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A Case Study: Investigating High School English Student Engagement in Language Learning through YouTube Music Videos

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ABSTRACT

This case study investigated high school student engagement in acquiring second language knowledge through YouTube music videos. A Chinese English learner who had lived in the United States for a year developed fundamental language skills but was hesitant to engage in language learning at the start of the project. Data collection was conducted over 10 weeks and involved semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and in-class artifacts related to YouTube music learning activities. The findings indicated that the learner engaged with YouTube music videos from four perspectives: behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive. From a behavioral perspective, singing recurring routines continuously engages the learner by promoting participation in language development. From an emotional and social perspective, music genres engage the learner through high affective input and peer interaction, facilitating the acquisition of cultural knowledge and daily communicative skill. From a cognitive perspective, multimodal features (e.g., lyrics and rhythm) stimulate the learner's cognition by providing mnemonic aids that enhance memory for vocabulary and pronunciation competencies. Theoretical and pedagogical implications are provided for English language learning contexts, shedding light on the conceptual development of student engagement, multilingual teacher education, and multimodal learning. This study identifies future research trends in the instructional use of YouTube videos from multiple perspectives, including the transfer of working memory to long-term memory, digital multimodal composing (DMC), and generative AI.

Keywords: Second Language Acquisition (SLA); YouTube Video; Student Engagement; Music; Multimodal Learning

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1. Introduction

Student engagement has recently become a prevalent topic in applied linguistic research that emphasizes students' involvement and action in response to the learning environment^[1, 2]. Music and songs are regarded as one of the most practical pedagogical tools that are integrated into second language (L2) classrooms to foster student engagement in understanding intricate linguistic features and academic concepts with creativity and enjoyment^[3] address multiple intelligences^[4] and facilitate memory retention (e.g.,^[5]). In high school L2 instruction, English language instructors typically employ creative learning activities related to contemporary music, such as rap^[6], pop music^[7], and jazz^[8], to engage students with linguistic concepts naturally through rhythm, stress, and intonation in the language acquisition process.

With the rapid advancement of multimodal online learning, the use of YouTube music videos has become a vital medium for learning in L2 instruction, offering students a rich array of visual illustrations and invaluable resources^[9]. A body of research^[10–13] suggests that YouTube music videos used as pedagogical tools significantly enhance students' motivation to develop language components, particularly pronunciation, listening, and vocabulary mastery. However, there are scarce studies that reveal how students engage with YouTube music videos, especially among high school learners, in addressing linguistic elements. The use of YouTube music videos should receive close attention in high school L2 instruction, as high school English learners face major learning anxieties (e.g., anxieties of English classes and standard examinations) throughout their academic path, compared to students at other educational levels^[14]. Accessing YouTube music videos can optimize high school student engagement and reduce academic stress to some extent by providing authentic and meaningful contexts while also helping students strengthen their language literacy^[15].

To fill this gap, this article aims to investigate high school student engagement through YouTube music videos in the process of acquiring linguistic components, guided by two research questions:

1. In what ways does a high school English learner enhance second language knowledge through engaging with YouTube music videos?
2. What factors influence a high school English learner to acquire second language knowledge through en-

gaging with YouTube music videos?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Student Engagement

Student engagement in language learning refers to students' involvement and actions that illustrate "a dynamic state when learners are thinking about, focusing on, and enjoying their language learning"^[16]. According to Fredricks et al.^[17], student engagement consists of four components: behavioral (learners' concentration, attention, and effort when performing a task), affective (emotional responses to language learning), social (peer collaboration), and cognitive (learners' thinking processes and mental activities). These four facets of engagement, which form a multidimensional construct, interrelate to support learners' effective learning. By developing second language knowledge while embracing these four aspects of engagement, L2 learners significantly enhance their active participation through teacher confirmation and rapport, collaborative skills, and self-regulated learning^[18–20].

Mounting recent evidence has indicated that students foster behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive engagement through YouTube videos in language classrooms. Damronglaohapan and Stevenson^[21] demonstrated that YouTube movie clips engage students' attention and positive behaviors, encouraging them to watch the clips repeatedly, which ultimately improves their English listening skills in higher education. Wang and Chen^[22] elucidated a case in which 20 Taiwanese university students regulate their emotions and concurrently expose themselves to target cultures while learning English from English-teaching YouTubers. Similarly, Aprianto^[23] illustrated that YouTube videos, as a means of supplementary materials with multimodal texts (e.g., vlogs, news clips), advance EFL students' social practice by enabling them to become proficient in daily conversation and cultural knowledge. Atayeva et al.^[24] examined the critical thinking skills of 150 junior high school students, focusing on six objectives: interpretation, analysis, inference, evaluation, explanation, and self-regulation, as the students analyzed YouTube short videos in English language classes in Indonesia. The findings indicated that the students excelled in making inferences and providing explanations when answering questions based on the YouTube short video.

The mentioned studies highlight that different genres of YouTube videos benefit students by encompassing four facets of learning engagement for acquiring language skills. As aforementioned in the introduction, there is a lack of evidence regarding student engagement with YouTube music videos. This study, therefore, adapts the multidimensional engagement framework of Fredricks et al.^[17] to explore student engagement with YouTube music videos in the context of a second language classroom.

2.2. Music and Language Acquisition

Music has been widely recognized as an effective learning tool for creating a dynamic and enjoyable learning atmosphere in second language classrooms that promotes students' language acquisition processes^[25, 26]. Although existing research has scarcely indicated that YouTube music videos influence students' engagement in language development—particularly in terms of behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive aspects—a range of studies^[3, 27, 28] has highlighted that non-YouTube musical learning activities (e.g., choral singing using audio tracks) increase language learners' multidimensional engagement, helping them grasp extensive vocabulary, improve pronunciation and listening skills, and engage in daily communicative conversations. Through non-YouTube musical activities, students develop an increasing interest and persistent effort in task completion (e.g.,^[29], helping them tackle the complexity of conceptual knowledge. Notably, teachers meticulously select music genres, such as pop music (e.g.,^[30]), jazz (e.g.,^[31]), and hip hop (e.g.,^[6]), thus equipping students to socially connect with authentic texts and construct meaningful communication regarding the target language and culture^[32].

In addition to harnessing music genres in language instruction, musical multimodal features also necessitate students' memory retention, facilitating cognitive processing to chunk linguistic units interwoven with songs^[13]. Through natural cognitive functioning, music affects both the left and right hemispheres of the brain simultaneously, bolstering memory formation and retrieval. The most prestigious memory-aid technique in music learning, mnemonics, leveraging the brain's inherent affinity of auditory and visual pat-

terns, enables students to “organize new information through a transformation or recording process”^[33]. The combination of musical structures—melody, rhythm, and lyrics—plays a vital role in the aural and visual stimuli conveyed through oral means. This combination is enhanced by mnemonic devices to strengthen short-term memory, also known as working memory, which is defined as the immediate storage of information for a brief period^[33, 34].

While melody facilitates the recall of the song text by providing line and syllable lengths and offering rhythmic information, rhythm transforms it into information that is efficiently stored when needed, providing prosodic cues to reconstruct the song text correctly^[34, 35]. With the perpetual occurrence of rhythms and melodies, song lyrics substantially provide recognition cues to retain phonemes and vocabulary^[36]. Through the repetition of recalling songs over time, influenced by its rhythms, melodies, and song lyrics, the language features obtained can transfer from working memory to long-term memory in students' brains^[37].

In summary, the use of YouTube videos and musical structures (e.g., rhythms, melodies, and song lyrics, music genre) significantly promote student engagement across behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive aspects, fostering second language development during in-class pedagogical activities. This study will draw on the conceptual framework of Fredricks et al.^[17] to provide deeper insight into the instructional use of YouTube music videos, particularly focusing on musical structures, in shaping student engagement across four dimensions: behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive, with the aim of enhancing linguistic competencies.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Context

The research was conducted in an English Language Development (ELD) program¹ at a public high school in Los Angeles County in the United States. The school has a total enrollment of 1,665 students, ranging from 9th to 12th grade, and offers three ELD instructional programs. Students are placed into different ELD levels, including ELD 1 (beginning), ELD 2 (intermediate), and ELD 3 (advanced), based

¹The English Language Development (ELD) program is designed to support English language learners in enhancing their proficiency to succeed in academic subjects taught in English at the elementary and secondary levels (e.g., middle and high school) within the school curriculum in the United States.

on their scores from the placement test known as the English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC),² which assesses speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The ELPAC test is taken annually, and students are placed into corresponding ELD levels based on their test performance.

This research was specifically conducted in ELD 2 class. The class had 17 students, including 12 Hispanic and 5 Asian students. The ELD 2 class is held from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm on school days, Monday to Friday. The instructor, a native English speaker of Hispanic origin, had been teaching ELD courses in the school for ten years. He was passionate and patient in his teaching and had implemented various learning activities to engage students in acquiring linguistic features and conceptual knowledge. For instance, the instructor implemented a YouTube music video as a warm-up learning activity at the beginning of every class. He routinely created the class agenda on the whiteboard as part of the lesson preparation and noted the YouTube songs used for activities before class.

3.2. Participant

This study focuses on an eleventh-grade high school student, Yong (pseudonym), who immigrated to the United States in 2018. He was born in Fangchenggang, Guangxi Province, China. After taking the ELPAC test, Yong was placed in ELD 1 for the spring semester of 2018 and moved to ELD 2 in Fall 2019. Yong initially learned English in third grade at a public school in China and has developed four basic English language skills. Yong speaks both Mandarin and Cantonese at home, but he remains silent and lacks confidence in speaking English in school. Nevertheless, Yong is a dedicated student who strives to improve his English proficiency in order to adapt to American culture and the community. His immediate goals include fulfilling high school graduation requirements to gain admission to a four-year higher education institution. The selection criteria for research participants include the ability to commit to the study's duration and to be accessible for the data collection methods used in the study. Yong thoroughly fulfilled these two inclusion criteria: he expressed his willingness to participate in three sessions of semi-structured interviews and allowed the researchers to conduct classroom observations.

Additionally, Yong developed an interest in singing by enrolling in an elective choir course at school and joining the school choir in China

3.3. Research Design

This research was conducted using a case study method with ethnographic approaches as its research design. A key advantage of the bounding ethnographic method within a case study is that it allows researchers to generate rigorous insights and detailed findings within a specific timeframe for data collection^[38]. A case study is defined as a research method that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the case) in depth and within its real-world context”^[39], highlighting social interactions and their resulting impacts^[40]. Ethnography refers to “an account of someone’s observation of and experience with a community and their cultural practices in specific contexts”^[41]. By closely examining the social and cultural patterns of ethnography within the contemporary context of a case study, this research sought to elicit English learners’ language acquisition through music during moment-by-moment classroom interactions.

3.4. Data Collection

The study spanned over a period of 10 weeks, from February 2019 to May 2019. The data was gathered through 1) in-person classroom observation, 2) Semi-structured interviews, 3) classroom documents and artifacts. The classroom observation was conducted every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday during school days, totaling 50 hours. Fieldnotes were taken on Yong’s classroom performance, including the YouTube music videos he participated in and how these activities influenced Yong’s engagement in various ways. The notes were also recorded during specific classroom moments that involved Yong’s interactions with the teacher and peers while engaging with the YouTube music activities or some aspects of L2 exposure from these activities.

Additionally, class documents such as YouTube video song lists, Yong’s classroom assignments, note entries, and printed lyric sheets were compiled to analyze different features of YouTube music videos (e.g., music genre, lyrics, rhythms) and how they influenced Yong’s engagement in

²The English Language Proficiency Assessment for California (ELPAC) is the state’s required English language proficiency test for students whose primary language is not English, from kindergarten through grade 12.

language competencies (e.g., vocabulary and pronunciation) from multiple dimensions. Three sessions of 20-minute semi-structured interviews (60 minutes in total) were conducted at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the semester. The first interview session focused on Yong's background information and his English learning progress in both China and the United States. The subsequent interviews, based on the classroom observations, emphasized questions regarding Yong's knowledge, beliefs, feelings, and attitudes toward the teacher's instruction, social and cultural norms, and language development from YouTube music activities.

3.5. Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used for data interpretation. It refers to a qualitative analytic method that enables researchers to systematically identify, analyze, and report patterns (themes) within the data^[42]. Two primary approaches used in thematic analysis are inductive (bottom-up) and deductive (top-down) approaches. An inductive approach is driven by the absence of a pre-existing coding framework and researchers' preconceptions, meaning that 'the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves'^[42, 43]. A deductive approach, on the other hand, is typically driven by the researchers' theoretical interests and specific research questions.

This study adopted thematic analysis using both inductive and deductive approaches, which were divided into two phases. In the first stage, semi-structured interviews and field notes were analyzed inductively using open coding. Keywords, phrases, and episodes related to Yong's classroom performances in YouTube music activities were used as thematic nodes. Subsequently, a deductive approach was employed to re-code the dataset based on the identified theme derived from inductive thematic analysis. A theoretical framework, Fredricks et al.^[17]'s multidimensional engagement, was adopted as a coding frame in analyzing Yong's engagement with YouTube music videos. Related thematic nodes regarding how Yong engages with YouTube music videos to acquire language skills across four dimensions-including behavioral (e.g., concentration and effort), social (e.g., peer collaboration), emotional (e.g., emotional response), and cognitive (e.g., thinking processes or mental activities in dissecting musical elements to obtain linguistic features)-were categorized into homogeneous groups.

4. Findings

4.1. Singing as a Recurring Learning Activity to Increase the Student's Behavioral Engagement

Behavioral engagement refers to students' active involvement in task or participation^[18]. It is difficult to disentangle behavioral engagement from the other three dimensions given that all dimensions of engagement encompass student active participation and involvement^[44]. To distinguish behavioral engagement from the other three dimensions, recent research has highlighted that students' behavioral engagement focuses more on their continuous performance in learning, as determined by the "expenditure of effort on learning tasks, the quality of their participation, and their degree of active involvement in the learning process"^[44].

Yong's behavioral engagement was primarily shaped by the class singing routine. For instance, every class began with a singing routine in which the instructor facilitated students watching YouTube music videos and guided them in choral singing throughout the semester. The instructor typically sang each line of the song and students repeated it line by line. After practicing each line, he put all lines together and guided students to sing the whole song. The instructor then scaffolded approximately ten new vocabulary words from the music videos, using images as visual aids to present the definitions.

Based on the field notes, Yong did not sing along with the YouTube music videos in the first two weeks. He performed the dance movements and tried to mumble the lyrics while watching the videos. Starting in Week 3, Yong progressively demonstrated active engagement with the music videos by singing aloud and incorporating gestures and movements. In Week 5, while the instructor lectured on each new word, Yong jotted down all the new vocabulary along with their Chinese translations (refer to **Figure 1**) and copied them three times during his spare time, even though it was not mandatory. Yong stated, "Singing along with YouTube videos is my favorite activity. I learn a lot of new words, and I copy them to memorize after school." Accordingly, Yong's enthusiasm and passion for YouTube music videos enabled him to diligently participate in singing routines and maintain his commitment to acquiring new vocabulary from the songs. Based on the semi-structured interview in Week 10,

Yong reported having obtained a total of 100 new vocabulary words throughout the semester. As such, it is manifested that Yong acquired a higher behavioral engagement through the YouTube music singing routine, which enabled him to maintain greater attention to mastering L2 acquisition.

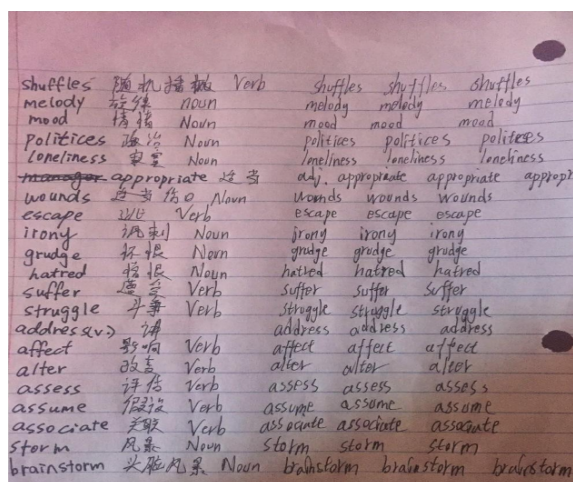


Figure 1. Yong’s selected vocabulary note taking sheet.

4.2. Music Genre Fostering the Student’s Emotional and Social Engagement

Yong’s emotional and social engagement was influenced by pop music in language learning, which enabled him to foster positive learning attitudes and adapt to the L2 culture. When Yong began demonstrating active behavioral engagement in Week 3, it was observed that he was particularly passionate about singing pop music. Some songs taught in the singing recurring activity were pop music, including the following song titles: “Something just like this,” “Rainbow,” “Happier,” “Give me a reason.” Yong described, “I enjoy the YouTube videos very much, and they are all popular music. It is more fun to learn English this way.” Particularly, the storylines embedded in pop songs engaged Yong with high affective input in his listening comprehension, as stated in the second interview in Week 5:

“The teacher tells us the story of the song. The song ‘wolves’ tells the singer’s real-life story. The ‘wolves’ are not wolves but her disease. I feel the power of the song. Storytelling helps me understand the song more and improve my listening.”

As interpreted from the above quotes, pop music YouTube videos entailed visual storytelling that effectively provoked Yong’s emotions and warranted greater investment

in language development. Through the vivid imagery and themes of the songs, Yong developed empathy and a mutual connection with the music in order to analyze the new nuances of meaning related to the cultural and societal issues embedded in the songs^[45].

Additionally, pop songs socially engaged Yong in interpersonal interactions with his peers, as they occasionally discussed the songs’ origins (e.g., artists, themes) starting from Week 5. One memorable episode occurred around Week 6 when Yong joyfully sang the song “Happier” with his Hispanic classmates after learning it from YouTube music routines. Yong sang, “Lately, I’ve been, I’ve been thinking, I want you to be happier, I want you to be happier.” He then informed his classmates about the songwriter of “Happier,” Marshmello. Yong stated:

“I have been practicing singing it for three months. I also listen to Marshmello’s other songs, such as ‘Friends,’ ‘Alone,’ and ‘Silence.’” (Yong displayed Marshmello’s English biography on the Chromebook to his classmates.)

As illustrated above, the interaction between Yong and his classmates demonstrated that he not only engaged in peer collaboration using his communicative skills but also developed a sufficient level of self-regulated learning by exploring the songwriter’s biography. Through such informal learning, the use of pop music enhances Yong’s language literacy (e.g., reading comprehension and speaking skills) and raises his cultural awareness.

In brief, pop music fosters Yong’s positive emotional and social engagement, drawing on cultural capital^[46] to acquire multiple language features (e.g., communicative speaking skill, reading, and listening comprehension). This provides Yong access to greater “potential liberty” and “linguistic richness,” enabling him to adapt to the L2 learning and cultural context^[47].

4.3. Multimodal Components Reinforcing the Student’s Cognitive Engagement to Develop Linguistic Features

Multimodal elements, such as lyrics, gestures, and rhythm, reinforce students’ cognitive engagement in developing vocabulary and pronunciation as mnemonic aids^[48, 49]. Yong’s cognitive engagement with YouTube music videos was minimal from Week 1 to Week 5, with little evidence suggesting that the musical features of these videos stimulated

his cognitive processing for developing second language knowledge. During a two-week period between Week 6 and Week 8, while guiding the class to sing in chorus to the song “Rainbow” by Sia and the lyrical version of “Moskau” by Dschinghis Khan from a YouTube music video, the instructor also distributed printed lyric sheets and selected several new words from the lyrics of “Rainbow. While scaffolding each new word with Google Images, the instructor replayed the video, located the new word, and incorporated movement and gestures to help students better comprehend its meaning. For example, the instructor performed the actions corresponding to the words *shoot*, *escape*, *wound*, *pain*, *storms*, and *soul*, as a direct gesture to replicate a semantic entity concurrently in the language^[50]. Yong had evidently acquired several new vocabulary words, as indicated in the interview, which clearly demonstrated his application of these terms. The dialogue is illustrated below:

Researcher: “Which words did you learn from ‘Rainbow’?”

Yong: “I learned *pain*, *storms* and *soul*.”

Research: “Can you make a sentence with each word?”

Yong: “Such a pain! I don’t like thunderstorms; I have a good soul.”

Researcher: “Good job!”

Based on the above interaction, Yong augmented his word repository by acquiring the new terms *pain*, *storms*, and *soul*. Notably, the lyric sheet and gestures serve as visual stimuli that essentially optimize Yong’s memory retention^[51] in the process of encoding and decoding the meanings of new words. As Yong recalled and correctly interpreted the newly acquired vocabulary, he gained the ability to apply this knowledge to convey content accuracy and clarity in sentence construction, thereby achieving higher-order cognitive functions^[52], as demonstrated in the dialogue.

Similarly, after singing the song “Moskau” by Dschinghis Khan in chorus twice in Week 7, Yong asked the instructor how to pronounce the words *divine*, *kozachok*, and *wondrous* from the lyric sheet. This was the first time Yong raised his hand to ask the teacher a question in class. Regarding the word *kozachok*, the instructor noted that Yong had mistakenly placed the stress on the second syllable, *chok*, when it should have been on the first syllable, *ko*. Yong maintained

the correct pronunciation for *kozachok* after the instructor repeatedly modeled the stress of the word and demonstrated a gesture of dance to help Yong understand the meaning of *kozachok* (A Ukrainian and Russian couple-dance with constantly increasing tempo). The printed lyric sheet and gesture, serving as a mnemonic aid from the YouTube video, crucially retrieved Yong’s stored information from verbal memory to decode the new vocabulary^[53].

In addition to the combined use of printed lyrics, on-screen lyrics, and gestures, rhythmic patterns also play a vital role in enhancing students’ cognition regarding pronunciation and vocabulary acquisition. For instance, rhymes helped Yong acquire pronunciation through natural sound. The instructor facilitated choral repetition by singing two major rhyme schemes from “Moskau”: “Queen of the Russian land/Built like a rock to stand/Your golden towers glow/Even through ice and snow/Moscow, Moscow, throw your glasses at the wall/And good fortune to us all.” Yong narrated, “The teacher made us chant the rhyme many times, and now I still remember the beats to the lines.” He started chanting, “Queen of the Russian land/Built like a rock to stand/Your golden towers glow/Even through ice and snow....” Rhyme chanting helped Yong retrieve repetitive occurrences^[54] that raised his phonemic awareness while consciously engaging with the rhythmic meter for the first four beats of the rhymes^[55]. This enabled Yong to bolster his understanding of sound patterns and strengthen his comprehension of word meanings at the phonetic, lexical, and semantic levels.

5. Discussion

The interpretation of qualitative findings indicated that Yong’s engagement with YouTube music videos in the process of second language acquisition thoroughly encompasses behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive facets. From a behavioral perspective, singing recurring routines continuously engages Yong by promoting participation in language development. From an emotional and social perspective, music genres engage Yong through high affective input and peer interaction, facilitating the acquisition of cultural knowledge and daily communicative skills. From a cognitive perspective, multimodal features (e.g., lyrics and rhythm) stimulate Yong’s cognition by providing mnemonic aids that enhance memory for vocabulary and pronunciation acquisition.

During two months of ethnographic observation, the instructor's implementation of YouTube music videos as a warm-up activity progressively enabled Yong's multifaceted engagement, optimizing his language development, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and speaking. The findings align with studies on music-mediated language learning, including^[3, 27, 56], which illuminate the fact that pedagogical activities involving music and songs meaningfully engage students in language achievement. Additionally, the findings also contribute new insights into research relating to YouTube music video and student engagement that Yong's behavioral engagement influences his emotional, social, and cognitive engagement. Inspired by the significant influence of YouTube music videos, Yong consistently demonstrates perseverance and commitment in his learning behaviors. Accordingly, Yong's active participation and effort in the YouTube music activity provide positive emotional input (e.g., emotional engagement) and facilitate communicative interaction with peers (e.g., social engagement). Yong's behavioral engagement also subtly generates his cognitive processes that allow his concentration on the YouTube music videos to perpetually retrieve mnemonic aids from the song lyrics and rhythm chanting, enabling to develop short-term memory of semantic vocabulary and phonology.

5.1. Limitations

Two limitations should be acknowledged in the study. Firstly, due to scheduling conflicts between the case study student and the researchers in terms of the interviews, the study was conducted primarily through classroom observations, while comparatively less data was gathered from semi-structured interviews. The absence of semi-structured interview dataset limited the ability to probe further into Yong's internal reactions and motives related to his engagement as perceived in class. Coding some phenomena from classroom observations might involve researchers' subjective interpretation in understanding Yong's actions and beliefs regarding YouTube video learning.

Secondly, this study has a limitation of transferability. According to Sang et al.^[57], transferability refers to "the researchers' interpretations or conclusions are transferable to other similar contexts" (p. 428). This study, on the other hand, may not be transferable. Yong's case, although an instance of an L2 learner successfully using music to achieve

language proficiency, may not be sufficient to apply to other L2 learners using the same learning technique. Notably, since individuals may have distinct strategies for enhancing their English language skills, YouTube music videos may not be suitable for every L2 learner.

5.2. Implications

The study holds three key implications for theoretical understandings and pedagogical references. From a theoretical perspective, existing studies have given little attention to the engagement framework^[17] in relation to YouTube music videos. Findings provide current and future applied linguists and educators with a more concrete and multifaceted conceptual framework for student engagement in future interventions. Thus, the novel theoretical concept of integrated student engagement with YouTube music videos considerably advances practical applications in L2 classroom and contributes to the development of new theories in the fields of language education and sociolinguistics.

At the pedagogical level, the use of YouTube music videos can provide instructors with a practical reference^[58] for designing the most suitable curriculum. Songs are intrinsically grounded with authentic and natural language, aimed as a focal group of English native speakers that contain contemporary vocabulary, idioms, and expressions^[9]. As such, instructors can regularly implement singing-related activities in class to encourage students to improve fluency with pronunciation and nurture a natural flow of language^[59]. With the integration of YouTube music videos featuring pop songs to enrich singing-related activities, instructors are equipped with colors, images, mimics, facial expressions, and gestures as non-verbal contextual cues^[60] to convey meanings while dissecting complex linguistic concepts, thereby creating a conducive and collaborative learning environment^[56].

In addition to leveraging in-class pedagogical activities, this study contributes to a broader layer of teaching practice known as multilingual teacher education. The role of teachers' cross-cultural and professional experiences bolsters diverse cultural interactions with students from different backgrounds and varied learning interests^[61]. Accordingly, teachers should design an inclusive curriculum that encompasses instructional techniques and learning activities, raises language awareness, and reflects the linguistic diversity in L2 classrooms^[62]. The use of songs assists teachers in ad-

dressing intercultural communication, enabling students to respect their own cultural identities while also helping to build a shared new culture (e.g., L2 culture) with other groups in the classroom^[63].

Finally, the findings of this study also provide high school English learners with diverse learning strategies using multimodal resources and digital technology. The utilization of YouTube videos could be an effective self-regulated learning tool that monitors students' language learning progress in setting goals and self-evaluating^[22]. Also, accessing YouTube videos offers authentic and rich content which enable learners to locate appropriate online material that suits their learning objectives^[64]. Through this informal self-learning process, students substantially cater to individual learning needs and bolster learner autonomy^[65]. In the era of digital technology, moving beyond YouTube platforms, the roles of language learning apps, online forums, and virtual exchanges are also suggested to enhance language exposure in strengthening learners' basic communicative skills and academic language acquisition both inside and outside the classroom^[66].

5.3. Future Research

In the growth of technological innovation, the use of YouTube videos has emerged tremendously in L2 classrooms as a digital practice for optimizing learning opportunities in language education. Future research should pay more attention to the instructional use of YouTube from various aspects in order to promote student engagement.

Future studies should conduct longitudinal research to examine how English learners use YouTube videos to develop language components, transferring their short-term memory into long-term memory. Within the limited time frame of this study, researchers may not be able to track whether Yong retains the new vocabulary and pronunciation he acquired from the YouTube videos over a longer period. Empirical evidence has explored the potential of YouTube videos to enhance the retention of information from working memory to long-term memory over time, serving as an effective instructional language technique based on quantitative statistical data^[67]. Hence, future research could consider a longitudinal investigation to trace English learners' long-term memory through follow-up semi-structured interviews and extended ethnographic observations, combined

with quantitative methods (e.g., surveys and quizzes).

The rise of multimodal composing and generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has garnered growing interest in the field of language education, as it has significant potential to render learning more engaging and motivating^[68]. Future studies should investigate the impact of student engagement in creating YouTube videos as multimodal composing artifacts. Through the process of orchestrating YouTube videos, students utilize semiotic resources to negotiate meaning in the multimodal design, with an emphasis on language use and creativity^[69], and to advance critical thinking^[70]. Finally, the role of GenAI can be further explored as an interactive tool for facilitating linguistic development through YouTube videos. Investigating the potential of GenAI (e.g., AI chatbots) in interactive quizzes and exercises can help assess whether students acquire vocabulary from the videos^[71], thereby increasing students' academic engagement from behavioral, cognitive, and emotional aspects^[72].

6. Conclusions

In response to student engagement with YouTube music videos in the English language classroom, this study uses the multidimensional engagement construct^[17] to investigate how an ELD high school student engages with YouTube music videos from behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive aspects in developing second language knowledge. As shown by the findings, the ELD high school learner developmentally fosters behavioral, emotional, social, and cognitive engagement with respect to the factors of recurring singing routines, music genres, and multimodal features to effectively acquire pronunciation, semantic vocabulary, and communicative skills. As fast-growing technology continues to emerge in second language classrooms, future pedagogical trends should highlight the importance of GenAI, in addition to YouTube videos, in interactive learning activities to further enhance student engagement in second language acquisition.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Q.F.; methodology, Q.F.; investigation, Q.F. and Z.G.; Writing-original draft preparation, Q.F. and Z.G.; Writing-review and editing, Q.F. and Z.G.; Project administration; Q.F. Conceptualization, Q.F.; methodology, Q.F.; software, Q.F.; validation, Q.F. and Z.G.; formal anal-

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Conflict of Interest

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