CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 RATIONALE

Songs are regarded as an essential part of human life, as presented in Huy Le (1999) that humans use songs to express their thoughts and feelings, and no culture thrives without songs. In addition, songs are perceived as the soul of human cultures. Songs are employed by humans everywhere; in the car, on the bus, at home and at work (Aniel, 2006). Songs can be used in a variety of ways in many fields and purposes. In the field of education, songs also play a vital role and are widely used for educational purposes such as to increase vocabulary, to teach pronunciation, and to develop listening, as shown in the study of Shatakser (2001) and Huy Le (1999). Some experts agree that there is the relationship between songs and language which enhance each other and help motivate students to learn (Klauer, 1999; Murphey, 2002; Suzanne, 2000). In the study of Suzanne (2000), music and songs helped improve the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Although Shatakser (2001) states that grammar used in songs is weak; that is, it presents non-standard grammar, it is, however, a fairly common use in daily life in which prescriptive grammar is not much concerned. According to Schoepp (2003), that kind of grammar can expose students to real world language which is presented in the form of colloquial English in most songs. Songs are considered authentic listening materials used in class (Malinee Thanajaro, 2000) that are worth using as the media in teaching. Apart from those benefits, Brown (2006) suggests that songs also have an impact on human psychological well-being. She cites the study of E. Mickel and C. Mickel that songs have a powerfully stimulating effect on the mental and/or emotional state of a listener and people listen to music to fulfill both psychological and physical needs. Songs can also create a relaxing atmosphere to be optimal for learning. It can be seen that technological advances such as ipod and MP3 players at the present time grow rapidly and help support easier access to songs and entertainment (E. Mickel & C. Mickel, 2002). This shows that songs are generally employed through the hi-technological media at this time. Since songs are widely used in EFL and ESL class

for the great merit of them, students' opinions and their background should also be considered in selecting songs and activities for the class to be more effective.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As mentioned earlier, a number of research studies state that songs are good authentic materials to teach a variety of aspects of English. In EFL class at Naresuan University, songs are also employed and supplemented in some lessons for some activities. It seemed that most students enjoyed those activities. However, the real opinions of them concerning songs were still not known. In addition, this study attempted to confirm and reveal students' opinions about using songs in class to benefit teaching and learning.

1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The result of the study will contribute to teaching English concerning the use of songs. It will benefit teachers to gain more knowledge in selecting songs and designing materials and activities concerning songs that are effective in teaching and suit students' interest. The findings can be used for considering information when selecting songs and when songs are used as supplementary or parts of activities in class according to students' interest and views.

1.4 PURPOSES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to survey the opinion of first year students about using English songs in EFL class.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

The study was to answer the following question

1. What are the opinions of first year students at Naresuan University about using English songs to enhance language learning?

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study was done only with the subjects chosen from first year students studying Foundations of English 2 (001112) in the second semester in the academic year 2007 at Naresuan University. The subjects took Foundation of English 1 (001111) in the previous semester. From the total population of 4,420, 300 students from 5 faculties, Faculty of Engineering (majoring in Industrial Engineering), Humanities (majoring in Korean, Chinese, Linguistics and Thai), Agriculture Natural Resources and Environment (majoring in Geography and Industrial Biotechnology), Social sciences (majoring in dual program; history and tourism), Management and Information Sciences (majoring in Mass Communication) were selected as the subjects of the study since the researcher took charge of them and taught them Foundations of English 2 (001112). Since the subjects were selected in a purposive way, the result may not be generalized to other groups with other settings and circumstances.

1.7 BASIC ASSUMPTION

It is assumed that every informant sincerely and honestly responded to all items in the questionnaire.

1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Songs refer to only English songs which have a short piece of music with words for singing.

2. EFL refers to English as a Foreign Language where English is taught as subject in schools but not used as a medium of instruction in education nor as a language of communication (e.g. in government, business or industry) within the country.

1.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter One: It provides an introduction of the study including rationale, statement of the problem, significance of the study, purpose of the study, research question, scope and limitation of the study, basic assumption, and definition of terms.

Chapter Two: It presents research reviews and literature relevant to the study; namely songs related to humans, the relationship of songs and language learning in the EFL classroom, the importance of music and songs in language learning, theoretical support for using songs in EFL classroom, activities concerning songs in class, and criteria in selecting songs.

Chapter Three: It describes research methodology used. It includes subjects, the construction of instrument, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

Chapter Four: It presents the findings of the study about students' background, students' experience related to English songs, and students' opinions in using songs to promote language learning.

Chapter Five: It presents conclusions, discussions and recommendations for EFL teachers and further research.

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