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A STUDY OF USING POP SONGS TO PROMOTE NEW VOCABULARY LEARNING FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study aimed to 1) promote students' ability in learning new vocabulary through pop songs and 2) to investigate students' opinions toward using pop songs in learning new vocabulary of grade 10 students at Yangchumnoi Pittayakom school, in Yangchumnoi district of Sisaket province. The sample who participated in this study were 40 grade 10 students at Yangchumnoi Pittayakom school derived by purposive sampling technique. The instruments were pretest and posttest, lesson plans and a questionnaire which was used to find the student's opinions towards using pop songs method. The data collection were analyzed with the mean, standard deviation and t-test. The research finding of the study showed that teaching through pop songs increased students' vocabulary ability for foreign language learners with significant value at .01 level. The students had the positive opinions toward using pop songs methods. It also revealed that the pop song technique was an effective tool to promote students' vocabulary ability, made students cheerfully participate in class and increased motivation in learning English.

Keywords:

English songs, teaching english, vocabulary learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1.BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

English is a universal language that everyone uses in communication all over the world. ASEAN countries have prescribed English as an official language. This will signal the importance of English and that people have to communicate well for good development in their life. Therefore, students in all countries have been learning. Thailand has managed English teaching based on the Basic Education Core Curriculum in order to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills of students. There are English learning courses as both core and selective subjects in

schools to develop students' capabilities in language. Unfortunately, although English has been taught in school for many years, there has been little success.

Most Thai students are unable to communicate in English effectively. They have problems in with all skills of English especially that they cannot remember the meaning of English words. When students lack vocabulary, they avoid communicating in English. This will cause them to not like learning English. Vocabulary is the main and major component of language learning in all skills. Laufer (1997: 140-145) states that vocabulary learning is the heart of language learning and language use. When the language learners' knowledge of vocabulary is limited, they will have problems with other learning skills like speaking and writing. Consequently, it can be claimed that vocabulary knowledge helps improve students' English ability in four macro skills (Deesri and Patanasorn, 2002). Using English song in the classroom is one method that teachers like to use to teach students. It is easily available through the radio, various recordings, the Internet, and new technologies. Popular Music is present almost everywhere. Music plays an important role in the socialization of children and adolescents. It will benefit both teachers and learners in learning new words. Daniele (2008: abstract) stated that the melody of the song can facilitate recall. The text is better recalled when it is heard as a song rather than as speech, provided the music repeats; Contribution of melody to rhythmical information; Features of memory recall and learning through music. Songs help us move away from decontextualized single definitions and towards a concept-based multilayered knowledge of words. Allen (2006) and Nagy (1988) also referred to three properties of effective vocabulary instruction: integration, repetition, and meaningful use. These three characteristics are also present when it comes to the use of authentic songs in the language classroom.

In conclusion, song is a useful and powerful teaching tool in English classroom. Teachers can use songs to encourage students in learning and developing new vocabularies. It will be beneficial for both teachers and students of learning new English words.

1.2.STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

English is a second language for Thai students. Most of them are rarely familiar with new vocabulary, correct pronunciation, and meaning. This makes students bored and susceptible to ignoring their learning. It is necessary that the teacher find a variety of teaching methods supporting learning English in the classrooms. This will encourage students' interest in learning and good attitude development towards learning English teaching. Teaching in various ways can stimulate students' learning. It is very important to make English interesting. According to the nature of the ages, learning vocabulary through their favorite songs is also interesting, because teenagers often listen to English songs of various genre such as rock music, pop music, and so on. This can encourage students in their vocabulary understanding.

1.3.PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The purposes of the study are;

- To promote students' ability in learning new vocabulary through pop songs.
- To investigate students' opinions toward using pop songs in learning new vocabulary.

1.4.RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to the purposes of the study, the research questions are;

- How do pop songs promote students' ability in learning new vocabulary?
- What are the students' opinions toward using pop songs in learning new vocabulary?

1.5.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study was designed to examine if using pop songs as a supplementary activity promote the performance of students in learning vocabulary. Students can learn more vocabulary through pop songs. It would help teachers to see whether the pop song technique is an effective tool to make students happily participate in class and motivate students' positive opinion in learning English.

1.6.SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This research was designed to investigate how pop songs promote students' ability and students' opinion toward using pop songs to learn new vocabularies. The sample of this study is only forty of grade ten students at Yangchumnoi Pittayakom School. Therefore, the samples of this study were not be representative of grade ten students at other schools in Thailand since the students may have difference English learning background and skill level of English.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1.POPULATION AND SAMPLE OF THE STUDY

Population of this study was 120 grade 10 students at Yangchumnoi Pittayakom School, Yangchumnoi district, Sisaket province. Sample of this study were 40 grade 10 students who took E31212 course during the second semester of academic year 2014 at Yangchumnoi Pittayakom School. A total of 40 students were selected by purposive sampling.

2.2.RESEARCH DESIGN

This study was constructed by the researcher in the second semester of the academic year 2014. This study design consisted of a one group pre-test and a one group post-test. First, the students did the pre-test of vocabulary. Then they had to learn new vocabulary for four weeks by using pop song technique to promote vocabulary learning of students in grade 10. At the end of the experiment, the post-test, which was also used as the pre-test, was used to evaluate the improvement of the scores in learning vocabulary. Finally, the subjects responded to the questionnaire in order to survey their opinion toward learning through song techniques. The quantitative data was analyzed using means and standard deviation.

2.3.INSTRUMENTS

The research instrument involves the following;

- Pre-Test and Post-Test were used to investigate students' ability of learning new vocabularies through pop songs.

- Lesson plans, including 4 pop songs, were used to teach new vocabularies. They are; lesson plan 1 used the song “Glad You Came” by Megan Nicole, lesson plan 2 used the song “A Thousand Years” by Christina Perri, lesson plan 3 used the song “ Let It Go” by Idina Menzel, lesson plan 4 used the song “ Roar” by Katy Perry.
- Questionnaire was categorized into 15 questions to investigate student’s opinion toward vocabulary learning through pop songs after learning through the four lesson plans.

2.4.DATA COLLECTION

- The data were collected during the second semester of the 2014 academic year. First, the researcher assigned the vocabulary pre-test. The scores were marked by the researcher.
- The students learnt English with the song technique to promote the new vocabularies in the songs as follows; Glad You Came, A Thousand Years, Let It Go, Roar
- After finishing studying, the post-test was used to evaluate the improvement of their learning new vocabulary through pop songs. The scores were marked by the researcher.
- Finally, the questionnaire was used to investigate the students’ opinions towards learning vocabulary through pop songs.

2.5.DATA ANALYSIS

The data was obtained from the research instruments had been analyzed by the SPSS program and then interpreted in quantitative data analysis.

- Mean and standard deviation was used to provide the average scores for pre-test and post-test.
- T-test was used to determine the difference between pre-test and post-test mean scores of the vocabulary test.
- The questionnaire was evaluated toward item discrimination, mean and standard deviation to examine the students’ opinion in their learning vocabulary through pop songs.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1.RESULTS

To measure the development of students’ ability in learning new vocabulary, the data were obtained from the pre-test and post-test scores. The result showed as follows;

The Result of Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores:

Students	Pre-Test (38)	Post-Test (38)	Differences
N = 40	21	36	15
\bar{x}	19.78	35.95	16.18
S.D	2.96	1.30	3.37
			Sig = 0.10

Table 1 shows the pre-test and post-test scores, the differences between the pre-test and post-test scores of total students. The mean score of the pre-test was 19.78; the mean score of the post-test was 35.95. The mean score of the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was 16.18. The highest of the score difference was 25. It can be interpreted that learning new vocabulary through pop songs can help students improve their learning new vocabulary with the highest score of 38.

In addition to examining if the proficiency test scores increased significantly, pre-test and post-test scores of the subjects were compared and calculated for statistical differences (See Appendix)

It also showed that the students had significantly different mean scores between the pre-test and post-test at .01 levels. The means scores of the post-test were significantly higher than the pre-test.

It indicates that the students had better scores in learning new vocabulary through pop songs. It can be explained that learning new vocabulary through pop songs helped students significantly improve their ability for grade ten students at Yangchumnoi Pttayakokom School.

The results of the study shown above answered the two research questions that were used for this study. The first question is “How do pop songs promote students’ ability in learning new vocabulary?”

The results indicated that learning new vocabulary through pop songs promote students’ ability in learning new vocabulary of Grade 10 at Yangchumnoi Pittayakom School, Sisaket province. The results in table 4.1 showed that the mean scores between pre-test and post-test increased in all aspects. The means scores of the post-test were significantly higher than the pretest at .01 levels.

The second research question is “what are the students’ opinions toward using pop songs in teaching new vocabulary?”

The results indicated that teaching new vocabulary through pop songs motivated students in their learning. It also encouraged their attention and motivated in learning vocabulary. They were happy to learn with their friends and found it easier to remember the vocabulary. The study through pop song provided fun activities in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. Students’ motivation was increased and caused them have a good opinion in learning English and they can use English with greater confidence.

The song also helped to “establish the prosody of the language” and then to repeat of phrases in the classroom in the singing mode” (Wilcox, 1995, p. 118) to further practice vocabulary. Wilcox noticed that the students enjoyed the singing, and thought that they would rehearse it residually, thus adding to the learning effect. This study showed that when students were not shy or reserved about participating in classroom activities. Songs for language learning could be quite successful.

When second language teachers add musical contours to simplified language input, they could expect higher motivation and comprehension from learners. Music and songs also increase the ability of the working memory, while offering a structured context for long-term recall of words and phrases (Stacey, 2004).

4. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to examine the influence of pop song to promote new vocabulary and students' opinions toward using pop songs in learning new vocabulary.

The population of the study consisted of 40 students in grade 10 students At Yangchumnoi Pittayakom School, Sisaket province. The participants who enrolled for the E31212 english selective course in the second semester of the 2014 academic year by purposive sampling. The research instruments were a pre-test and post-test, lesson plan and questionnaire. The pre-test was assigned before starting learning new vocabulary through pop songs. Then, four lesson plans were used to teach the students new vocabulary by using pop songs. The students had to listen to the songs and then complete the new vocabulary they heard from the songs. After that they had to do the vocabulary activities from the songs to check their understanding. The step of learning new vocabulary through pop song started from the easy to difficult vocabulary in four songs. After finished learning the fourth lesson plans, the post-test was assigned to examine the students' ability in their learning new vocabulary. Finally, they had to answer the questionnaire to check their opinion after learning new vocabulary through pop songs. The proficiency test and questionnaire were analyzed by mean scores (\bar{X}) and standard deviations (S.D).

The main finding in this research showed that the result of the study confirmed that the students' ability in learning new vocabulary of grade 10 students at Yangchumnoi Pittayakom School improved by using pop songs in classroom. The mean scores of the post-test were higher than the mean scores of the pre-test. In addition, the t-test was used to determine the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test. That means the students improve their learning skills. The post-test score of each individual student increased. The students' vocabulary learning was improved significantly at 0.01 level. The finding of students' opinion showed the agreed at the high level. Overall, the mean scores of students' level of satisfaction was 4.23. The students strongly agreed with learning through pop songs in teaching new vocabulary in items 1, 2, and 8; "Learning through pop songs encourage the student's attention. (4.68)"; "Learning through pop songs motivate students in learning new vocabulary. (4.63)"; "Learning through pop songs makes easy to remember the new words (4.54)".

The students had the positive opinions towards learning through pop songs in teaching new vocabulary.

This technique could promote students in learning new vocabulary through the pop songs that they usually to listen. It also motivated their learning, encouraged their attention and motivated in learning vocabulary. They were happy to learn with their friends and found it easier to remember the vocabulary. The study through pop song provided fun activities in a relaxed and

comfortable atmosphere. Students motivation was increased and caused them have a good attitude in learning English, and they could use English with greater confidence.

4.2.RECOMMENDATION FOR PRACTICE

- Some vocabularies in the songs may be more difficult and not be familiar to the students.
- The sound system should be clear and available in learning.
- Some phrasal verbs from the songs cause the students some difficulty to identify the meaning of vocabulary.

4.3.FURTHER RESEARCH

According to the finding of the study, the following recommendations for further research are as follows;

- Further study should be conducted to improve achievement of the vocabulary in English learning by songs.
- Further study should study more songs such as folk songs, rock, pop rock, and so on which make the students learning in vocabulary or grammar.
- Further research should study with the students in grade 11 or 12 to get deeper data.
- The researchers have to be careful and choose the appropriate songs to teach the students.
- The length of songs should not be more difficult or too long because it will make students less concentrate and not motivate in the study.
- Further study should study should be on grammar or phrasal verbs learning with songs.

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