

Abstract of a project entitled

**A case study of speech choir experience in a chamber choral group at The  
Education University of Hong Kong**

by

**Lam Kar Kiu Carrie**

submitted to The Education University of Hong Kong

for the degree of Bachelor of Education (Honours) (Music)

in May 2016

This study aims to investigate whether it is valuable to implement speech choir practice at The Education University of Hong Kong. 15 members from The Education University of Hong Kong Chorus were invited to attend speech choir practice and perform two speech choir pieces at Speech Choir Demonstration Performance (afternoon concert) on 5th July 2015. The two pieces were *Every meal earned is a meal spent* (餐餐搵食餐餐清) and *In the Quiet of the Night* (靜夜思夜靜) written by Prof. Tsang Yip Fat Richard and Dr. Leung Chi Hin respectively. The practices were

held by them. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. All participants were invited to complete an online questionnaire in response to their speech choir practice and demonstration performance experience. Three participants were invited for an in-depth interview so as to understand more about participants' behavior and expression during the speech choir experience. After analyzing the data of both the questionnaire and interviews, a positive result is shown. The findings can serve as a reference to explore the possibilities of promoting speech choir in primary and secondary school choir in Hong Kong. Suggestions are made for further development of speech choir.

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## Declaration

I, *Lam Kar Kiu Carrie*, declare that this research report represents my own work under the supervision of *Dr. Leung Chi Hin*, and that it has not been submitted previously for examination to any tertiary institution.

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Lam Kar Kiu Carrie

16<sup>th</sup> May 2015

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## **Background**

Speech choir is an innovative choral art form. Prof. Richard Tsang first advocated it in 2007 based on Christopher Small's concept of Musicking. Musicking, as a verb, encourages everyone to proactively approach music and make fun of it. Same in speech choir, there are many possibilities for participants to make music proactively by special sound effects, movements or acting.

Since 2011, the Education Bureau has been holding the Schools Speech Choir Showcase every year, serving as a promotion to primary and secondary schools. In 2012, Prof. Richard Tsang promoted speech choir in the course 'MUS1248 Creative Musicking' for the Bachelor of Education (Honours) (Music) at The Education University of Hong Kong, aiming to equip student music teachers with innovative skills for choral art ensembles.

The introduction of speech choir brings diversity to the choral art in music education in Hong Kong. It welcomes all to engage in a music-related experience. As speech choir pieces lack music element 'pitch', it avoids students who lack singing skills dampening their interest in music and hinder their development. At the same time, it cultivates their musicianship and creativity. Till now, the investigation of speech choir has not been studied extensively. Therefore, through investigating participants' views

after attending several rehearsals and a demonstration performance, the impact of speech choir, the feasibility of promoting speech choir in The Education University of Hong Kong and local schools are concerned.

## **Literature Review**

### **Traditional choral music**

Choral music may be defined as music written in parts designed to be performed with several voices on each part (Ulrich, 1973). In traditional choir practice, members are trained with a variety of skills. Phillips (2004) mentioned that there are five basic areas for which voice instruction generally is prescribed: respiration, phonation, resonant tone production, diction and expression. Also, Brinson (2014) stated that participation in choral programs can provide enjoyment and enrichment for all humankind and provide a creative and socially acceptable manner in which to express feelings and to share them in community with fellow human beings.

### **Definition of Speech Choir**

Tsang (2011) stated that speech choir is a brand-new form of colourful and vivid musical performances presented by the use of versatile human voice, rhythm, dramatic sound effects and speech expression. Speech choir welcomes all to experience the art of choral music. The past president of the Music Educators National Conference, Paul Lehman (1987) said that every member of society should have the ability to perform, to create, and to listen to music with understanding.



Since speech choir pieces lack pitch, speech choir mainly emphasizes on the rhythm, articulation and tone colour so as to express the meaning and mood of the piece in an interesting way. In some pieces, improvisation is applied to create a rich texture. Other non-musical elements such as body movements, acting and stage design are added to enhance the piece and make it an entertaining performance.

Besides, the content of speech choir pieces is normally related to daily life. The text is colloquial that sounds interactive with the audience. Expressionists believed that human have a need to express daily routine in a subjective, indirect way beyond the limitations of language through artistic endeavor. (Collins, 1999)

### **Musicianship cultivated through participation in speech choir**

There are many advantages to introduce speech choir. Speech choir stresses the importance of rhythm, articulation and tone colour. Tsang (2011) stated that joining speech choir can improve a sense of rhythm because speech choir emphasizes on the sophisticated and varied rhythm as a way to boost the musicality of the piece. Garretson (1993) mentioned that when dealing with spoken speech in choir, participants have to stress careful articulation of the words and achieve a special unique sound that stems from the combination of vowels and consonant, and the inherent meaning of the text.

In terms of creativity, participants have a chance to explore different sound effects via the voice and body movements according to the atmosphere of the piece. Also, participants are free to improvise spontaneously. Britsch & Dennison (1995) stated that the improviser has choices regarding notes, tempo, dynamics, accents, rhythms and sound sources – sometimes all these choices simultaneously.

What is more, as Tsang (2011) mentioned, participants' musical creativity and team spirit will be nurtured, their self-confidence and power of concentration will be strengthened through extensive training.

### **Speech choir experience in choral practice**

In this study, two speech choir pieces are chosen for a chamber choral group from The Education University of Hong Kong Chorus to practice and perform. The two pieces were *Every Meal Earned is a Meal Spent* (餐搵餐食餐餐清) and *In the Quiet of the Night* (靜夜思夜靜) written by Prof. Tsang Yip Fat Richard and Dr. Leung Chi Hin respectively. The former piece has a three part contrapuntal texture. After performing the entire score, participants start improvisation on a constant regular beat pulse. Participants create their own interesting rhythms based on the phrase '餐搵餐食餐餐清' throughout the improvisation. They have to listen, give and take as well as to respond to each other. For the latter piece *In the Quiet of the Night* (靜夜思夜靜), participants are divided into four blocks. Each block does Creative Musicking in

different time slots with reference to the score. It requires the rapport among the participants to vary their rhythm, articulations, tone colour and dynamics to give a changing combined texture. The scores of both pieces have been attached in the appendix.

### **Research Questions**

In order to investigate the views of speech choir participants among the chamber choral group and the feasibility of promoting speech choir in The Education University of Hong Kong and local schools in Hong Kong, data would be collected according to the research questions as below.

***Table 1: Questions for research***

- |  |
|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What are the characteristics of speech choir?</li><li>2. Are participants interested in speech choir experience and willing to have more exposure to speech choir?</li><li>3. Do participants benefit from joining speech choir?</li><li>4. Is it feasible for participants to teach speech choir?</li><li>5. Is it valuable to implement speech choir in primary and secondary school?</li></ol> |
|--|

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

There are a total of 15 participants involved in this case study. They are music students either studying Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) or Bachelor of Music in Education (B.M.E.) under the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts at The Education University of Hong Kong, ranging from years 1 to 4 in the academic year of 2014-2015. As participants are The Education University of Hong Kong Chorus members, they have choir experience before.

They are asked to join a compulsory speech choir event ‘Creative Musicking and Speech Choir Demonstration Performance (離譜作樂)’ held by Prof. Tsang on 5th July 2015 at 3p.m. at the City Hall. This is the first time that all participants join speech choir rehearsals, working on two speech choir pieces. Also, this performance is the first speech choir performance all participants have ever had.

### **Procedures**

To prepare for the Speech Choir Demonstration Performance, three rehearsals were conducted on 19th, 26th June and 3rd July in 2015 at The Education University of Hong Kong. Each rehearsal lasted for two hours long. There was a final rehearsal on 5th July in 2015 in the morning at the City Hall. Prof. Tsang was responsible for

holding rehearsal on the piece *Every meal earned is a meal spent* (餐餐搵食餐餐清) while Dr. Leung Chi Hin was responsible for holding rehearsal on the piece *In the Quiet of the Night* (靜夜思夜靜). Both Prof. Tsang and Dr Leung gave advise and demonstrated how the piece could be enhanced, hoping to bring out the best effect of the piece.

After the performance, an online questionnaire was conducted. There are two parts in the questionnaire. The first part collects the basic information of the participants and the second part is about their views or evaluations on speech choir experience. The questions of the online questionnaire are shown below.

**Table 2: Questions from the questionnaires**

<p><b><u>A) Background information</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Year of study</li> <li>2. Choir experience</li> </ol>
<p><b><u>B) Views of participants on speech choir experience</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Are you interested in joining speech choir?</li> <li>2. Which characteristics of speech choir do you find it interesting? (sound explorations on human voice, sophisticated and mixed rhythm, varied articulations, clear dictions, spontaneity of improvisation, use of body movement)</li> <li>3. Do you enjoy musicking with the group during speech choir practice and performance?</li> <li>4. During the practice, do you agree that you try to explore and adjust your voice to a tone colour that matches the mood of the speech choir piece during practice and</li> </ol>

performance?

5. After joining speech choir, do you agree that your rhythmic sense is improved?
6. After joining speech choir, do you agree that you pay more attention to the clear dictions of the words and articulations?
7. After joining speech choir, do you agree that your improvisation skills are improved?
8. Would you like to join more speech choir activities in the future?
9. Do you agree that speech choir should be promoted to primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong?
10. Do you agree that you have the ability to conduct speech choir practice in local primary or secondary schools?

In addition, interview was also conducted. Among the 15 participants, 3 of them were randomly selected as the interviewees. They are 4B.Ed. Year 3, 5B.Ed. Year 2 and 5B.Ed. Year 1 students. During the interview, in-depth questions were asked with regard to the online questionnaire. The participants shared their opinions freely concerning the impact of speech choir towards their personal development after the speech choir experience. The questions of the interview are shown below.

***Table 3: Questions from the interviews***

1. Are you interested in joining speech choir? How does it sound new and interesting to you?
2. Among all characteristics of speech choir, i.e. sound explorations on human voice, sophisticated and varied rhythm, careful articulations, clear dictions, spontaneity of improvisation, use of body movement, which one do you find the most interesting? Why?
3. Can you share any moments that you enjoy the most during the practice or performance?

4. Do you observe any body movement among the participants during practice and performance? i.e participants move with the pulse/ interact with other participants/ nodded their head/ facial expression/ act according to the text of the piece
5. Do you think joining speech choir trains your rhythmic sense? Why?
6. Do you think joining speech choir allows you to pay more attention to the clear dictions of the words and articulations? Why?
7. Do you think joining speech choir improves your improvisation skills? Why?
8. Would you like to join more speech choir activities in the future?
9. Do you think it is important to promote speech choir to primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong? Why?
10. Do you think you are capable of conducting speech choir practice?

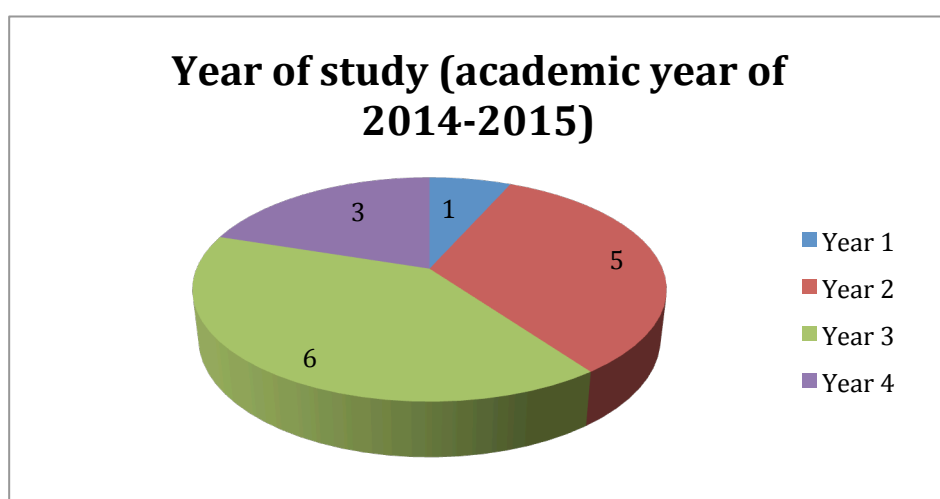
After collecting data from the online questionnaire and interview, data was analyzed in the findings part. It summarized participant's views after attending speech choir practice and demonstration performance. There were discussions concerning the impact of speech choir. Also, limitations of this study were raised. Hence, suggestions with regard to the implementation of speech choir were made.



## **Findings**

The findings concerning participant's view towards speech choir after attending practice and demonstration performance from the online questionnaire are shown in this part. There were a total of 15 participants in the questionnaire. More than half of them have more than 10 years of choir experience. Figure 1 shows the year of study while figure 2 shows the choir experience of the participants. At the same time, responses of the 3 interviewees are included.

***Figure 1: Year of study***



**Figure 2: Choir experience**

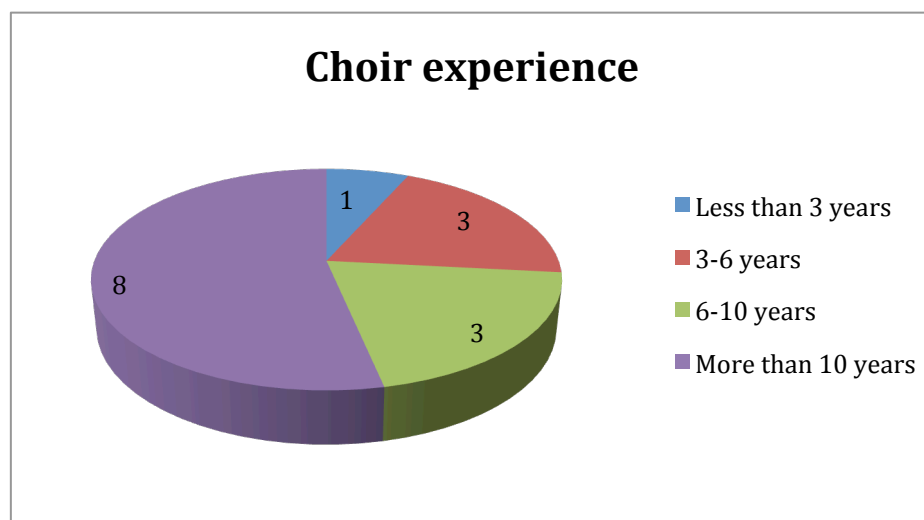
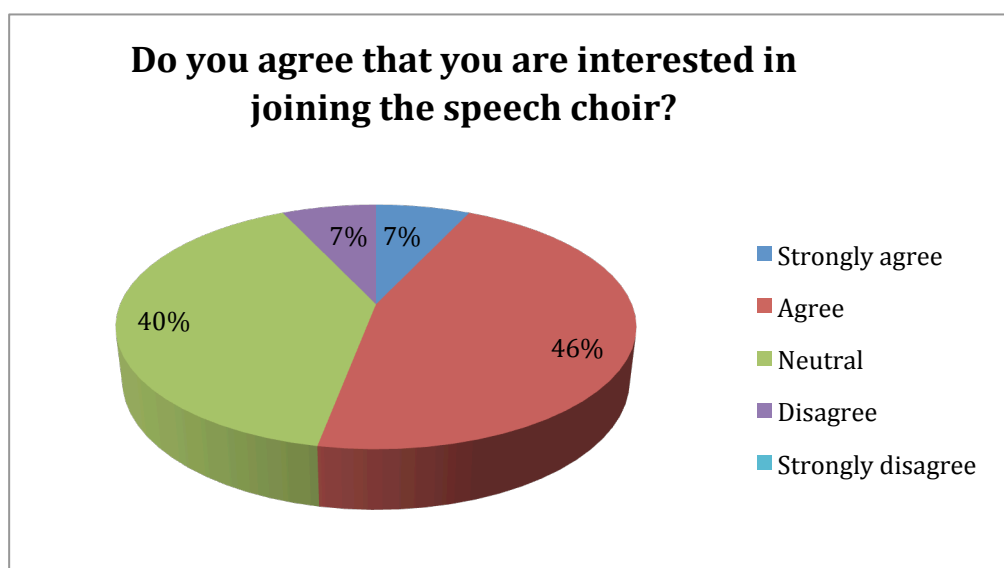


Figure 3 shows the enthusiasm of the participants in joining the speech choir.

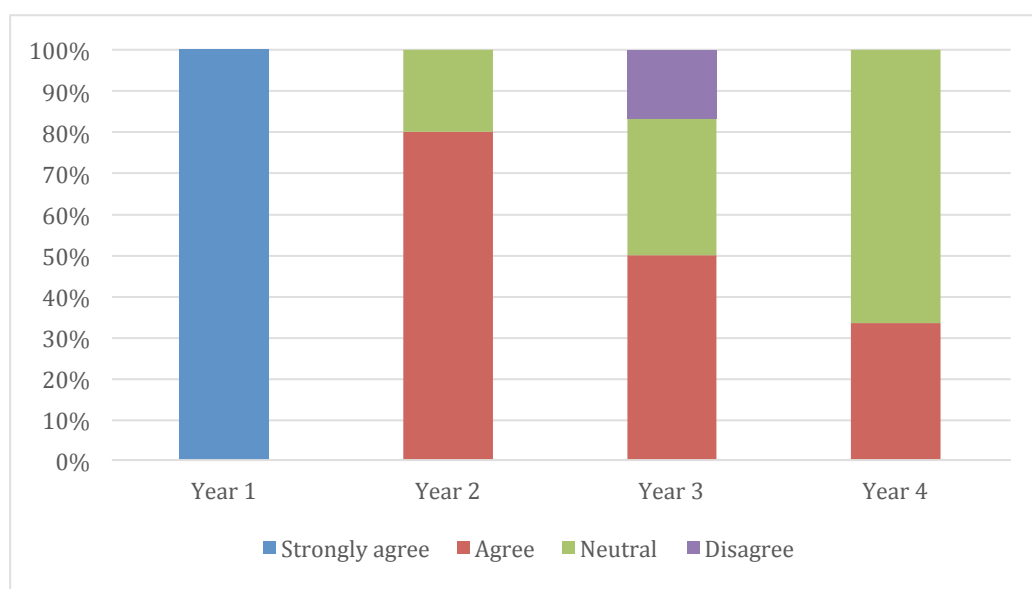
**Figure 3: Results from online questionnaire question 'I am interested in joining the speech choir.'** (Participants rate it as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree)



Among the participants, slightly more than half of them agree that they are interested in joining the Speech Choir, with 7% of them strongly agree that they are interested in joining it. 40% of the participants are neutral to speech choir.

Take a closer look, figure 4 shows the relationship of the popularity of speech choir and the year of study of the participants.

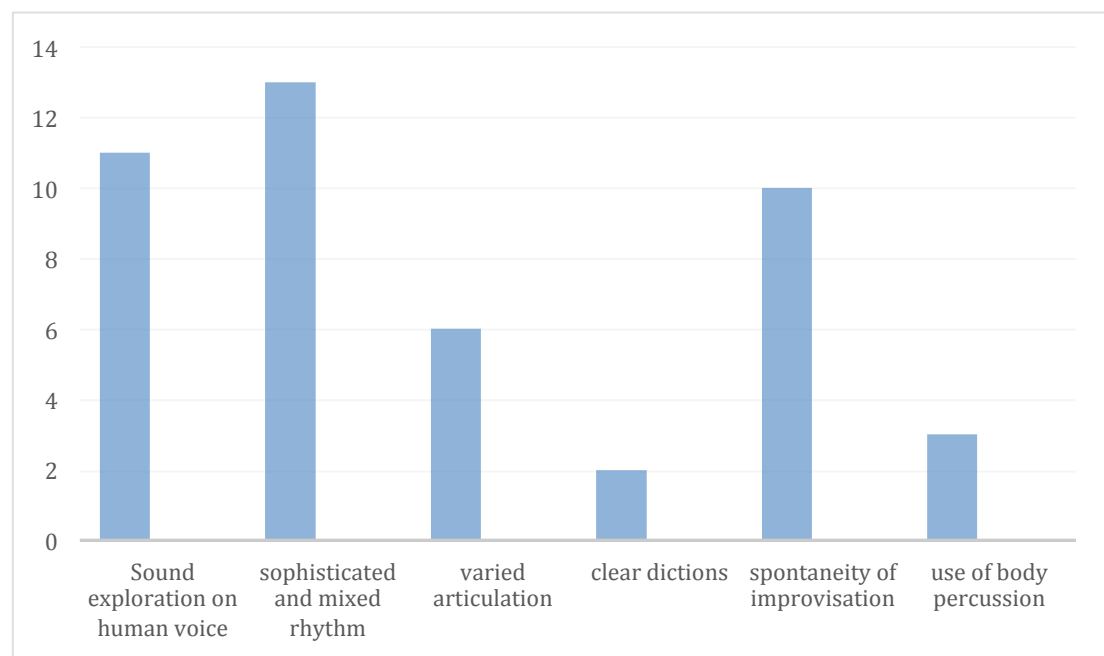
**Figure 4: Popularity among participants in different years of study**



To rank the popularity of speech choir among participants in different years of study, the result would be as follows: year 1 with 100% high popularity, year 2 with 80% popularity, year 3 with 50% popularity and year 4 with approximately 32% popularity. Figure 4 clearly shows that in this case study, the younger the participants, the more interest they have in participating in the speech choir.

Figure 5 shows the characteristics of speech choir that interest the participants most. They can choose up to three characteristics.

**Figure 5: Results from online questionnaire question ‘Which characteristics of speech choir do you find interesting? (can choose at most three options)’**



According to figure 5, it is worth noticing that sophisticated and mixed rhythm is the most interesting characteristics of speech choir from the participants’ point of view. Coming next is sound exploration on human voice, followed by the spontaneity of improvisation.

Interviewees are asked to explain the reasons why they think some of the characteristics interest them. Interviewee A mentioned that sophisticated and mixed rhythm interest her the most because it is very challenging. “*The sophisticated*

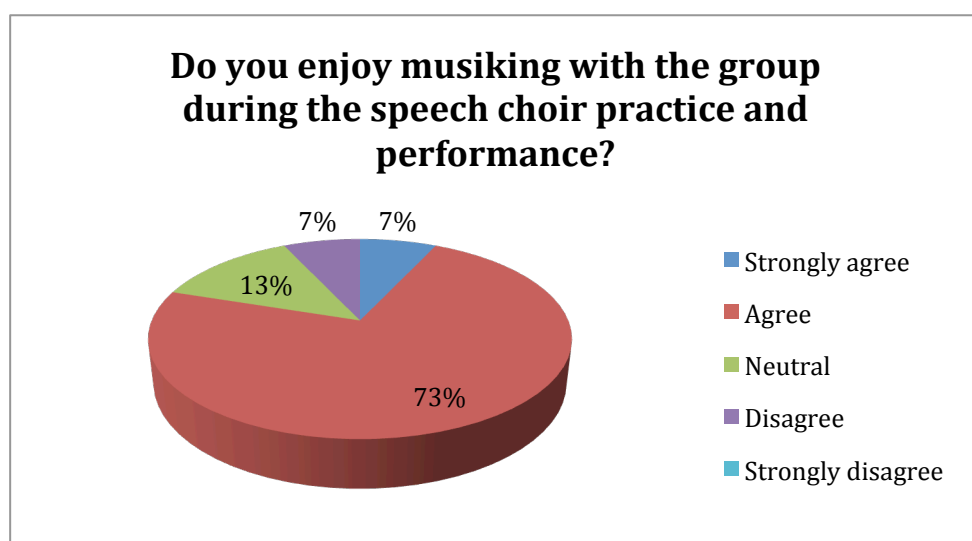
*rhythm matches the words and it can convey the meaning of the words effectively.’’*

Interviewee B shared that sound exploration on human voice interest her the most.

*“Speech choir practice provides me a chance to make different sounds like whispering, pretending sound from the nature or simply shouting that I can seldom do it in traditional choir.”*

Figure 6 shows the level of engagement of participants during the speech choir practice and performance.

**Figure 6: Results from online questionnaire question ‘Do you enjoy musicking with the group during the speech choir practice and performance?’ (Participants rate it as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree)**



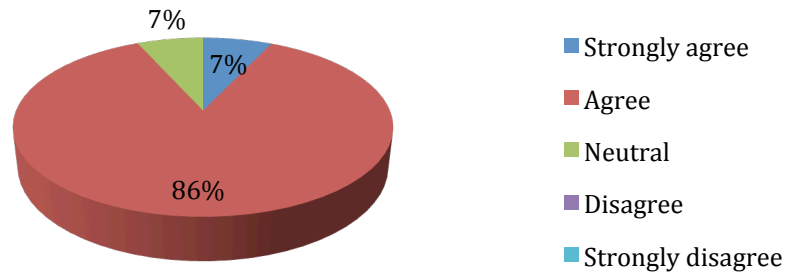
From figure 6, it is evident that nearly 80% of the participants enjoy musicking with the group during the speech choir practice and performance. The proportion of feeling neutral to the engagement of musicking contributes to 13%.

In general, interviewees shared common views that they enjoy musicking with the group when all members are active to give and take during the improvisation part. Interviewee A enjoyed the moment when more and more people joined in the improvisation by jamming ‘餐餐清’ or other creative wordings like ‘開飯啦喂’ with the beatbox as the background in Prof. Tsang’s piece. Interviewee B shared that she enjoyed the interactions with the block when practicing Dr. Leung’s piece. *‘When I hear the one next to me saying moonlight softly, I will try to raise my voice in different register so as to create more variety of voice and build more layers.’*

Figure 7 shows the willingness of the participants in using their voice to adapt to the speech choir piece.

***Figure 7: Results from online questionnaire question ‘Do you try to explore and adjust your voice to produce a tone colour that matches the mood of the speech choir piece?’***  
***(Participants rate it as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree)***

**Do you try to explore and adjust your voice to produce a tone colour that matches the mood of the speech choir piece?**

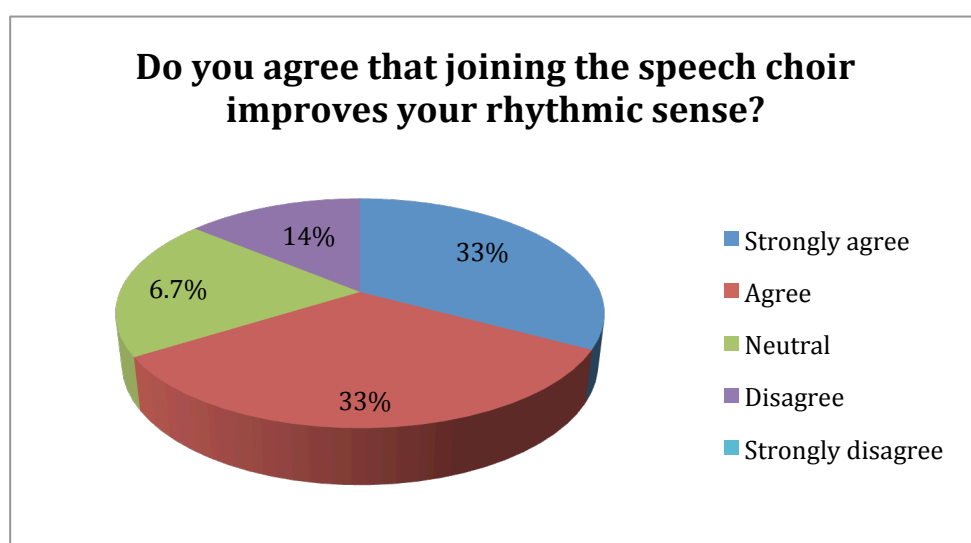


There is a striking fact that over 90% of the participants did sound exploration themselves during speech choir practice. They try to explore the possibilities of their voice and adjust their voice to produce a tone colour that matches the mood of the speech choir piece.

Interviewees shared their experience of sound exploration. Interviewee A tried to explore the sound that she seldom uses. For instance, in Dr. Leung's piece *"I try to make variations on 'sh', do it like whispering sometimes and lift up the voice so as to create a calm and mysterious atmosphere."* Interviewee B said that she tried to use a very excited voice when saying '餐餐清'. *"I try to shout it in a hurried way, trying to convey the message that the money earned is gone quickly!"* Interviewee C said that she tried to imagine the sound in mind and do it accordingly, like 'sh' with different volumes as the wind flows near and far away.

Besides, the impact of speech choir on musicianship development is explored. The development of rhythmic sense, clear dictions of the words, articulations and improvisation skills is reflected by the participants in figure 8, 9 and 10 respectively.

**Figure 8: Results from online questionnaire question ‘Joining the speech choir improves my rhythmic sense.’ (Participants rate it as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree)**



From figure 8, we can see that more than 60% of the participants agree that joining the speech choir improves their rhythmic sense. To certain extent, the sophisticated and mixed rhythm of speech choir piece can help enhance participants' musicianship development of rhythm.

Interviewees are asked how their rhythmic sense can be improved through speech choir practice and performance. All of them agree that their rhythmic sense is



eventually trained from the first time sight-reading the score till the performance. Interviewee C shared that *‘for the first time looking at the score, I focus a lot on the rhythm as I don’t need to concern about the pitch. Given the basic pulse, I work hard to read the words aloud rhythmically. It is interesting to note that despite the complicated rhythm notations on the score, it is easy to follow as the words go naturally with the rhythm like a daily dialogue.’* Interviewee A said that it boosts her rhythmic sense during free jamming in the improvisation part in Prof. Tsang’s piece. *‘We rely much on the beat given by the beatbox and do our jamming. I try to stress the accent of the words on the strong beat and make use of syncopation to make interesting rhythmic pattern’*. Also, interviewee B further mentioned that the whole group should be sensitive to keep the pulse in order to make three parts go well together. *‘Also, I enjoy catching the offbeat in Prof. Tsang’s piece. The use of semiquavers on ‘餐餐清’ make the piece more exciting and intense.’*

***Figure 9: Results from online questionnaire question ‘Joining the speech choir allows me to pay more attention to the clear dictions of the words and articulations.’ (Participants rate it as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree)***

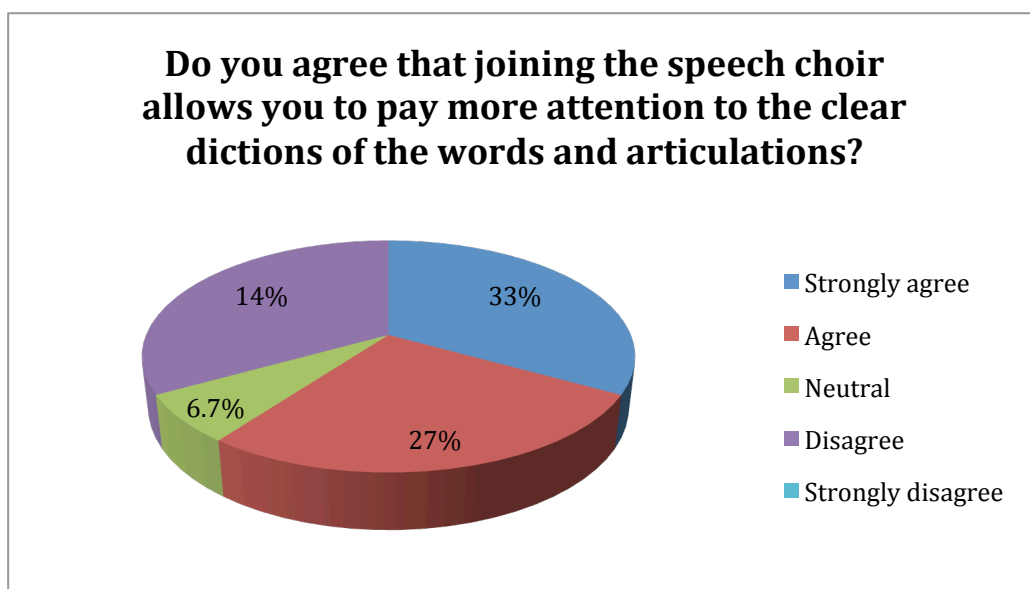
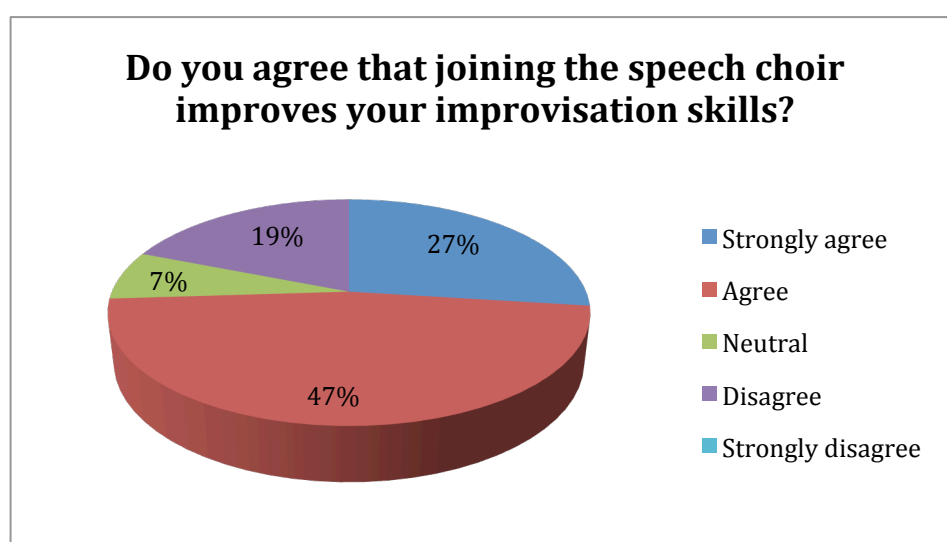


Figure 9 indicates that nearly 60% of the participants agree that joining the speech choir allows them to pay more attention to the clear dictions of the words and articulations. As no pitch is concerned, speech choir relies on the clear delivery of the words and articulations to spread the message of the piece effectively.

Interviewees are asked how their dictions and articulations can be improved through speech choir practice and performance. Interviewee B mentioned that both Prof. Tsang and Dr. Leung stressed the importance of the dictions during the practice. Otherwise, the audience doesn't know what is piece about with the murmuring voice. Interviewee A explained, *‘The words have to be precise, like the ‘c’ sound in ‘餐’, ‘清’ or ‘m’ in ‘moonlight’, we have to make good use of the teeth and tongue to pronounce the consonant and vowel well.’* Interviewee C shared that articulations can be done well when all participants pay attention to the markings on the score and

get into the mood of the piece. *‘I am aware of the staccato and accent so as to highlight the articulations in the context of the piece and make it more interesting.’*

**Figure 10: Results from online questionnaire question ‘Joining the speech choir improves your improvisation skills.’ (Participants rate it as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree)**



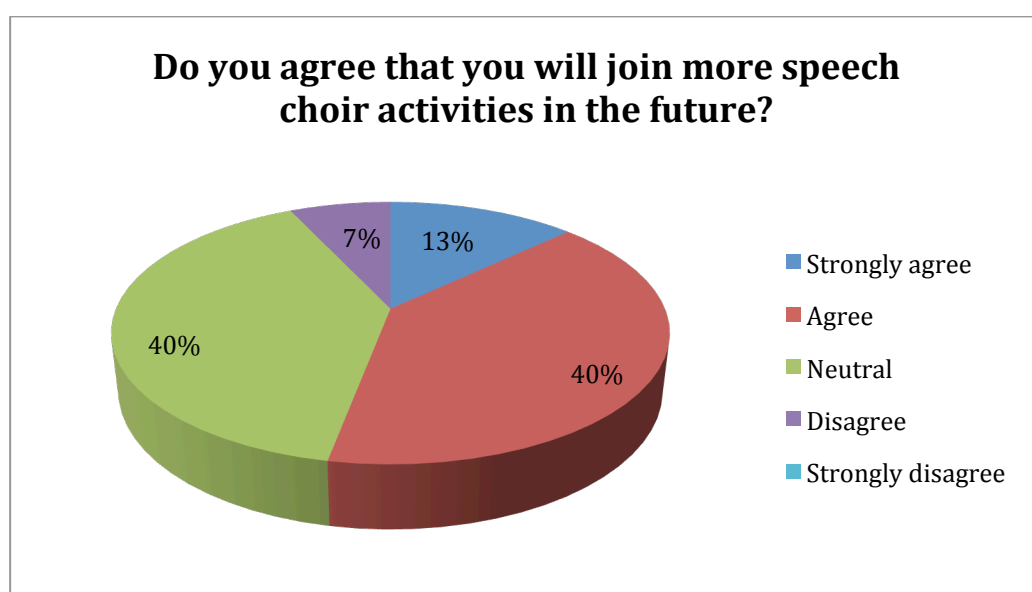
According to figure 10, there is exactly 80% of the participants agree that joining the speech choir improves their improvisation skills. Unlike traditional choir piece, speech choir pieces normally provide participants rooms for spontaneous improvisation as a way to unleash their creativity.

Interviewees are asked how their improvisation skills can be improved through speech choir practice and performance. Interviewee B mentioned that there is a solo time for every participant in Prof. Tsang’s piece. *‘I follow Prof. Tsang’s instructions, by*

*choosing any rhythmic patterns in the piece and express it freely. I gradually grasp the skills after several practices.”* There is also a mass improvisation in Dr. Leung’s piece. Interviewee C said, *“it trained me to spontaneously pick a word and vary the volume or rhythm as I like. Of course, it has to be matched with the setting of the piece.”*

On the other hand, the future development of speech choir is investigated. The corresponding results are shown by the participants in figure 11, 12 and 13.

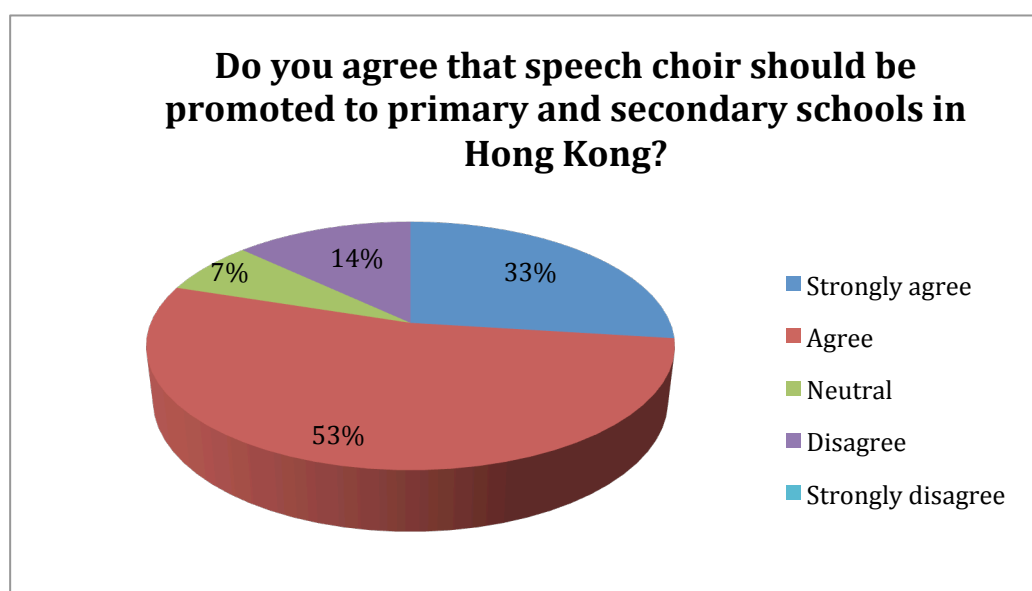
**Figure 11: Results from online questionnaire question ‘I would like to join more speech choir activities in the future.’ (Participants rate it as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree or strongly disagree)**



From figure 11, it is encouraging to see that more than half of the participants agree to join more speech choir activities in the future. There is quite a proportion of 40% of

them remain neutral. Overall, all interviewees said they would consider to join more related activities if there are chances in the future.

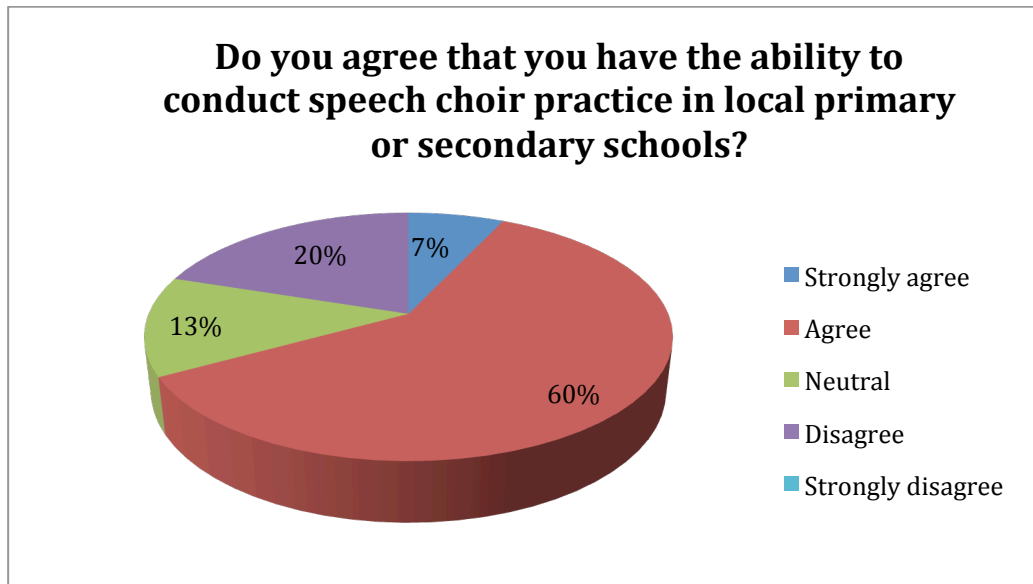
**Figure 12: Results from online questionnaire question ‘Do you agree that speech choir should be promoted to primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong?’ (Participants rate it as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)**



According to figure 12, over 80% of the participants agree that speech choir should be promoted to primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong.

In general, all interviewees agree that it will be great if local students get to know about speech choir and have a chance to experience it. Apart from traditional choir, speech choir provides a fair opportunity for all students to participate in music choral activities.

**Figure 13: Results from online questionnaire question ‘Do you agree that you have to ability to conduct speech choir practice in local primary or secondary schools?’**  
*(Participants rate it as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree)*



From figure 13, nearly 70% of the participants agree that they have the ability to conduct speech choir practice in local primary or secondary school. The remaining 30% doubted their ability in teaching speech choir.

Some Interviewees believed that they can teach speech choir because they can put the experience into practice and do it with the students. However, one doubted because she thinks she still needs to know more about the teaching strategies and look for teaching materials.

Besides, interviewees are asked about the behaviors and facial expressions they observed during practice and performance.

Interviewee A recalled her memory, *“We were very shy at the beginning. We stood still to read the score. However, Prof. Tsang was very energetic to boost us up and get us engage more into the piece. We started to nod our heads, move our body with the beat and build rapport with other parts. I saw my peers acting while performing. Some of them frowned to express the quick use of money. Some of them put their hands in front of the mouth to express the urge for a meal.”*

As interviewee B remembered, *“We had good eye contact with each other. Especially during the improvisation part, apart from looking at the conductor, we looked at the one who is doing the solo. When the solo finished, she looked at the next one to signal her turn. Most of us were confident to be the solo improvisation. We had enjoyable facial expression as we smiled and rise our eyebrows.”*

Interviewee C mentioned, *“I noticed that some of us would create our own movements as we went along the piece. When ‘sh’ to higher pitch, some of us would tiptoe, look up or rise our eyebrows. When doing ‘tic tock’ sound, some of us used tongue exaggeratedly to vary the sound produced. Also, some of us would interact with each other like having a dialogue with acting.”*

## **Limitations**

There are several limitations in this study. Firstly, this is just a case study focusing on a small ensemble group, which consists of 15 people only. The sample size is small. Moreover, all participants in this study are holding a degree majoring in music. Most of them are experienced chorister though they don't have speech choir experience before. As a result, this study is not comprehensive enough as it doesn't account for participants with no choir experience before.

Secondly, this study just focuses on two speech choir pieces as a reference to explore its characteristics and benefits. In fact, there are a variety of speech choir pieces with different levels of difficulty or emphasizes on different music elements. The two pieces applied in this study may not demonstrate all the characteristics of speech choir.

Besides, the literature concerning speech choir is limited as there are no related researches before. The literature review is mainly translated from Prof. Tsang's work in Chinese. As a result, the discussions and implications drawn from this study rely much on the data collected from questionnaires and interviews.



At the same time, the data collected from questionnaires or interviews are not reliable enough. Concerning the musicianship cultivated through speech choir, it mainly depends on the self-evaluation of the participants. There are no tests in testing their rhythmic sense, articulations and improvisation skills as a way to indicate their improvement.

## **Implications and Discussions**

After the collection and analysis of the data from online questionnaires and interviews, it is affirmed that speech choir is an alternative innovative choral music activity that benefits participants. It allows participants to explore their voice and develop their musicianship skills at the same time. As indicated from results, speech choir helps participants to develop a sense of rhythm, dictions and articulations as well as improvisation skills.

Moreover, the idea of speech choir can be broadly promoted. Not many local schools have speech choir ensemble nowadays. Even local school hasn't set up a speech choir ensemble yet, music teachers can introduce the idea of speech choir during lessons. For instance, teachers can guide the class to work on a sound project. Also, it would be great if local school considers setting up a speech choir ensemble, as the cost is low. Every student can join this music-related activity without the use of instruments. At the same time, more supports should be provided to the local music teachers. For instance, the book 'Speech Choir' written by Prof. Tsang concerning the training and performance of speech choir can be spread and shared to local music teachers as it provides a detailed guide for the preparation of speech choir practice. Also, Hong Kong Arts Development Council can ask for the permission of different composers and publish teaching material consisting of a variety of speech choir scores. In this

way, students can have more exposure to different pieces of speech choir. Composers' work can also be recognized by the public.

Furthermore, apart from the Schools Speech Choir Showcase organized by the Education Bureau every year, it is recommended that more performing opportunities should be provided. There can be joint-school speech choir concert to showcase each school's hard work. Different school has different interpretations on the pieces and students can have a lot to learn from the peers. What is more, the Hong Kong Schools Music Festival can consider adding the category of speech choir as a competition item. It can provide another valuable experience in which students strive hard to achieve a high standard of musicking.

In addition, it is good that The Education University of Hong Kong offers a compulsory course 'creative musicking' for Bachelor of Education (Music) year 1 students. In this course, students are free to use their instruments to try different musicking exercises and perform. It would be better if students can be exposed to speech choir more. For example, students can form a small group and work on a speech choir piece. In this way, students can have hands-on experience of what speech choir is like. This equips them to be ready to teach speech choir at local school when there is a need. Also, it would be great if some of the small groups can go into

the community by doing demonstration in local school music workshop. It can serve as a means to promote speech choir.

### **Recommendations for further research**

The positive results in this study provide a foundation on the idea of speech choir and how speech choir might benefit the participants. Further study concerning the implementation of speech choir and the relationship between speech choir and traditional choir are suggested as follows:

- 1) A study on the implementation of speech choir in primary school or secondary school in Hong Kong
- 2) A study to compare the implementation of the speech choir in primary school and secondary school
- 3) A study to investigate whether participating in speech choir will arouse students' interest in music-related activities
- 4) A study on how speech choir practice enhance traditional choir training

To make further researches a reliable one, it is recommended that the sample size of the participants should be bigger. It would be ideal if participants don't have choir experience before. Test can be included to examine the musicianship skills that participants developed.

In conclusion, speech choir welcomes all to join in and improves the musicianship skills of participants. As speech choir receives positive feedback from the participants, it is beneficial to implement speech choir practice at The Education University of Hong Kong that nurtures future teachers. It is also valuable to promote speech choir to local primary and secondary schools. Yet, more resources have to be invested in the successful development of the speech choir.

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## Appendix

### I. Scores of Speech Choir piece

a) 餐搵餐食餐餐清 by Professor Tsang Yip Fat, Richard

Appendix

### 餐搵餐食餐餐清

Allegretto ♩ = 100 曾葉發曲

*mf*

Voice 1  
餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清 餐 餐 清 餐 餐 清 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清

Voice 2  
*mf*  
餐 搵 餐 食

Voice 3

---

V. 1  
*mp* 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清 *f* *sf*

V. 2  
餐 餐 清 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清 餐 餐 清 餐 餐 清 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清 *f* *mf*

V. 3  
餐 搵

---

V. 1  
*mf* 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清 餐 餐 清 餐 餐 清 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐

V. 2  
*mf* 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清

V. 3  
餐 食 餐 餐 清 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清 餐 餐 清 餐 餐 清 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 餐 清



13

V. 1 *mp* *sf* *sf* *f* *mf* *f* *p*  
清 食餐食餐食 食 餐 食餐食餐食餐 食 餐 餐 食 食食

V. 2 *mp* *sf* *sf* *f* *mf* *f* *p*  
食餐食餐食 餐 食 餐 食餐食餐食 餐 餐 食 食食 食食

V. 3 *mp* *sf* *sf* *f* *mf* *f*  
食餐食餐食 食 餐 食 餐 食餐食餐 食 餐 餐 食



16

V. 1 *p* *mf*  
食食 食 食 食食 食食 食 食 餐食餐食餐食餐食

V. 2 *mf*  
食 食 食餐食餐食 食餐 食餐 食餐 餐食 餐食餐食餐食餐 餐

V. 3 *p* *mf*  
食食 食食 食 食 食餐食餐食 食 餐 食餐食餐食餐 食 餐



19

V. 1 *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*  
餐餐食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐搵餐食餐搵餐 食 餐 餐 清

V. 2 *f* *mp* *mf* *mp*  
食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐搵餐食餐搵 餐食餐 搵 餐 食 餐 搵 餐

V. 3 *f* *mp* *mp*  
餐 食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐 搵 餐 食 餐搵餐食餐

24

V. 1 *mf* *f*  
餐餐搵餐餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐餐清餐餐搵餐餐食餐餐搵餐餐食餐搵餐食

V. 2 *mf* *f*  
食餐搵餐搵餐食餐搵餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐搵餐食

V. 3 *f*  
搵餐食餐餐搵餐餐食餐餐搵餐餐食餐搵餐餐食餐搵餐食餐餐清餐餐搵

27

V. 1 *ff*  
餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食

V. 2 *ff*  
餐搵餐搵餐食餐餐搵餐餐食餐餐搵餐餐食餐搵餐搵餐餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食

V. 3 *ff*  
餐餐食餐餐搵餐餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食餐搵餐食

b) In the Quiet of the Night(靜夜思夜靜) by Dr Leung Chi Hin

# *In the Quiet of the Night*

## 靜夜思夜靜

for mass participatory Creative Musicking choir

給創意樂動聲藝團

Leung Chi-hin

梁智軒

### Block 1

Timing: 0:30-1:06

**ppp** **pp** **pp**

hum

(sing in a comfort register i.e. octave lower or higher at will)

Timing: 1:16-2:20

**ff-pp**

tongue click

(use the numbers below to generate rhythm)

2 3 5 3 2 4 1 1 3 2

Timing: 2:34-3:06

**ff-pp**

Moonlight... Light... Moon... Moooooooooon...

Light...t...t..

Singer can choose to sing with normal tone or whisper tone with free choice of pitch and rhythm

Timing: 3:10-4:10

**ff-pp**

床前明月光，疑是地上霜。

Pick any three texts from the above fragments, sing them smoothly (legato) with free choice of pitch and rhythm  
You can pick another three texts any time at your will

# Block 1 (con't)

Timing: 4:10-4:46

*mf* *f* *mf*

sh  
(wind sound)

Timing: 5:00

*f*

Moonlight reflects off the front of my bed.

Recite the above poem smoothly together (once only)

Timing: 6:10-7:30

*ff-pp*

Bed my of front the off reflects moonlight

Shout or whisper the above fragments with free rhythm

Timing: 7:30-8:00

*p* *mp* *p*

hum

(sing in a comfort register i.e. octave lower or higher at will)

## *In the Quiet of the Night*

### 靜夜思夜靜

for mass participatory Creative Musicking choir

給創意樂動聲藝團

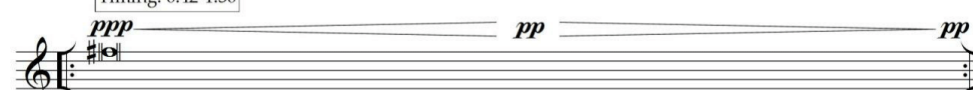
Leung Chi-hin

梁智軒

#### Block 2

Timing: 0:42-1:30

**ppp** **pp** **pp**



hum  
(sing in a comfort register i.e. octave lower or higher at will)

Timing: 1:48-2:14

**ff-pp**

tongue click



(use the numbers below to generate rhythm)

2 3 5 3 2 4 1 1 3 2

Timing: 2:20-3:16

**ff-pp**

I look up... Loooooooook... k... I... I... I... look... up... uuup... up...

Singer can choose to sing with normal tone or whisper tone with free choice of pitch and rhythm

Timing: 3:10-4:20

**ff-pp**

床前明月光，疑是地上霜。

Pick any three texts from the above fragments, sing them smoothly (legato) with free choice of pitch and rhythm  
You can pick another three texts any time at your will

## Block 2 (con't)

Timing: 4:20-5:18

*mf* *f* *mf*

sh  
(wind sound)

Timing: 5:24

*f*

Could it be frost on the ground instead?

Recite the above poem smoothly together (once only)

Timing: 6:22-7:40

*ff-pp*

Instead ground the on frost be it could

Shout or whisper the above fragments with free rhythm

Timing: 7:38-8:00

*p* *mp* *p*

hum  
(sing in a comfort register i.e. octave lower or higher at will)

## *In the Quiet of the Night*

### 靜夜思夜靜

for mass participatory Creative Musicking choir

給創意樂動聲藝團


Leung Chi-hin

梁智軒

#### Block 3

Timing: 0:00-0:52

**ppp** **pp** **pp**



hum

(sing in a comfort register i.e. octave lower or higher at will)

Timing: 1:00-2:34

**ff-pp**

tongue click



(use the numbers below to generate rhythm)

2 3 5 3 2 4 1 1 3 2

Timing: 2:52-3:24

**ff-pp**

My home... toooooown... My... my... hooooome...

My home town...

Singer can choose to sing with normal tone or whisper tone with free choice of pitch and rhythm

Timing: 3:26-4:30

**ff-pp**

舉頭望明月，低頭思故鄉。

Pick any three texts from the above fragments, sing them smoothly (legato) with free choice of pitch and rhythm  
You can pick another three texts any time at your will

### Block 3 (con't)

Timing: 4:30-5:24

sh  
(wind sound)

Timing: 5:38

*f* I look up to view the bright moon ahead.

Recite the above poem smoothly together (once only)

Timing: 6:34-7:00

*ff-pp* Ahead moon bright the view to up look I

Shout or whisper the above fragments with free rhythm

Timing: 7:00-8:00

hum  
(sing in a comfort register i.e. octave lower or higher at will)



# In the Quiet of the Night

## 靜夜思夜靜

for mass participatory Creative Musicking choir

給創意樂動聲藝團

Leung Chi-hin

梁智軒

### Block 4

Timing: 0:14-1:22

**ppp** **pp** **pp**

hum  
(sing in a comfort register i.e. octave lower or higher at will)

Timing: 1:30-2:54

**ff-pp**

tongue click

(use the numbers below to generate rhythm)

2 3 5 3 2 4 1 1 3 2

Timing: 2:00-3:10

**ff-pp**

Froooooost... onnnnn... the... the... grouuuuund...

**Frost on the ground...**

Singer can choose to sing with normal tone or whisper tone with free choice of pitch and rhythm

Timing: 3:26-4:40

**ff-pp**

舉頭望明月，低頭思故鄉。

Pick any three texts from the above fragments, sing them smoothly (legato) with free choice of pitch and rhythm  
You can pick another three texts any time at your will

# Block 4 (con't)

Timing: 4:40-5:48

*mf* *f* *mf*

sh  
(wind sound)

Timing: 5:52

*f*

Thoughts of hometown bring down my head.

Recite the above poem smoothly together (once only)

Timing: 6:48-7:20

*ff-pp*

Head my down bring hometown of thoughts

Shout or whisper the above fragments with free rhythm

Timing: 7:20-8:00

*p* *mp* *p*

hum  
(sing in a comfort register i.e. octave lower or higher at will)

## II. Script of Interview

### a) Interviewee A

‘M’ represents me while ‘A’ represents interviewee A.

M: Good morning. I am working on my honours project entitled ‘A study of Speech Choir experience in a small ensemble at tertiary education level in Hong Kong’. Thank you for your help in filling my online questionnaire as well as attending the interview today.

A: You’re welcome.

M: So let’s get started. I know it’s your first time attending speech choir practice. How does it sound interesting to you? Among all characteristics of speech choir, i.e. sound explorations on human voice, sophisticated and varied rhythm, careful articulations, clear dictions, spontaneity of improvisation, use of body movement, which one do you find interesting the most?

A: Sophisticated and mixed rhythm. Compared with the traditional choir pieces, speech choir emphasized more on the rhythm. It can be very challenging sometimes. It is also interesting to notice that the sophisticated rhythm matches the words and it can convey the meaning of the words effectively.

M: Can you share any moments that you enjoy the most during the musicking practice or performance?

A: Umm... in Prof. Tsang’s piece, we have a beatbox as the background. I like the time when more and more people joined in the improvisation by jamming ‘餐餐清’ or other creative wordings like ‘開飯啦喂’. The texture is varying.

M: It’s nice to hear that. speech choir emphasizes on different possibilities of exploring human voices. During the practice, how do you explore your voice to produce a good sound that matches the piece?

A: Yea...it is new to me. I tried to explore the sound that I seldom use. For instance, in Dr. Leung’s piece ‘I try to make variations on ‘sh’, do it like whispering sometimes and lift up the voice so as to create a calm and mysterious atmosphere.

M: Good! That’s the one of rationale of speech choir. Do you think joining speech choir trains your rhythmic sense? Why?

A: Yes. Especially doing free jamming! We rely much on the beat given by the beat box and do our jamming. I try to stress the accent of the words on the strong beat and make use of syncopation to make interesting rhythmic pattern.

M: How about dictions and articulations? Do you think joining speech choir allows you to pay more attention to the clear dictions of the words and articulations? Why?

A: Yes...they are the basics. We have to make good use of the teeth and tongue to pronounce the consonant and vowel well. The words have to be precise, like the 'c' sound in '餐', '清' or 'm' in 'moonlight'.

M: True. Then do you think joining speech choir improves your improvisation skills? Why?

A: Yes... there is a freedom in choosing different rhythmic patterns and words and say it on the spot.

M: It seems speech choir can help develop musicianship skills. Besides, Do you observe any body movements among the participants during practice and performance?

A: We were very shy at the beginning. We stood still to read the score. However, Prof. Tsang was very energetic to boost us up and get us engage more into the piece. We started to nod our heads, move our body with the beat and build rapport with other parts. I saw my peers acting while performing. Some of them frowned to express the quick use of money. Some of them put their hands in front of the mouth to express the urge for a meal!

M: Are you interested to join more speech choir activities in the future?

A: Yea.. if there are chances, I will try.

M: Do you think it is important to promote speech choir to primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong? Why?

A: Yes. It's a new choral experience. They should try it because everyone can do well.

M: As a potential music tutor, you may have a chance to teach co-curricular activities in the future. Will you consider introducing speech choir to your school? Do you think you are capable of conducting speech choir practice?

A: Maybe...but I think I can conduct speech choir practice as I have the experience of choir teaching. They are similar, as I have to focus more on the rhythm and tone colour.

## II. Script of Interview

### b) Interviewee B

‘M’ represents me while ‘B’ represents interviewee B.

M: Good morning. I am working on my honours project entitled ‘A study of speech choir experience in a small ensemble at tertiary education level in Hong Kong’. Thank you for your help in filling my online questionnaire as well as attending the interview today.

B: You’re welcome.

M: So let’s get started. I know it’s your first time attending speech choir practice. How does it sound interesting to you? Among all characteristics of speech choir, i.e. sound explorations on human voice, sophisticated and varied rhythm, careful articulations, clear dictions, spontaneity of improvisation, use of body movement, which one do you find interesting the most?

B: Sound exploration on human voice. I can try to make different sounds like whispering, pretending sound from the nature or simply shouting that I can seldom do it in traditional choir.

M: Can you share any moments that you enjoy the most during the musicking practice or performance?

B: I enjoyed the interaction with the block when practicing Dr. Leung’s piece. We work together to build up different textures. When I hear the one next to me saying moonlight softly, I will try to raise my voice in different register so as to create more variety of voice and build more layers.

M: It sounds good. Speech Choir emphasizes on different possibilities of exploring human voices. During the practice, how do you explore your voice to produce a good sound that matches the piece?

B: We have to be more open and get ourselves into the mood of the piece. I tried to use a very excited voice when saying ‘餐餐清’. I tried to shout it in a hurried way, trying to convey the message that the money earned is gone quickly!

M: Bravo! Then do you think joining speech choir trains your rhythmic sense? Why?

B: Of course! We should be sensitive to keep the pulse in order to make three parts go well together. I enjoy catching the offbeat in Prof. Tsang’s piece. The use of semiquavers on ‘餐餐清’ make the piece more exciting and intense.

M: How about dictions and articulations? Do you think joining speech choir allows you to pay more attention to the clear dictions of the words and articulations? Why?

B: Yes. Both Prof. Tsang and Dr. Leung stressed the importance of the dictions during the practice. Otherwise, the audience doesn't know what is the piece about with the murmuring voice.

M: Then do you think joining speech choir improves your improvisation skills? Why?

B: Yes. I have never expected that there would be a solo time for every participant to do improvisation. I didn't know how to do at first, and then I followed Prof. Tsang's instructions, by choosing any rhythmic patterns in the piece and expressed it freely. I gradually grasp the skills after several practices.

M: It seems speech choir can help develop many musicianship skills. Besides, Do you observe any body movements among the participants during practice and performance?

B: Ummm... let me think... yes we had good eye contact with each other. Especially during improvisation part, apart from looking at the conductor, we looked at the one who is doing the solo. When the solo finished, she looked at the next one to signal her turn. Most of us were confident to be the solo improvisation. We had enjoyable facial expression as we smiled and rise our eyebrows.

M: Are you interested to join more speech choir activities in the future?

B: Probably... I will.

M: Do you think it is important to promote speech choir to primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong? Why?

B: Yes. They just need a mouth and they can do it! I guess the kids will love it because its content is related to daily lives like a dialogue and it is playful!

M: I guess so. As a potential music tutor, you may have a chance to teach co-curricular activities in the future. Will you consider introducing speech choir to your school? Do you think you are capable of conducting speech choir practice?

B: I doubted. I can do well in performing speech choir but I still need to know about the strategies concerning teaching speech choir.

## II. Script of Interview

### b) Interviewee C

‘M’ represents me while ‘C’ represents interviewee C.

M: Good morning. I am working on my honours project entitled ‘A study of speech choir experience in a small ensemble at tertiary education level in Hong Kong’. Thank you for your help in filling my online questionnaire as well as attending the interview today.

C: You’re welcome.

M: So let’s get started. I know it’s your first time attending speech choir practice. How does it sound interesting to you? Among all characteristics of speech choir, i.e. sound explorations on human voice, sophisticated and varied rhythm, careful articulations, clear dictions, spontaneity of improvisation, use of body movement, which one do you find interesting the most?

C: Sound exploration on human voice. I used to sing in choir and it requires a sound that has resonance and blends with the group. But participating in speech choir allows me to use many different sounds.

M: Can you share any moments that you enjoy the most during the musicking practice or performance?

C: During the free jamming, we freely express ourselves. I like the moment we build rapport and can end the jamming and start the piece again successfully.

M: Yea. Speech choir emphasizes on different possibilities of exploring human voices. During the practice, how do you explore your voice to produce a good sound that matches the piece?

C: I try to imagine the wind sound and do the ‘sh’ accordingly, with different volume like the wind flowing near and far.

M: Good. Then do you think joining speech choir trains your rhythmic sense? Why?

C: Yes... for the first time looking at the score, I focused a lot on the rhythm, as I didn’t need to concern about the pitch. Given the basic pulse, I worked hard to read the words aloud rhythmically. It is interesting to note that despite the complicated rhythm notations on the score, it is easy to follow as the words go naturally with the rhythm like a daily dialogue.

M: How about dictions and articulations? Do you think joining speech choir allows you to pay more attention to the clear dictions of the words and articulations? Why?

C: Sure. Articulations can be done well when all participants pay attention to the markings on the score and get into the mood of the piece. I am aware of the staccato and accent so as to highlight the articulations in the context of the piece and make it more interesting.

M: Then do you think joining speech choir improves your improvisation skills? Why?

C: Yes. It trained me to spontaneously pick a word and vary the volume or rhythm as I like. Of course, it has to be matched with the setting of piece.

M: It seems speech choir can help develop many musicianship skills. Besides, do you observe any body movements among the participants during practice and performance?

C: Ummm...I noticed that some of us would create our own movements as we went along the piece. When doing 'sh' to higher pitch, some of us would tiptoe, look up or rise our eyebrows. When doing 'tic tock' sound, some of us used tongue exaggeratedly to vary the sound produced. Also, some of us would interact with each other like having a dialogue with acting.

M: Are you interested to join more speech choir activities in the future?

C: Yes.

M: Do you think it is important to promote speech choir to primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong? Why?

C: Yes. It will be great if local students experience speech choir apart from traditional choir that has a higher demand on the voice range. They can develop many musicianship skills as mentioned throughout the process.

M: Last but not least, as a potential music tutor, you may have a chance to teach co-curricular activities in the future. Will you consider introducing speech choir to your school? Do you think you are capable of conducting speech choir practice?

C: I think I can do it. As I experience it before, I will put the experience into practice. And do it with the students.