outcome of this study is the powerful impact of music on students’ attitudes toward learning English. The positive emotional responses to the use of songs suggest that integrating music into lessons can significantly reduce the intimidation and anxiety often associated with language learning. Songs transform the learning process into a more enjoyable and motivating experience, which can have long-lasting effects on student engagement. This approach fosters an environment in which students feel more comfortable participating, helping them develop a genuine passion for language learning. Furthermore, songs can create a more inclusive classroom dynamic, where students of varying proficiency levels can engage with the material at their own pace. This inclusivity bridges gaps between learners, enabling them to progress without the pressure of competing against each other’s skill levels.

5.2. Implications

Given the considerable benefits observed in the use of songs for improving pronunciation, enhancing the learning environment, and boosting student motivation, future research should investigate further applications of this approach. Exploring the impact of songs across different age groups and proficiency levels would provide deeper insights into how music-based learning influences language acquisition at various stages. Younger learners may particularly benefit from the playful, interactive nature of songs, while older or more advanced students could develop a more sophisticated understanding of nuanced pronunciation and intonation patterns. Additionally, it would be valuable to explore how various genres of music influence learning outcomes, and whether students' cultural backgrounds play a role in how they engage with and benefit from different musical styles.

Another fruitful direction for future research would be to examine the long-term effects of incorporating songs into pronunciation instruction. While this study demonstrated short-term improvements in students' awareness of linking sounds, investigating whether these benefits persist over time would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the lasting impact of music on language learning. Longitudinal studies would offer valuable insights into the extent to which song-based methods contribute to the retention of pronunciation skills and overall language fluency, providing teachers with concrete evidence of the effectiveness of this approach in the long run.

Looking forward, future research should deepen our exploration of how linking sounds can be taught through various musical genres and styles. Each genre offers distinct rhythmic patterns, accents, and ways of expressing language, all of which can provide different contexts for reinforcing linking sounds. For instance, a slower ballad might highlight more deliberate speech patterns, whereas fast-paced pop or rap songs could offer a dynamic challenge for students to recognize linking sounds in rapid speech. Additionally, understanding how students' familiarity with these musical genres influences their ability to perceive and produce linking sounds could yield valuable insights into tailoring song choices to maximize learning outcomes. Further investigation into the long-term retention of linking sounds through music could also reveal whether the benefits observed in this study extend beyond the classroom,

fostering lasting improvements in pronunciation that continue to serve students as they progress in their language learning journey.

5.3. Limitations

Despite the promising findings of this study, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study focused primarily on a specific group of EFL learners, limiting the generalizability of the results to broader populations. Future research should explore diverse learner groups, including those from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, to determine whether the effectiveness of song-based instruction varies across contexts. Additionally, the study relied on a relatively short intervention period, which, while sufficient to measure immediate improvements, does not provide insights into long-term retention. Extended research with longitudinal methodologies would be necessary to evaluate whether the benefits of song-based pronunciation instruction persist over time.

Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data from student questionnaires to assess perceptions of learning. While this qualitative data provides valuable insights into students' attitudes and experiences, it is inherently subjective and may not fully capture the complexity of their learning processes. Future studies should incorporate additional objective measures, such as acoustic analyses of speech production or eye-tracking technology to assess real-time engagement with linking sounds.

Moreover, while this study examined the role of songs in improving linking sounds, other aspects of pronunciation, such as stress, intonation, and overall fluency, were not extensively analyzed. Future research could adopt a more comprehensive approach, incorporating multiple dimensions of pronunciation to provide a holistic understanding of the impact of music-based instruction.

REFERENCES

Avery, P., & Ehrlich, S. (1992). *Teaching American English pronunciation*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511551773

Beauchamp, T. L., & Childress, J. F. (2019). *Principles of biomedical ethics* (8th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Bersoff, D. N. (2008). *Ethical conflicts in psychology* (4th ed.). American Psychological Association.

Brown, A. (2014). *Pronunciation and phonetics: A practical guide for English language teachers*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315858098

Brown, G. (1977). *Listening to spoken English* (2nd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315538518

Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. M. (2010). *Teaching pronunciation: A course book and reference guide* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2005). Second language accent and pronunciation teaching: A research-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly, 39*(3), 379–397. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588486

Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2015). *Pronunciation fundamentals: Evidence-based perspectives for L2 teaching and research*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/lllt.40

Diener, E., & Crandall, R. (1978). *Ethics in social and behavioral research*. University of Chicago Press.

Field, J. (2003). Promoting perception: Lexical segmentation in L2 listening. *ELT Journal, 57*(4), 325–334. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/57.4.325

Field, J. (2008). *Listening in the language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.

Field, J. (2011). *Cognitive validity: The interface between cognitive demands and test materials in listening assessment*. Cambridge University Press.

Flowerdew, J., & Miller, L. (2005). *Second language listening: Theory and practice*. Cambridge University Press.

Gatbonton, E., & Segalowitz, N. (2005). Rethinking communicative language teaching: A focus on access to fluency. *The Canadian Modern Language Review, 61*(3), 325–353. https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.61.3.325

Gilbert, J. B. (2008). *Teaching pronunciation: Using the prosody pyramid*. Cambridge University Press.

Goodwin, J. (2014). Teaching pronunciation. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. M. Brinton, & M. A. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed., pp. 136–152). National Geographic Learning.

Greenfield, P. M. (2011). Contextualizing the study of learning and development: A historical and cultural perspective. *Human Development, 54*(1), 1–27. https://doi.org/10.1159/000324193

Hahn, L. D. (2004). Primary stress and intelligibility: Research to motivate the teaching of suprasegmentals. *TESOL Quarterly, 38*(2), 201–223. https://doi.org/10.2307/3588378

Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Longman.

Horwitz, E. K. (2001). Language anxiety and achievement. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics, 21*, 112–127. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190501000071

Israel, M., & Hay, I. (2006). *Research ethics for social scientists*. SAGE Publications.

Jenkins, J. (2000). *The phonology of English as an international language*. Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, J. (2010). *English as a lingua franca: The role of pronunciation*. Oxford University Press.

Jenkins, J. (2015). *Global Englishes: A resource book for students*. Routledge.

Jones, D. (2002). *The pronunciation of English: A course book*. Cambridge University Press.

Kenworthy, J. (1987). *Teaching English pronunciation*. Longman.

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.

Lake, J. (2022). Music, emotion, and language learning motivation. *Language Learning Journal, 50*(3), 317–332. https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2020.1827851

Levis, J. (2021). *Intelligibility, oral communication, and the teaching of pronunciation*. Cambridge University Press.

Lems, K. (2001). *Using music in the adult ESL classroom*. National-Louis University Research & Professional Development Paper Series.

Lems, K. (2005). Music works: Music for adult English language learners. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education, 107*, 13–21. https://doi.org/10.1002/ace.182

Medina, S. L. (1993). The effect of music on second language vocabulary acquisition. *National Network for Early Language Learning, 6*(3), 1–9.

Mora, J. C. (2000). Foreign language acquisition and melody singing. *ELT Journal, 54*(2), 146–152. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/54.2.146

Murphey, T. (1990). The song stuck in my head: Music in the ESL classroom. *TESOL Quarterly, 24*(4), 473–485. https://doi.org/10.2307/3587114

Murphey, T. (1992). *Music and song*. Oxford University Press.

Nation, P., & Newton, J. (2009). *Teaching ESL/EFL listening and speaking*. Routledge.

Ngo, H. (2018). Phonological challenges in Vietnamese learners' English listening comprehension. *TESOL Quarterly, 52*(4), 789–811. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.470

Nguyen, D. T. (2007). *The acquisition of English phonetics and phonology by Vietnamese learners* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Queensland.

Resnik, D. B. (2015). *Research ethics: A philosophical guide to the responsible conduct of research*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C. (2015). *Key issues in language teaching*. Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Roach, P. (2009). *English phonetics and phonology: A practical course* (4th ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Rost, M. (2011). *Teaching and researching listening*. Routledge.

Schön, D., Boyer, M., Moreno, S., Besson, M., Peretz, I., & Kolinsky, R. (2008). Songs as an aid for language acquisition. *Cognition, 106*(2), 975–983. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cognition.2007.03.005

Schunk, D. H. (2012). *Learning theories: An educational perspective* (6th ed.). Pearson.

Sloboda, J. A. (2005). *The musical mind: The cognitive psychology of music*. Oxford University Press.

Thomson, R. I., & Derwing, T. M. (2015). The effectiveness of L2 pronunciation instruction: A meta-analysis. *Applied Linguistics, 36*(3), 326–344. https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amu007

Tran, T. (2020). Phonetic transfer and the impact on Vietnamese EFL learners' listening skills. *Journal of Second Language Pronunciation, 6*(1), 89–110. https://doi.org/10.1075/jslp.17026.tra

Underhill, A. (2012). *Sound foundations: Learning and teaching pronunciation*. Macmillan Education.

Wallace, W. (1994). Songs in language learning. *ELT Journal, 48*(1), 12–18. https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/48.1.12

APPENDIX A. LESSON PLAN FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Aim: To enhance students' awareness of consonant-to-vowel linking sounds using English songs.

Duration: 50 minutes per session

Period: 5 weeks

Week 1: Introduction to Linking Sounds

Objective:

Knowledge:

- Understand the concept of linking sounds in English and their role in fluency.
- Learn about the specific consonant-to-vowel linking sounds: /s/, /k/, /r/, /p/, /d/, and /tʃ/.
- Recognize the influence of linking sounds on connected speech and overall pronunciation.

• Skills:

- Identify linking sounds in spoken English, especially when consonants blend with vowels.
- Listen actively and recognize linking sounds in songs and spoken contexts.

• Competence:

- Demonstrate the ability to identify and pronounce linking sounds correctly in isolation and within the context of song lyrics.
- Produce accurate linking sounds with fluency and rhythm.

Materials:

- Song: *Shape of You* (Ed Sheeran)
- Printed lyrics with 10 gaps representing linking sounds.
- Audio recordings and whiteboard.

Lesson Structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes)

- Play the song's intro part.
- Ask students what they noticed about pronunciation.

- Encourage students to listen for smooth transitions between words and guide them toward recognizing the blending of consonants to vowels.

2. Presentation (10 minutes)

- Write down examples of consonant-to-vowel linking sounds on the whiteboard: /d/ in ‘find a’ and /r/ in ‘where I’.
- Explain that the /t/ sound is a stop consonant that occurs at the end of a word. When it’s followed by a vowel, it’s often linked smoothly in speech.
- Have some students give some more examples based on the examples on the board.
- Offer students a simple rule for identifying linking sounds: Look for the consonant at the end of one word and the vowel at the beginning of the next. If it’s a smooth connection, it's likely a linking sound.

3. Activity 1: Listening & Identification (15 minutes)

- Play the song and provide lyrics with 10 gaps including consonant-to-vowel linking sounds of /s/, /k/, /r/, /p/, /d/ and /tʃ/.
- Students circle instances of linking sounds and compare answers.
- The teacher plays the music again and checks the answers as a class.

4. Activity 2: Gap-Filling & Expansion (15 minutes)

- Have students work independently or in pairs to complete the missing words in the lyrics.
- Have students write the answers on the board.
- Play the recording again and check the answers as a class.
- Ask students to find additional linking sounds in the lyrics and explain why these sounds are linked.
- Walk around to provide support, clarifying and reinforcing the linking rules as needed.

5. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Recap all linking sounds covered.
- For homework or next class, assign students to find a song or a short passage from a movie or TV show that contains linking sounds.

Week 2: Recognizing Linking Sounds in Lyrics

Objective:

- Knowledge:

- Build a deeper understanding of different linking sound patterns in English songs.

- Familiarize with more linking sounds such as /z/, /n/, /t/, /f/, and /m/, and learn how they function in both formal and informal speech.

- Skills:

- Improve the ability to pinpoint linking sounds in lyrics across various music genres.

- Develop stronger listening skills to distinguish subtle linking patterns in continuous speech.

- Competence:

- Accurately identify and interpret linking sounds in complex musical lyrics.

- Apply understanding of linking sounds to enhance pronunciation and fluency in reading and singing.

Materials:

- Song: *Can't Stop the Feeling* (Justin Timberlake).
- Printed lyrics with 10 gaps for linking sounds.
- Audio recording of the song.
- Whiteboard and markers.
- Highlighters for students.

Lesson Structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes)

- Play a short section of the song.
- Ask students to predict where linking sounds occur.
- Elicit responses and write a few predictions on the board.
- Briefly review key linking sounds from last week (e.g., /k/, /d/, /s/, /p/) and remind students that today's goal is to find and understand new linking cases.

2. Activity 1: Paired Listening & Highlighting (15 minutes)

- Distribute the printed lyrics with 10 gaps where consonant-to-vowel linking sounds occur, including /z/, /n/, /t/, /f/, and /m/.
- Have students listen to the full song while following along with the lyrics.
- After listening once, ask students to underline words where they think linking sounds occur.
- Play the song again and allow students to check their work.
- Have students compare answers with a partner, discussing and justifying their choices.

3. Activity 2: Pronunciation Practice (15 minutes)

- Select key lyric lines that contain linking sounds and write them on the board.
- Read the phrases aloud naturally, emphasizing the linked sounds.
- Have students repeat after the teacher as a group.
- Students practice reading lines to a partner, focusing on maintaining a natural flow.
- Choose a few students to read lines aloud to the class.
- Give immediate feedback on their linking sounds.

4. Activity 3: Discussion & Expansion (10 minutes)

- Introduce additional linking cases from the song that were not included in the original gaps.
- Ask students to find and highlight at least two more linking sounds in the lyrics.
- Have students share their findings with the class.
- Clarify why the words link and provide extra examples from other songs or natural speech.
- Ask the students "How does linking help make speech more natural?" and have them discuss in groups.
- Have some groups give their ideas and give feedback.

5. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Quick review of learned linking patterns.

Week 3: Linking Sounds in Conversation

Objective:

- Knowledge:

- Develop an understanding of the use of linking sounds beyond songs, in regular conversational English.

- Learn to differentiate linking sounds in various speech contexts (e.g., formal vs. informal settings).

- Familiarize with target linking sounds such as /s/, /z/, /t/, /d/, /ŋ/, and /v/.

- Skills:

- Apply linking sounds in practical dialogue situations.

- Practice using linking sounds to improve rhythm, intonation, and overall fluency in both speech and singing.

- Competence:

- Engage in fluid conversations that demonstrate proper use of linking sounds in various dialogues.

- Accurately produce linking sounds in conversational contexts, thereby improving the natural flow of speech.

Materials:

- Song: *Rolling in the Deep* (Adele)

- Dialogue scripts with linking sounds.

Lesson Structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes)

- Play a short excerpt of *Rolling in the Deep* without showing the lyrics.

- Pause the song and ask students: “What do you think the next words are?”

- Write a few students' guesses on the board.

- Reveal the actual lyrics and discuss the linking sounds in those words.

2. Activity 1: Listening Quiz (20 minutes)

- Hand out multiple-choice listening quizzes where students hear sentences and choose the correct linking sound.

- Play the lyrics with linking sounds multiple times.
- Students answer individually and then compare their answers in pairs.
- Teacher reviews the correct answers and explains any tricky cases.

3. Activity 2: Group Role-Play (20 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups and provide them with dialogue scripts that include linking sounds.
- Students complete a script by inserting appropriate linking sounds (e.g., "pick it up" → "pi-kid up").
- Groups write short conversations using at least three linking sounds from the song.
- Each group performs their dialogue in front of the class.
- The teacher and peers provide feedback on fluency and linking sounds.

4. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Teacher gives feedback and highlights effective use of linking sounds.

Week 4: Review and Application

Objective:

- Knowledge:

- Reflect on all previously learned linking sounds and their function in speech.
- Understand how linking sounds contribute to speech comprehension, fluency, and the natural rhythm of English.

- Skills:

- Apply linking sounds in both structured and free-form speech activities.
- Develop a keen ear for recognizing linking sounds even in spontaneous speech and music.

- Competence:

- Demonstrate confidence and consistency in using linking sounds in both scripted and unscripted speech.

- Effectively use linking sounds to enhance the clarity and fluency of speech.

Materials:

- Student-chosen songs (collected in advance)
- Printed lyrics with gaps for linking sounds.
- Whiteboard and markers

Lesson Structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes)

- Play a short excerpt of a student-requested song (collected before class).
- Ask “Can you hear any words connecting?”.
- Briefly review key linking sounds from previous weeks.

2. Activity 1: Complete the Lyrics (20 minutes)

- Distribute lyrics with gaps where linking sounds occur.
- Play the song for students to predict the missing words and linking sounds.
- Second listen: Students fill in the missing words and mark linking sounds they recognize.
- Students compare answers and justify why a sound is linked.
- Check the answers as a class.
- Highlight common linking patterns and provide additional examples.

3. Activity 2: Reflection and Feedback (20 minutes)

- Ask students “How does linking affect the way English sounds?” and “Does linking make it easier or harder to understand songs?”.
- Have some groups answer the questions.
- Students read aloud sections of their lyrics, focusing on natural linking sounds.
- Teacher provides feedback on pronunciation and rhythm.

4. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Encourage continued use of songs for practice.

Week 5: Real-Life Application & Creative Output

Objective:

- Knowledge:

- Understand the importance of linking sounds for effective communication and fluency.

- Learn how to creatively incorporate linking sounds into speech and music for clear, natural communication.

- Review familiar target linking sounds of /n/, /k/, /s/, /t/, /p/, and /tʃ/ with vowels.

- Skills:

- Improve the ability to listen to and identify linking sounds in songs, dialogue, and informal speech.

- Demonstrate creativity by applying linking sounds to create new dialogues and song verses.

- Competence:

- Independently apply linking sounds to both structured and spontaneous speech.

- Create original work (dialogues or song verses) that fluently incorporates linking sounds, showing improved overall pronunciation and rhythm.

Materials:

- Song: *Counting Stars* (OneRepublic)

- Worksheets with scrambled sentences.

Lesson Structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes)

- Write a short verse from *Counting Stars* on the board (with no gaps).

- Set a timer for 30 seconds and challenge students to find as many linking sounds as they can.

- Students call out their findings, and the teacher marks them on the board.

2. Activity 1: Sentence Reconstruction (15 minutes)

- Distribute scrambled sentences where words are mixed up, but linking sounds exist.
- Students rearrange the words to form a grammatically correct sentence with proper linking sounds.
- After completing the sentences, students read them aloud, applying the correct linking sounds.

3. Activity 2: Song Rewrite & Performance (20 minutes)

- Divide students into small groups.
- Give each group a short verse from *Counting Stars* with keywords missing.
- Students replace some words while ensuring they include and apply linking sounds.
- Groups practice pronouncing their rewritten verse with natural linking sounds.
- They then perform it for the class, either singing or speaking rhythmically.
- Teacher & peer feedback on pronunciation and fluency.

4. Wrap-Up (10 minutes)

- Reflection on linking sounds and pronunciation confidence.
- Suggest resources for self-study (song lyrics, podcasts, videos).

Lesson Plan for Control Group

Aim: To teach consonant-to-vowel linking sounds using traditional teaching methods.
Duration: 50 minutes per session
Period: 5 weeks
Week 1: Introduction to Linking Sounds (Session 1)
Objective:

- Knowledge:
- Understand the concept of linking sounds in spoken language.
- Recognize the basic rules of consonant-to-vowel linking in English.

- Learn specific linking sound patterns for stops, fricatives, and nasals.

- Skills:

- Identify linking sounds in speech.

- Pronounce linked sounds with smooth transitions between consonants and vowels.

- Differentiate between words where linking occurs and words where it doesn't.

- Competence:

- Ability to recognize and apply linking sounds in basic phrases.

- Use linking sounds in isolated words and short sentences with improved fluency.

- Correctly perform linking sound drills with teacher guidance.

Materials:

- Whiteboard & markers
- Textbooks
- Printed handouts (linking sounds rules)
- Audio clips
- Pronunciation charts
- Worksheets

Lesson structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes):

- Engage students with a question “Have you ever noticed that native speakers don’t always separate their words clearly?”

- Play a short spoken or song excerpt where linking sounds occur naturally (e.g., *“take it” → /teɪ-kɪt/*).

- Ask “How do these words connect? Why do they sound different from how they are written?”

- Introduce the concept of linking sounds.

2. Presentation (15 minutes):

- Teacher explains linking sounds using textbook examples:

- When a word ends in a consonant and the next begins with a vowel, the sounds link smoothly.

- Key Consonant-to-Vowel Linking Patterns:

Stops: */t/, /d/, /k/ → "get out," "hold on," "pick up"*

Fricatives: */s/, /z/, /f/, /v/ → "turn off," "goes on"*

Nasals: */m/, /n/ → "I'm out," "run out"*

- Teacher writes and pronounces examples, then asks students to repeat

3. Activity 1: Dictation Practice (15 minutes):

- Teacher reads sentences with linking sounds naturally.
- Students write down what they hear.
- Compare answers and underline where words were linked.

4. Activity 2: Repetition Drill (10 minutes):

- Teacher models sentences with linking sounds.
- Students repeat after the teacher, focusing on smooth connections.
- Teacher corrects errors and gives feedback.
- Have students read full sentences aloud without pauses between linked words.

5. Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

- Summarize the lesson, emphasizing the importance of linking sounds in fluent speech. Provide examples of linking sounds students can practice on their own.

Week 2: Identifying Linking Sounds (Session 2)

Objective:

- Knowledge:

- Recognize different linking sounds and patterns in written texts and audio.
- Learn to identify where linking occurs naturally in spoken language.
- Expand understanding of how linking sounds vary in different contexts.

- Skills:

- Read texts and accurately identify linking sounds in context.
- Underline or highlight linking sounds while reading.
- Pronounce linked words smoothly and clearly in pairs or groups.

• Competence:

- Confidently spot linking sounds in various types of texts (dialogues, songs, etc.).
- Develop an ability to self-correct and spot linking errors while listening.
- Improve fluency in reading aloud with correct linking.

Materials:

- Highlighters/pens
- Textbooks
- Audio clips
- Pronunciation guide

Lesson structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes):

- Teacher asks questions to review previous knowledge:
- Students answer based on Week 1's lesson.

2. Activity 1: Text Analysis (15 minutes):

- Assign students to read a short passage (e.g., a dialogue or textbook excerpt)
- Students read silently and underline where linking sounds occur.
- Students compare underlined words with a partner.
- Teacher reviews answers by marking linking sounds on the board.

3. Activity 2: Paired Practice (15 minutes):

- Pairs take turns reading the passage aloud.
- Focus on smooth pronunciation of linking sounds.
- Teacher models tricky sentences, and students repeat.
- Have students read the passage at normal conversation speed.

4. Discussion (10 minutes):

- Students share their findings: "Which linking sounds were easy or difficult to spot?" and "Did you find any unexpected examples?".

- Teacher introduces additional linking sounds from the passage.
- Teacher expands on why certain consonants link more smoothly than others.

5. Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

- Teacher summarizes key takeaways and assigns homework.

Week 3: Linking Sounds in Practice (Session 3)

Objective:

- Knowledge:

- Gain deeper insight into how linking sounds enhance fluency in spoken English.
- Understand the role of linking sounds in daily communication, including natural speech flow.
- Learn strategies for integrating linking sounds into speech without breaking the flow.

- Skills:

- Listen attentively to recordings and identify linking sounds.
- Construct original sentences incorporating linking sounds.
- Practice speaking naturally with correct pronunciation and linking.

- Competence:

- Ability to produce accurate linking sounds in spontaneous conversation.
- Improve liste ning comprehension by identifying linked phrases in audio material.
- Speak clearly, using linking sounds naturally without conscious effort.

Materials:

- Listening exercise audio clips
- Sentence strips for reconstruction
- Printed worksheets (sentence completion)
- Whiteboard & markers
- Textbooks

Lesson structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes):

- Teacher writes 5 sentences on the board, each containing a linking sound.
- Students come up and underline the linking sounds.

2. Activity 1: Listening Exercise (15 minutes):

- Play an audio recording of a short dialogue or song verse.
- Students listen and write down where they hear linking sounds.
- Compare answers with a partner and discuss differences.
- Teacher plays the recording again and highlights correct answers on the board.
- Students repeat the linked phrases with correct pronunciation.

3. Activity 2: Sentence Construction (20 minutes):

- Students write 5 sentences that include linking sounds about their hobbies.
- Pairs exchange sentences and practice reading them aloud.
- Teacher provides corrections, emphasizing natural pronunciation.
- Read sentences at normal conversation speed while maintaining linking.

4. Wrap-Up (10 minutes):

- Teacher reviews common mistakes from student readings.
- Highlight key takeaways.

Week 4: Review and Assessment (Session 4)

Objective:

- Knowledge:

- Consolidate understanding of linking sounds and their patterns.
- Be able to explain why linking occurs in specific contexts.
- Review and reflect on common linking errors and strategies to avoid them.

- Skills:

- Identify, explain, and correctly use linking sounds in both spoken and written contexts.

- Take part in a quiz and practical role-play to demonstrate understanding of linking sounds.
- Provide constructive feedback to peers on linking sound use.

- Competence:

- Be confident in using linking sounds in both written texts (e.g., quizzes, written answers) and spoken performance (e.g., role-play).
- Demonstrate a solid understanding of linking through assessment activities and oral presentations.
- Take ownership of learning by reflecting on personal strengths and weaknesses.

Materials:

- Textbooks
- Quiz sheets
- Dialogue role-play cards
- Audio recordings for assessment

Lesson structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes):

- Teacher writes “Linking Sounds” on the board.
- Students brainstorm as many examples as they can from previous lessons.
- Discussion prompts: “Which linking sounds are the most common?”

2. Activity 1: Written Quiz (20 minutes):

- Distribute a quiz worksheet with sentences containing linking sounds.
- Students identify and underline the linking sounds.
- Short-answer section: Students explain why linking occurs in selected sentences.
- Teacher reviews answers, clarifies any confusion, and provides additional examples.

3. Activity 2: Role-Play (20 minutes):

- Pairs create a short conversation (6-8 lines) using at least 5 linking sounds.
- Practice reading aloud, focusing on natural speech rhythm.
- Perform for the class (volunteers first).
- Teacher provides feedback on pronunciation, fluency, and linking accuracy.

4. Wrap-Up (5 minutes):

- Teacher highlights key strengths and areas for improvement.
- Prepare for Week 5: Students should bring examples of linked phrases they heard outside class.

Week 5: Real-Life Application (Session 5)

Objective:

- Knowledge:

- Apply the knowledge of linking sounds to real-life situations and conversations.
- Understand how linking sounds can enhance clarity and fluency in everyday communication.
- Learn to recognize linking sounds in media, such as podcasts or movies.

- Skills:

- Engage in spontaneous dialogue using linking sounds in realistic contexts.
- Listen to real-world examples of linking sounds in media and identify them.
- Construct grammatically correct sentences with natural linking for fluency.

- Competence:

- Competently use linking sounds in daily interactions, including simulated real-life scenarios (ordering food, directions, etc.).
- Demonstrate a natural rhythm and fluency in conversations using linking sounds.

- Self-assess and seek out opportunities to practice linking sounds outside of the classroom.

Materials:

- Textbooks and pens
- Scrambled sentence cards
- Fluency practice scripts
- Teacher's feedback sheet

Lesson structure:

1. Warm-Up (5 minutes)

- Teacher writes 5 incomplete phrases on the board, (e.g.: *Turn __ off).*
- Students guess the missing words and say the phrases aloud with linking sounds.

2. Activity 1: Sentence Reconstruction (15 minutes)

- Distribute worksheets with scrambled sentences containing linking sounds.
- Students rearrange the words to form correct sentences with proper linking.
- One student reads the sentence aloud, while the other corrects any errors.
- Teacher highlights key pronunciation points.

3. Activity 2: Real-Life Dialogue Practice (15 minutes)

- Teacher provides real-life scenarios (e.g., ordering food, making small talk, giving directions).
- Pairs create a short, spontaneous conversation using at least 5 linking sounds.
- Students perform dialogues while the teacher notes fluency and accuracy.
- Conduct class feedback: What sounded natural? What could be improved?

5. Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

- Teacher gives final feedback on students' progress.
- Encourages students to notice linking sounds in real conversations, movies, and podcasts.

APPENDIX B.

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Comparing results
Controlled	3,9	4,7	**0,8**
Controlled	1,6	2,7	**1,1**
Controlled	2,6	3,1	**0,5**
Controlled	3,1	4,1	**1**
Controlled	2	2,5	**0,5**
Controlled	1	2,2	**1,2**
Controlled	1,9	3,3	**1,4**
Controlled	2,2	3,3	**1,1**
Controlled	2,3	3,5	**1,2**
Controlled	4,1	4,8	**0,7**
Controlled	2,4	3,8	**1,4**
Controlled	1,2	2,2	**1**
Controlled	3,7	4,3	**0,6**
Controlled	4,3	5,7	**1,4**
Controlled	2,1	3,4	**1,3**
Controlled	2,5	3,8	**1,3**
Controlled	1,1	2,6	**1,5**
Controlled	4	5	**1**
Controlled	1,3	2,6	**1,3**
Controlled	2,5	3,1	**0,6**
Controlled	4	4,6	**0,6**
Controlled	3,4	4	**0,6**
Controlled	2,2	3	**0,8**
Controlled	3,1	4,3	**1,2**
Controlled	3,9	4,6	**0,7**
Controlled	2,4	3,9	**1,5**
Controlled	2,7	3,5	**0,8**
Controlled	3,4	3,9	**0,5**
Controlled	3,8	5	**1,2**

Controlled	4,1	5,3	**1,2**
Controlled	4,1	5,2	**1,1**
Controlled	2,8	4	**1,2**
Controlled	1,5	3	**1,5**
Controlled	1,5	2,6	**1,1**
Controlled	1,1	1,8	**0,7**

Compared results of controlled group's pre-test and post-test scores

Group	**Pre-test**	**Post-test**	**Comparing esults**
Experimental	3,2	6,5	**3,3**
Experimental	2	5	**3**
Experimental	2,8	6	**3,2**
Experimental	2,4	5	**2,6**
Experimental	3,8	6,3	**2,5**
Experimental	3	6,3	**3,3**
Experimental	1,6	4,8	**3,2**
Experimental	2,9	6,3	**3,4**
Experimental	3,4	6	**2,6**
Experimental	1,2	5,9	**4,7**
Experimental	2,7	6	**3,3**
Experimental	2,4	5,3	**2,9**
Experimental	2,4	5,1	**2,7**
Experimental	4,1	6,8	**2,7**
Experimental	3,8	6,2	**2,4**
Experimental	1,6	6,5	**4,9**
Experimental	2,4	4,7	**2,3**
Experimental	1,3	5,5	**4,2**
Experimental	3	5,2	**2,2**
Experimental	2,6	5,4	**2,8**
Experimental	1,6	4,2	**2,6**
Experimental	1,3	3,6	**2,3**

Experimental	3,1	6,3	**3,2**
Experimental	1,2	3,9	**2,7**
Experimental	2,8	5,3	**2,5**
Experimental	3	6	**3**
Experimental	2,7	6	**3,3**
Experimental	2,2	6,7	**4,5**
Experimental	1,6	5,9	**4,3**
Experimental	3	5,1	**2,1**
Experimental	2,1	5,8	**3,7**
Experimental	3,5	6	**2,5**
Experimental	1,6	4,7	**3,1**
Experimental	2,5	6,3	**3,8**
Experimental	3,2	5,6	**2,4**

Compared results of experimental group's pre-test and post-test scores

APPENDIX C. QUESTIONAIRE

No.	Statements	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree
Section1. Perception of Teaching Linking Sounds through English Songs						
1	Learning linking sounds through English songs makes pronunciation practice more enjoyable.	0	1	4	20	4
2	The use of songs helps me feel more comfortable and motivated to learn pronunciation.	0	3	3	2	21
3	Singing along with English songs helps me better understand how words connect in natural speech.	0	2	2	20	5
4	The melody and rhythm of songs help me memorize pronunciation	0	0	3	15	11

	patterns more effectively.					
5	Using songs to teach linking sounds is more engaging than traditional pronunciation exercises.	0	3	5	18	3
Section 2. Effectiveness of Songs in Teaching Linking Sounds						
6	Listening to songs improves my ability to recognize linking sounds in spoken English.	0	0	1	16	12
7	Shadowing song lyrics helps me improve my fluency and pronunciation accuracy.	0	1	2	16	10
8	Comparing spoken and sung lyrics helps me understand the differences in	0	0	3	15	11

	connected speech.					
9	Practicing with songs has increased my confidence in speaking English with proper linking sounds.	0	4	3	14	8
10	I believe learning linking sounds through songs is an effective technique for improving my listening and speaking skills.	0	4	5	10	10

APPENDIX D. PRETEST & POSTTEST

Part 1: Identifying Linking Sounds (Q1–10)

Choose the word that best completes the sentence based on natural speech patterns.

1. How do native speakers say: “Go on”?

A) /ɡoʊ ʔɒn/

B) /ɡoʊ wɒn/

C) /ɡoʊ ɒn/

D) /ɡoʊ jɒn/

2. In connected speech, "far away" is pronounced as:

A) /fɑː ɚ weɪ/

B) /fɑː rə weɪ/

C) /fɑː ə weɪ/

D) /fɑː jə weɪ/

3. “She is” is naturally pronounced as:

A) /ʃiː ɪz/

B) /ʃi jɪz/

C) /ʃi wɪz/

D) /ʃi rɪz/

4. What happens in connected speech with “turn off”?

A) Linking /n/ → /tɜːrn ɒf/

B) Elision of /n/ → /tɜːr ɒf/

C) Intrusive /r/ → /tɜːr ɒf/

D) No change → /tɜːrn ɒf/

5. What is the most natural pronunciation of "see it"?

A) /siː jɪt/

B) /siː ɪt/

C) /siː wɪt/

D) /siː tɪt/

6. When spoken naturally, "do it" sounds like:

A) /du ɪt/

B) /du wɪt/

C) /du jɪt/

D) /du tɪt/

7. The phrase "put it on" often includes:

A) Linking /t/ → /pʊt ɪt ɒn/

B) Intrusive /w/ → /pʊw ɪt ɒn/

C) Elision → /pʊ ɪt ɒn/

D) No change → /pʊt ɪt ɒn/

8. “Turn it off” in connected speech sounds like:

A) /tɜːr nɪt ɒf/

B) /tɜːr ɪt ɒf/

C) /tɜːr nɒf/

D) /tɜːrnɪt ɒf/

9. “I saw it” in fast speech would likely be:

A) /aɪ sɔːr ɪt/

B) /aɪ sɔː ɪt/

C) /aɪ sɔː jɪt/

D) /aɪ sɔː wɪt/

10. What happens to "give up" in fast speech?

A) Linking /v/ → /gɪvʌp/

B) Elision of /v/ → /gɪʌp/

C) Intrusive /w/ → /gɪwʌp/

D) No change → /gɪv ʌp/

Part 2: Applying Linking Sounds in Context (Q11–20)

Choose the sentence with the most natural connected speech.

11. A) Do_you want to go?

B) Do w_you want to go?

C) Do you want to go?

D) Do y_you want to go?

12. A) I_love it.

B) I j_love it.

C) I w_love it.

D) I love it.

13. A) She_is a teacher.

B) She j_is a teacher.

C) She w_is a teacher.

D) She is a teacher.

14. A) It’s far away.

B) It’s fa_r_away.

C) It’s far a_way.

D) It’s far away.

15. A) They saw_it yesterday.

B) They saw w_it yesterday.

C) They saw j_it yesterday.

D) They saw it yesterday.

16. A) He’s going_to_the store.

B) He’s going w_to_the store.

C) He’s going j_to_the store.

D) He’s going to_the store.

17. A) Turn_off the light.

B) Turn r_off the light.

C) Turn w_off the light.

D) Turn off the light.

18. A) Read it aloud.

B) Read r_it aloud.

C) Read w_it aloud.

D) Read j_it aloud.

19. A) Put it away.

B) Put w_it away.

C) Put j_it away.

D) Put it away.

20. A) Call him up.

B) Call w_him up.

C) Call r_him up.

D) Call him up.

Answer Key

1. **B**
2. **B**
3. **B**
4. **A**
5. **A**
6. **B**
7. **A**
8. **D**
9. **A**
10. **A**
11. **A**
12. **A**
13. **A**
14. **B**
15. **A**
16. **A**
17. **A**
18. **A**
19. **A**
20. **A**

APPENDIX E. CONSENT FORM FOR STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

Research Title:

Researcher:

[Your Name]

[Your Position, e.g., Lecturer, Department of English]

[Contact Information]

Purpose of the Study:

This study aims to investigate how English songs can improve EFL students' recognition and production of linking sounds, an essential component of connected speech in English pronunciation.

What participation involves:

You will participate in song-based pronunciation activities designed to improve your awareness and use of linking sounds.

The program will last for […….], with sessions conducted [insert frequency, e.g., twice a week].

You will complete pre-tests, post-tests, and related pronunciation exercises.

Participation will not affect your grades or academic standing at Bach Khoa College.

Voluntary Participation and Right to Withdraw:

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

Commitment:

To ensure the validity of the research, you agree:

Not to enroll in additional English pronunciation or listening courses outside the program during the experimental period.

To fully participate in all scheduled sessions and activities.

Confidentiality:

All personal data will be kept confidential. Results will only be used for research purposes, and your identity will not be disclosed.

Benefits and Risks:

Benefits: You will gain additional pronunciation practice, especially in linking sounds, potentially improving your fluency and listening skills.

Risks: There are no known risks associated with participation in this study.

Consent Declaration:

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you understand the purpose and requirements of the study, and you agree to participate voluntarily under the terms outlined above.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Name & Signature: _____

Date: _____

OVERALL RECOMMENDATION: MAJOR REVISION NEEDED

THE PAPER IS POTENTIAL BUT REQUIRES MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN ACADEMIC WRITING, METHODOLOGY DETAIL, AND LITERATURE, CITATIONS SYNTHESIS BEFORE ORAL DEFENSE