


## ARTICLE

# Singing to Enhance Pronunciation: A Qualitative Study of Vietnamese EFL Lecturers' Experiences and Outcomes

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## ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates the impact of singing on the pronunciation skills of Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lecturers. With a focus on a purposively selected group of nine teachers across different career stages from two educational institutions in Vietnam, the research aims to explore how integrating singing into language teaching influences pronunciation teaching and learning. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis, framed by the Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning and the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition. Key findings reveal that singing significantly enhances pronunciation awareness among lecturers, increases motivation and engagement in pronunciation practice, and effectively addresses specific pronunciation challenges faced by Vietnamese speakers. These outcomes highlight the potential of singing as a dynamic tool for pronunciation practice, beneficial not only for students but also for teachers in their professional development. The study also identifies a heightened awareness of English phonetic patterns and an improved ability to teach and practice these aspects in a Vietnamese EFL context. The findings have important implications for EFL education, particularly in contexts with significant phonological differences from English, advocating for the incorporation of culturally relevant and engaging teaching methods such as singing in language education.

**Keywords:** A Qualitative Study; Experiences; Pronunciation; Singing; Vietnamese EFL Lecturers

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# 1. Introduction

This study centers on a novel pedagogical approach within the realm of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, specifically investigating the impact of singing on the pronunciation skills of Vietnamese EFL lecturers. Traditional methods of teaching pronunciation in EFL settings often face criticism for their limited engagement and practical application<sup>[1]</sup>. This has prompted a search for more dynamic and interactive approaches, such as the incorporation of music and singing into language learning. The potential benefits of this approach are particularly relevant in the context of Vietnamese EFL lecturers, for whom English is not a native language.

The primary focus of this research is to examine the observed impacts of using singing as a tool for improving pronunciation among Vietnamese EFL lecturers. The unique phonetic characteristics of English, as compared to Vietnamese, present significant pronunciation challenges for these educators<sup>[2]</sup>. This study seeks to understand whether integrating singing into their pronunciation practice can effectively address these challenges.

The guiding research question is: What are the observed impacts of singing on the pronunciation skills of Vietnamese EFL lecturers? By concentrating on this question, the study aims to provide a focused analysis of the effectiveness of singing as a pronunciation practice tool. This involves a detailed examination of changes in pronunciation accuracy, fluency, and overall confidence among Vietnamese EFL lecturers who incorporate singing into their teaching practice. The findings from this study are expected to offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of innovative language teaching techniques, contributing to the broader field of EFL education, especially in contexts where pronunciation poses a significant learning barrier.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. The Challenge of Pronunciation in EFL Contexts

Pronunciation in EFL education has long been a topic of significant interest and challenge. Scholars like Morley and Jenkins have emphasized the importance of pronunciation in achieving intelligible communication in English<sup>[3,4]</sup>. The challenge is particularly pronounced in contexts where the phonetic and phonological structures of the native language differ substantially from English. Vietnamese, a tonal language with a phonemic inventory vastly different from English, presents such a challenge<sup>[2]</sup>.

### 2.2. Singing and Language Acquisition

The intersection of music and language learning has been a fertile ground for research. Patel and Yu et al. have

argued that there is a neurological overlap between music and language processing<sup>[5,6]</sup>. Studies in this domain have often focused on young learners<sup>[7,8]</sup>, but there is a growing body of research extending these findings to adult language learners. The rhythm, melody, and repetitive nature of songs have been posited to aid memory retention and pronunciation<sup>[9–11]</sup>.

### 2.3. Singing and Pronunciation

The direct impact of singing on pronunciation has been explored, though less extensively. Research by Fonseca-Mora and Joyner has indicated that singing can lead to improvements in pronunciation<sup>[12,13]</sup>, as it involves a heightened awareness of phonemic sounds and intonation patterns. This is particularly relevant for tonal languages like Vietnamese, where melody and tone play a crucial role<sup>[2,14]</sup>. Vietnamese EFL teaching methodologies have evolved, but the focus on pronunciation has been relatively recent. Traditional methods have often neglected this aspect, leading to a lack of confidence and proficiency among learners and educators alike<sup>[15]</sup>. The introduction of novel approaches, such as singing, is therefore a significant shift in pedagogy.

### 2.4. Singing as a Pedagogical Tool

The use of singing in education is not new, but its application in teaching pronunciation in EFL settings, particularly among teachers, is less common. Studies like those by Ludke et al. have shown that singing can enhance language learning outcomes<sup>[10]</sup>. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding its impact on teachers, especially in the context of non-native EFL lecturers.

The literature review underscores the potential of singing as a beneficial tool in EFL pronunciation education, particularly in challenging linguistic contexts like Vietnam. However, it also highlights a research gap in understanding the specific impacts of singing on the pronunciation skills of Vietnamese EFL lecturers. This study aims to address this gap, contributing to the broader discourse on innovative and effective EFL teaching methodologies.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative research design, utilizing semi-structured interviews to explore the impacts of singing on the pronunciation skills of Vietnamese EFL lecturers. The choice of a qualitative approach is driven by the nature of the research question, which seeks to delve into the experiences, perceptions, and personal narratives of the participants<sup>[16]</sup>. Semi-structured interviews are particularly

suited to this purpose as they provide a balance between the guided exploration of specific topics and the flexibility for participants to express their thoughts and experiences in their own terms.

The theoretical foundation of this study is primarily anchored in two distinct but complementary frameworks: the Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning and the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition. The Sociocultural Theory, as conceptualized by researchers <sup>[17,18]</sup>, places a strong emphasis on the role of social interaction and cultural context in the learning process. This perspective is particularly relevant to our study as it posits that learning is an active process that unfolds through engagement in social practices. Singing, in this context, is more than a mere educational tool; it is a culturally and socially embedded practice that facilitates language learning not just through mechanical repetition, but through meaningful social participation and cultural immersion. This aspect of the theory supports the exploration of how singing, as a social and interactive practice, can aid Vietnamese EFL lecturers in acquiring pronunciation skills in English.

On the other side, the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition offers insight into the specific linguistic challenges encountered by Vietnamese EFL lecturers. This theory examines the influence of an individual's native language phonology on the acquisition of a new language's phonological system <sup>[19,20]</sup>. In the context of Vietnamese lecturers learning English, this theory is crucial for understanding the unique phonological hurdles they face due to the significant differences between the Vietnamese and English sound systems. It sheds light on how the rhythm, intonation, and stress patterns inherent in singing can potentially aid in overcoming these specific pronunciation challenges. By incorporating the rhythmic and melodic elements of songs, this approach may offer a solution to the difficulties posed by the contrasting phonological structures of Vietnamese and English. Hence, these two theoretical frameworks collectively provide a comprehensive lens through which the study investigates the effectiveness and impact of singing as a tool for improving English pronunciation among Vietnamese EFL lecturers.

### 3.2. Participants

The participant selection for this study was carefully and purposefully designed to include a diverse group of nine Vietnamese EFL teachers, drawn from two distinct educational institutions within Vietnam. This purposive sampling strategy was employed to capture a broad spectrum of experiences and perspectives regarding the use of singing as a tool for improving pronunciation skills in EFL teaching. The participants were categorized based on their career stages, ensuring a balanced representation across different levels of professional experience. **Table 1** outlines key information about the participants.

**Table 1.** Participant profiles: Gender and career stage distribution.

No.	Pseudonyms	Gender	Experience
1	Hang	Female	Novice
2	Huu	Male	Novice
3	Nhan	Male	Novice
4	Quang	Male	Mid-career
5	Hong	Female	Mid-career
6	Cuc	Female	Mid-career
7	Hien	Female	Near-end
8	Tinh	Male	Near-end
9	Nhu	Female	Near-end

The first category consists of three novice teachers (Hang, Huu, and Nhan). These individuals are in the early stages of their teaching careers, having recently embarked on their professional journey in EFL education. Their inclusion is crucial as they provide insights into the initial stages of adopting and integrating new teaching methods, like singing, into their practice. Their experiences can highlight the challenges and advantages of using innovative techniques when one is relatively new to the field.

The second group comprises three mid-career teachers (Quang, Hong, and Cuc). These participants have been teaching for a significant duration and have accumulated a wealth of experience, but they have not yet reached the zenith of their careers. They occupy a critical middle ground in the study, offering perspectives that bridge the gap between novice enthusiasm and the seasoned wisdom of long-term practitioners. Their views are particularly valuable in understanding how singing as a pronunciation tool is perceived and utilized by those who have a solid grounding in EFL teaching but are still open to exploring and adopting new methods.

Lastly, the study includes three near-end career teachers (Hien, Tinh, and Nhu). These are seasoned professionals who have amassed extensive experience in EFL teaching and are approaching the later stages of their careers. Their participation provides depth to the study, as they can offer long-term insights into the evolution of teaching practices, including the integration of unconventional tools like singing. Their experience can shed light on how such practices are received and sustained over time and how they align with the broader changes in the field of EFL education.

In conducting research involving human participants, ethical considerations are paramount. The study adheres to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of the participants. Prior to the commencement of the study, all participants are provided with detailed information about the research objectives, methods, potential risks, and benefits. Informed consent is obtained from each participant, guaranteeing their voluntary participation and their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. Additionally, to maintain confidentiality, all identifying information is

removed or altered in the reporting of the study's findings. This ethical approach not only aligns with the standard research protocols but also ensures that the dignity and rights of the participants are respected throughout the research process. The careful consideration of these ethical issues reflects the study's commitment to upholding the highest standards of research integrity and ethical conduct.

### 3.3. Data Collection

The data collection for this study was primarily conducted through semi-structured interviews, which offered a blend of directed questions and open-ended discussions to elicit detailed insights from the participants [21]. Prior to the main data collection phase, a pilot study was conducted. This initial step involved conducting preliminary interviews with a small subset of participants. The purpose of the pilot study was to test the effectiveness and clarity of the interview questions and to make necessary adjustments based on the feedback received. Following the pilot study, several revisions were made to the interview questions to ensure they were comprehensively addressing the research objectives while being clear and understandable to the participants.

The revised interview questions included queries such as, "How has incorporating singing into your pronunciation teaching affected your own pronunciation skills?" and "Can you describe any challenges you have faced while using singing as a teaching tool, and how you addressed them?" These questions were designed to probe deeply into the experiences and perceptions of the participants regarding the use of singing in teaching pronunciation.

The interviews were conducted in locations convenient for the participants, often in their own institutions or a quiet public place conducive to confidential conversation. Each interview lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, allowing ample time for participants to elaborate on their responses. To ensure comfort and clarity in communication, the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. This choice was made to encourage participants to express themselves more freely and naturally, ensuring that language barriers did not hinder the depth and authenticity of their responses.

Given the qualitative nature of this study, the use of the participants' native language was crucial. It not only facilitated a more nuanced understanding of their perspectives but also ensured that subtle linguistic nuances were not lost in translation. For participants who were more comfortable in English or another language, appropriate arrangements were made to accommodate their preferences, including the provision of translation services where necessary. This approach ensured that all participants could fully engage with the research process, regardless of their language proficiency.

### 3.4. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data collected through semi-structured interviews in this study was conducted using thematic analysis, a method particularly suited for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data [22]. Thematic analysis is a flexible approach that allows for a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data. In this study, it was employed to distill and interpret the underlying ideas and concepts expressed by the Vietnamese EFL teachers regarding their experiences with using singing as a tool for pronunciation practice.

The process began with a thorough reading of the interview transcripts to achieve immersion and obtain a sense of the overall depth and breadth of the content. This initial reading was followed by a more detailed coding process. During this stage, segments of the text were highlighted and coded to denote specific points of interest related to the research question. These codes were then collated and examined to identify patterns and potential themes. This involved a recursive process of reviewing and refining the identified themes to ensure they accurately represented the dataset.

As themes were developed and defined, they were continually checked against the dataset to ensure they were grounded in the actual data. This iterative process of reviewing themes, collecting data, and re-analyzing helped to refine the specificity of each theme and the overall narrative of the findings. The thematic analysis enabled the research to move beyond mere description of the data, facilitating a deeper interpretation of how and why singing impacts the pronunciation skills of Vietnamese EFL lecturers.

The final stage of the analysis involved contextualizing these themes within the broader theoretical frameworks underpinning the study, specifically the Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning and the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition. This integration helped in elucidating how the themes aligned with or diverged from existing theoretical understandings, providing a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study. Through this thematic analysis, the study aimed to present a nuanced understanding of the complexities and dynamics involved in using singing as a pronunciation tool in the Vietnamese EFL context.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Enhanced Pronunciation Awareness Through Singing

One prominent theme that emerged from the data was the enhanced awareness of pronunciation among the Vietnamese EFL lecturers when integrating singing into their teaching. This finding was mentioned by all three



novice teachers, two of the mid-career teachers, and two near-end career teachers.

Huu, a novice teacher, shared, “*Using songs in my classes made me more conscious of how English sounds. It is like I am tuning my ears while teaching.*” This reflection underscores the Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning, highlighting how the social and cultural practice of singing in a classroom setting can enhance the teacher’s own awareness of language sounds. From the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition perspective, this awareness is a critical step in overcoming native language phonological influence, as the teacher becomes more attuned to the rhythm and intonation patterns of English.

Cuc, a mid-career teacher, noted, “*I have started to notice subtle pronunciation details in songs, which I now emphasize more in my pronunciation classes.*” This observation illustrates how singing can act as a bridge between theory and practice. Through the lens of the Sociocultural Theory, it shows how engaging with songs socially in a classroom can lead to deeper linguistic insights. Phonologically, it suggests an enhanced sensitivity to the nuances of English pronunciation, which is a significant step in mastering a second language’s phonology, especially for a language as phonetically different from Vietnamese as English.

Tinh, a near-end career teacher, commented, “*Singing has unexpectedly made me re-evaluate my pronunciation techniques. I have become more aware of the intonation patterns, which I used to struggle with.*” This insight aligns with the Sociocultural Theory, as it demonstrates the ongoing learning and adaptation process in teaching practices, influenced by cultural tools like music. In terms of the Phonological Theory, this heightened awareness of intonation patterns among experienced teachers signifies an advanced stage of phonological adaptation and acquisition in their second language proficiency.

These findings collectively indicate that singing, as a pedagogical tool, not only aids in teaching pronunciation but also significantly enhances the teachers’ own pronunciation skills and awareness. This enhancement is evident across different career stages, suggesting its effectiveness as a universal tool in EFL teaching.

## 4.2. Motivation and Engagement in Pronunciation Practice

The second key finding from the study is the increased motivation and engagement in pronunciation practice among the Vietnamese EFL lecturers when incorporating singing. This theme was observed in all three novice teachers, two of the mid-career teachers, and one of the near-end career teachers.

Hang, one novice teacher, expressed, “*Singing in class breaks the monotony. It is not just about repeating sounds. My students and I feel more motivated.*” This statement

reflects the Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning, which suggests that learning is enhanced in a socially engaging and culturally rich context. Singing, as a culturally familiar and enjoyable activity, fosters a more vibrant learning environment. From the perspective of the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition, this increased motivation can lead to more practice, which is essential for mastering the phonological aspects of a new language.

Hong, a mid-career teacher, stated, “*Integrating singing has rekindled my passion for teaching pronunciation. It feels like we are learning together with the students.*” This experience resonates with the Sociocultural Theory, highlighting how shared cultural activities like singing can rejuvenate the teacher-student relationship and enhance the learning experience. Phonologically, this rejuvenated interest in teaching pronunciation may lead to more innovative and effective approaches to addressing pronunciation challenges in the EFL context.

Nhu, a near-end career teacher, shared, “*I was surprised at how songs could engage even the most reserved students. It brought a new energy to pronunciation exercises.*” This observation aligns with the Sociocultural Theory, emphasizing the power of culturally relevant tools like music to engage learners at a deeper level. In terms of the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition, such engagement is crucial as it leads to increased practice opportunities, which are necessary for the acquisition of pronunciation skills.

Overall, these findings highlight the significant role of singing in boosting motivation and engagement in pronunciation practice among Vietnamese EFL lecturers and their students. This increase in motivation and engagement, as explained by the Sociocultural Theory, enhances the overall learning experience, while from a phonological perspective, it provides more opportunities for practicing and internalizing the sounds of English.

### *Overcoming Pronunciation Challenges Specific to Vietnamese Speakers.*

The third significant finding of this study relates to how singing helps in overcoming specific pronunciation challenges faced by Vietnamese speakers of English. This theme was particularly prominent among all three groups of teachers—mentioned by two novice teachers, all three mid-career teachers, and two near-end career teachers.

Nhan, one novice teacher, remarked, “*Singing helped me grasp the flow and melody of English, which is quite different from Vietnamese.*” This observation reflects the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition, highlighting how exposure to the rhythm and melody in songs can aid in understanding and adopting the phonological features of English. The Sociocultural Theory also plays a role here, as singing represents a culturally engaging method that facilitates the internalization of these new phonetic patterns.

Hong, a mid-career teacher, shared, “*Through songs, I have become more aware of and better at pronouncing sounds that are not present in Vietnamese.*” This comment underscores the practical application of the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition. Singing exposes teachers to a range of phonetic nuances, aiding in the acquisition of sounds that are typically challenging for Vietnamese speakers. The Sociocultural Theory supports this finding by suggesting that the social and enjoyable nature of singing encourages repeated practice, which is essential for mastering these new sounds.

Tinh, a near-end career teacher, observed, “*Singing in English forced me to pay attention to stress and intonation patterns, which are so different in our native language.*” This insight is closely aligned with the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition, as it illustrates the role of singing in enhancing the teacher’s understanding of the prosodic features of English. From the Sociocultural Theory perspective, this represents an adaptation of teaching strategies to include culturally engaging practices that address specific linguistic challenges.

These findings collectively underscore the effectiveness of singing as a tool in addressing the unique pronunciation challenges faced by Vietnamese speakers of English. Singing facilitates a deeper understanding of the phonological aspects of English, which are different from Vietnamese, and offers a culturally engaging way to practice and internalize these features.

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Enhanced Pronunciation Awareness Through Singing

The observation that singing significantly improves pronunciation awareness aligns with previous studies that have explored the multifaceted benefits of music and singing in language learning. For instance, past research has demonstrated that musical activities can enhance listening skills and phonetic awareness in learners [10]. However, the current study extends these findings by specifically focusing on EFL lecturers, rather than students, thereby contributing a new perspective to the existing literature.

The experiences of the novice, mid-career, and near-end career teachers in this study resonate with the principles of the Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning, which emphasizes the role of social and cultural tools in learning processes. This parallels findings from other studies which suggest that social interaction and cultural practices, like music and singing, can enrich the language learning environment [14,17,18]. However, the current study uniquely highlights how these practices not only benefit students but also significantly enhance the language skills of the teachers themselves, particularly in pronunciation. This aspect of teachers’ professional development through culturally

embedded practices like singing is a relatively unexplored area in existing literature.

From a phonological perspective, the current study’s emphasis on the impact of singing on overcoming native language phonological influence is particularly significant. Previous studies have noted the role of singing in improving pronunciation in learners [12,13], but this study sheds light on how singing helps teachers, specifically in a Vietnamese context, to become more attuned to the rhythm and intonation patterns of English. This finding is crucial given the marked phonological differences between Vietnamese and English [2]. The study’s emphasis on the phonological adaptations made by teachers, as they become more sensitive to the nuances of English pronunciation through singing, marks a distinct contribution to the field. It underscores the role of singing not just as a pedagogical tool for students, but also as a means of professional development for teachers in EFL contexts.

### 5.2. Motivation and Engagement in Pronunciation Practice

The finding of increased motivation and engagement in pronunciation practice through singing among Vietnamese EFL lecturers offers a significant addition to the existing body of research in language education. Previous studies have shown that innovative and interactive methods can enhance motivation and engagement in language learning [23,24]. These findings also resonate with the growing body of research in positive psychology as it relates to language teacher well-being. Lo and Punzalan emphasize that fostering positive emotions and well-being in language educators can have a direct impact on their motivation and professional engagement [25]. In the context of this study, the use of singing as a pronunciation practice not only benefited students but also contributed to teachers’ emotional uplift and professional satisfaction. This aligns with positive psychology’s focus on strengths-based approaches and emotional flourishing, suggesting that when teachers engage in enjoyable, meaningful activities like singing, they may experience greater job satisfaction and a renewed sense of purpose. Such affective benefits are particularly valuable in higher education settings, where burnout and disengagement can be prevalent. Therefore, incorporating creative practices not only enhances pedagogical outcomes but also supports teachers’ psychological resilience and long-term motivation. However, this study brings a new dimension by specifically exploring the impact of singing on the motivation and engagement of EFL lecturers, not just students.

The experiences shared by the novice, mid-career, and near-end career teachers in this study strongly support the Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning. This theory posits that learning is more effective in socially engaging and culturally rich contexts [17,18]. The use of singing in pronunciation practice, as described by the participants,

exemplifies how integrating culturally familiar and enjoyable activities like singing can transform the learning environment. This transformation leads to increased motivation and engagement, which is vital in language learning, especially in the often challenging area of pronunciation.

Furthermore, these findings align with the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition by demonstrating that increased engagement and motivation can lead to more effective practice and mastery of the phonological aspects of English <sup>[19,20]</sup>. This is particularly important for Vietnamese EFL lecturers, who need to overcome specific pronunciation challenges related to their native language. The increased practice opportunities facilitated by singing can help them internalize the sounds of English more effectively.

Additionally, the study's findings highlight the importance of innovative teaching methods in rekindling the passion for teaching and learning. As noted by the mid-career and near-end career teachers, singing not only enhances student engagement but also rejuvenates the teachers' interest in teaching pronunciation. This aspect of professional development and teacher motivation is a significant contribution to the field, as it emphasizes the role of creative teaching methods in sustaining teacher enthusiasm and effectiveness over time.

### **5.3. Overcoming Pronunciation Challenges Specific to Vietnamese Speakers**

The study's finding on the effectiveness of singing in addressing pronunciation challenges specific to Vietnamese speakers of English adds a unique dimension to the existing research in language education. While previous studies have acknowledged the general benefits of music and rhythm in language learning <sup>[5,10]</sup>, this study specifically highlights how singing can aid Vietnamese EFL lecturers in overcoming the unique phonological hurdles of English. This focus on the specific linguistic context of Vietnamese speakers is a noteworthy contribution to the field.

The insights provided by the novice, mid-career, and near-end career teachers align with the Phonological Theory of Second Language Acquisition, which emphasizes the impact of a learner's native language on acquiring new phonological systems <sup>[19,20]</sup>. The teachers' experiences suggest that singing, with its inherent rhythm and melody, assists in understanding and adopting the phonological features of English that are markedly different from Vietnamese. This practical application of the theory illustrates how exposure to the musical elements of a language can facilitate the mastery of challenging sounds and intonation patterns.

Furthermore, the study resonates with the Sociocultural Theory of Language Learning by demonstrating how singing, as a culturally engaging practice, aids in the internalization of new phonetic patterns. This theory posits that learning is

enhanced in social and cultural contexts <sup>[17,18]</sup>. The findings suggest that the enjoyable and interactive nature of singing in a classroom setting encourages repeated practice and engagement with the language, which is crucial for mastering new phonetic and prosodic features. This aspect of the study extends the application of the Sociocultural Theory to the specific challenge of teaching pronunciation to speakers of tonally and phonologically distinct languages like Vietnamese.

## **6. Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study embarked on an exploration into the realm of pronunciation practice in the context of Vietnamese EFL lecturers, with a specific focus on the use of singing as a pedagogical tool. It aimed to uncover how integrating singing into language teaching could impact the pronunciation skills of these lecturers, who play a pivotal role in shaping the English proficiency of future generations in Vietnam. To achieve this, the study employed a qualitative research design, utilizing semi-structured interviews with nine Vietnamese EFL teachers across various career stages from two educational institutions. These interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, allowing for a detailed and nuanced understanding of the participants' experiences and perceptions.

The findings of the study were revealing and multifaceted. First, it was observed that singing significantly enhanced pronunciation awareness among the lecturers, cutting across novice to near-end career stages. Teachers reported a heightened sensitivity to the phonetic and prosodic features of English, a language phonologically distinct from their native Vietnamese. Second, the study found that singing in pronunciation practice led to increased motivation and engagement, both for the teachers and their students. This was particularly significant in breaking the monotony of traditional pronunciation exercises and rekindling interest in teaching pronunciation. Third, the study highlighted how singing effectively addressed specific pronunciation challenges faced by Vietnamese speakers. Teachers noted improvements in their ability to grasp and teach sounds and intonation patterns that are typically challenging for Vietnamese speakers of English.

The findings from this study offer significant implications for the field of EFL education, especially in regions where the native language significantly differs from English, such as in Vietnam. A key implication is the potential of integrating singing into language instruction as an effective tool for enhancing pronunciation skills. This approach, as evidenced by the study, benefits not only students but also teachers. In environments where traditional methods may fall short, singing emerges as an innovative, engaging, and culturally resonant method. This revelation is particularly pertinent for teacher training and professional development programs, where it suggests a shift towards

more dynamic and culturally-aligned pedagogical strategies. By incorporating singing into teacher training curricula, educators can develop a more rounded approach to teaching pronunciation, one that is both enjoyable and effective.

Moreover, the study's findings regarding increased motivation and engagement due to singing have important ramifications. They indicate that blending music and language instruction can transform the learning experience, making it more engaging and enjoyable. This change in the teaching-learning dynamic could lead to improved retention of pronunciation skills and a deeper mastery of the linguistic nuances of English. For language educators and curriculum designers, this means considering the integration of musical elements into language teaching, not as a peripheral activity, but as a core component of the teaching strategy. Such an approach could redefine the way pronunciation is taught, making the process more interactive and learner-friendly.

Next, the study underlines the necessity of addressing specific pronunciation challenges that are unique to non-native English speakers in EFL contexts. The effectiveness of singing in tackling these challenges suggests that tailored, context-specific strategies are essential. This calls for a more nuanced understanding of the phonological differences between learners' native languages and English, and the development of customized teaching methods that directly address these challenges. For EFL programs in linguistically diverse settings, this means moving beyond one-size-fits-all solutions and developing teaching practices that are tailored to the specific phonological needs of the learners.

To fully capitalize on these benefits, singing can be meaningfully integrated into teacher training and professional development workshops. For example, collaborative song-based pronunciation exercises can provide teachers with hands-on experience in applying musical techniques to target problematic sounds in English. These activities can be paired with reflective singing sessions, where teachers analyze their own pronunciation and emotional responses while engaging with songs. Such practices not only enhance phonological awareness but also foster a supportive and enjoyable learning environment among peers. Embedding these activities in training programs encourages teachers to explore alternative methods, build confidence in their own pronunciation, and develop a repertoire of engaging techniques to use in their classrooms.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the growing body of research advocating for more dynamic and culturally attuned teaching methodologies in EFL education. It provides evidence that singing is not merely a novel approach but a potentially impactful tool for enhancing pronunciation teaching and learning. As EFL education continues to evolve, incorporating such creative and contextually relevant practices could play a crucial role in improving language proficiency and teaching effectiveness, especially in linguistically diverse contexts like Vietnam.

## 6.1. Recommendations

Future research endeavors could take several expansive and diverse directions. A crucial step would be to engage a larger and more varied sample of EFL teachers, extending beyond the Vietnamese context. Including educators from different geographical regions and cultural backgrounds would offer a more comprehensive view of how singing impacts pronunciation teaching and learning across various linguistic landscapes. Such an approach could involve comparative studies, contrasting the experiences and outcomes of Vietnamese EFL lecturers with those from other linguistic backgrounds. This would provide valuable insights into whether the benefits of using singing as a teaching tool are universally applicable or vary depending on the native language and phonological characteristics of the learners and teachers.

Additionally, the integration of quantitative research methods would significantly enhance the study's objectivity and robustness. Implementing pre- and post-intervention assessments of pronunciation skills would offer concrete, measurable data on the effectiveness of singing in improving pronunciation. This quantitative approach would complement the qualitative insights, providing a more balanced and holistic understanding of the impact. Longitudinal studies would further enrich this understanding by examining the long-term effects of incorporating singing into language teaching. Such studies could track changes and developments over extended periods, offering a clearer picture of the sustainability and enduring influence of this teaching method.

These proposed expansions and methodological enhancements aim to deepen the understanding of the role of singing in EFL education. By exploring its application and effectiveness in a variety of teaching scenarios and cultural settings, future research can provide more definitive guidance on the best practices for using singing in language education. The ultimate goal is to establish a well-rounded and empirically supported framework that guides EFL educators in various contexts to utilize singing as an effective tool for enhancing pronunciation teaching and learning.

## 6.2. Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study lies in its scope and sample size. The research focused exclusively on nine Vietnamese EFL lecturers from two educational institutions, which may not provide a comprehensive representation of the diverse teaching contexts in Vietnam or other countries. This limited sample size and geographical concentration restrict the generalizability of the findings. Furthermore, the study's qualitative nature, while offering in-depth insights, lacks the statistical robustness that quantitative methods might provide. Another limitation is the study's reliance on self-reported data, which can be



subject to biases and inaccuracies. This is particularly relevant in assessing the subjective experience of increased pronunciation awareness and motivation, which might not directly correlate with measurable improvements in pronunciation accuracy.

## Author Contributions

Conceptualization, H.T.N.; formal analysis, H.T.N.; writing—original draft preparation, H.T.N.; writing—review and editing, T.T.P. and T.T.L.; supervision, H.Y.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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## Institutional Review Board Statement

Ethical review and approval were waived for this study due to the nature of the research, which did not involve the collection of sensitive personal data or any physical or psychological intervention with human participants.

## Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

## Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions but are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request via email: thaole@ctu.edu.vn.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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