

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter reviews literature related to songs, and focuses on using songs in class to enhance language learning. The review is divided into 6 sections: (1) songs related to humans (2) the relationship of songs and language learning in the EFL classroom (3) the importance of music and songs in language learning (4) theoretical support for using songs in the EFL classroom (5) activities concerning songs in class and (6) criteria in electing songs.

2.1 SONGS RELATED TO HUMANS

Songs are regarded as an essential part of human life. Huy Le (1999) reports that humans use songs to express their thoughts and feelings, and no culture is successful without songs. Murphey (2002) supports that there is no human society without its music, which establish a powerful force for both cultural cohesion and identity, and for fulfillment of individuality. Songs are also perceived as the soul of human culture. Songs and humans are involved everywhere as hearing occurs in the car, on the bus, at home and even at work (Aniel, 2006). It can be seen that songs and humans cannot be separated.

2.2 THE RELATIONSHIP OF SONGS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Apart from daily life, music is relevant to language learning in the EFL class. Songs can facilitate language learning and motivate students in the classrooms (Klauer, 1999; Suzanne, 2000; Murphey, 2002). Songs play a vital role and are widely used for educational purposes such as to increase vocabulary, to teach pronunciation, and to better listening, as shown in the study of Huy Le (1999) and Shatakser (2001). Some experts agree that there is a relationship between songs and language where each enhances the other and helps motivate students to learn (Klauer, 1999; Suzanne, 2000; Murphey, 2002). Many educators believe that the use of songs in class is a fun

way and makes students more relaxed (Huy Le, 1999; Murphey, 2002; Schoepp, 2003). According to the study of Suzanne (2000), music and songs help improve all four skills; listening, speaking, reading and writing, although Shatakser (2001) states that grammar used in songs is ineffective since it presents non-standard grammar. For that point, in contrast, ungrammatical structures presented in songs can be real world languages that people understand and accept as a major source of English outside the classrooms. Based on Schoepp (2003), songs help expose students to real world language that is presented in the form of colloquial English in most songs. In the study of Kesarin Phanarangsarn (2000) regarding the slight effectiveness of teaching grammar by using songs, it is mentioned that songs do not cover all the grammar content of a curriculum. However, Cullen (1999) believes that it is the language resource that almost all students love. Moreover, Buppa Janjaroen (2001) presents that through the words of songs, students can learn about the cultures of native-speaking countries and gain insight into those cultures. By using songs, Murphey (2002) points out there are two advantages of music and songs in relation to language learning; that is, they are highly memorable, and they are motivating. Songs are considered authentic listening materials used in class (Malinee Thanajaro, 2000) that are worth using as media in teaching. Apart from those benefits, Brown (2006) suggests that songs also have an impact on their 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. As in the teaching method developed by the Bulgarian psychologist, Lozanov (1979), called "Suggestopedia" or "Desuggestopedia", songs and music are used to 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 makes it easier to access songs and entertainment (E. Mickel and C. Mickel). This shows that songs are generally employed through the hi-technological media at this time. As mentioned earlier, it can be seen that songs can be implemented efficiently in language learning in EFL classrooms to help learners develop a variety of skills, and highly used in everyday life as well.

2.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF MUSIC AND SONGS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

According to Murphey (2002), songs stick in people's minds and become part of human life and are easily employed in the classroom. Songs are regarded as adolescent motherese which is a simplified language that adults employ with infants and a highly affective behavior. As growing up, the amount of child-directed speech or motherese tends to decrease, so songs as affective attention can replace it. It can be seen that music and songs are hard to escape since they appear more and more everywhere around the world: in operating theaters, restaurants and cafes, shopping malls, at sports events, in our cars, etc. In terms of "the songs stuck in my head" phenomenon, it is the echoing in our minds of the last song that we heard after leaving our car, a restaurant, etc., and can be both enjoyable and sometimes unnerving and can support the idea that songs work on short and long term memory. In general, songs contain lots of repetition. Language in songs in general is simple and conversational like teachers look for in sample texts. Songs may greatly activate the repetition mechanism of the language acquisition device and certainly appears to do so with children who learn songs almost without effort. Hence, they are affective and more motivating than other texts. This is also supported by Domoney and Harris (1993) who said that the repetition of songs helps promote automatization of colloquial language. By singing along, students can perfect and practice their pronunciation, and songs allow students to concentrate very carefully on each subtle sound until they get it right (Condon, 2006). Songs can also be chosen for individual purposes to appropriate listeners because most pop songs do not have precise people, places or time references. Practically, songs are short, self-contained texts, recordings, and films. They are easy to handle in a lesson for language teachers. Songs are relaxing and fun, and encourage harmony within oneself and within a group. They can also sustain cultures, religions, patriotism and revolutions. It is possible that songs actually precede and aid the development of speech in homo-sapiens although modern technology has universalized access to songs. Singing vocalization is significantly easier than speech. Songs also seems to aid the development of language in young children. A growing body of many research studies reveals that musical babbling

produced by infants and returned by parents is very crucial in the development of language in young children.

2.4 THEORETICAL SUPPORT FOR USING SONGS IN EFL CLASSROOM

A number of research studies have been interested in the role of songs in language learning for the following reasons:

Linguistic reasons and affective reasons for using songs in language learning are influenced by Krashen's monitor hypotheses; the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. For linguistic reasons, it is relevant to the input hypothesis proposed by Krashen who believes that the comprehensible input or $i + 1$; that is, if the input contains forms and structures that are a bit higher than the learner's current level of competence in the language, then comprehension and acquisition will occur (Lightbown & Spada, 2003). Through songs, vocabulary is incidentally acquired and the amount of comprehensible input is proportionate with the amount of vocabulary acquired. In terms of affective reason, the affective filter hypothesis proposed by Krashen is mentioned. The affective filter is an imaginary barrier that prevents learners from acquiring language from the available input. The filter will be up when the learners are stressed or have no motivation and it will be down when the learners are relaxed and motivated (Krashen, 1985, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2003, P. 41). Songs are one of the methods to achieve a weak affective filter, promote language learning, and teachers can provide a positive atmosphere by using songs for students. Song activities create a warm, relaxing and receptive state for learners. There are additional theoretical supports mentioned by Schoepp (2003) about cognitive reasons. Cognitive reasons are based on developing automaticity. Automaticity is defined as a component of language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses. Songs can help automatize the language development processes. Gatlinton and Segalowitz (1988, P. 476) state students should be placed in an environment in which it is appropriate to use target utterances in a genuinely communicative fashion. The nature of songs is fairly repetitive and consistently supports automaticity. Another important area reveals multiple intelligences which is relevant to using songs in the EFL classroom.

According to the theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Gardner (1993), people possess eight distinct intelligences to a different degree and not all of them are equally developed. One of the categories is musical intelligence which involves being able to sense melody, rhythm and pitch as well as the ability to recognize songs and other musical compositions in order to reproduce them with varying degrees of perfection and improvise in simple melody. He describes the way people demonstrate different skills and talents while trying to learn. In addition, teachers need to provide various approaches to meet individual students' areas of strength in order to experience more successful instruction. Based on Suzanne (2000), music and songs can be used as a means for language learning that is consistent with multiple intelligences' theory.

2.5 ACTIVITIES CONCERNING SONGS IN CLASS

There are many song activities to do in class as suggested by Voblikova (2002). Those activities are for many purposes as in the following:

Listening and Oral Activities

The feature of suprasegmental; that is, how rhythm, stress, and intonation effect the pronunciation of English in context are contextually introduced in songs, Students can discover the natural English speech through songs. Students from any language background can benefit from a choral or individual reading of the lyrics of the songs to practice the natural reductions that are common in spoken English since, there are words that are more stressed than others in each sentence in English. In each word with more than one syllable, there is one syllable that is more stressed as well. The other words and syllables are made less important by using reduction. This means that they are shorter, quieter, and lower in pitch (tone) than the stressed words and syllables. Students may conclude orally the action or theme of songs or make oral presentations about songs or musicians, playing musical selections for the class. To involve the whole class, students can complete handouts about each presentation, or answering questions about the topics, something new they learned and something they enjoyed.

Reading and Writing Activities

Students can fill in the blanks before, during or after listening to songs. Then they can check to see whether their word choices make sense semantically, even if they did not catch the exact word used. This encourages building the important skill of guessing and predicting. This activity is usually done by deleting words at predetermined intervals, such as every 5th or 7th word. However, words can be cut instead for practicing a target grammar point, e.g. past tense verbs, prepositions or compound nouns, or to identify key words. Another popular activity is to separate the lyrics into lines and have students put them in the correct order when they listen to the song. This can be done individually or in small groups. It may be necessary to play the songs several times. Once the lines of the songs have been arranged in order, the songs can be played once more as students read or sing along. Alternatively, the class can be divided into teams with identical sets of strips and compete to see which group can put the strips in the correct order first. For short songs, students can work in small groups to write the words of a song. The process of putting the lyrics together as a group involves making decisions about word order, verb tense, and parts of speech. It also builds the teamwork skills so important to the workplace and community. When the lyric sheet is handed out, the groups can compare what they heard and wrote with the actual words. Adult students enjoy writing responses to songs, both in class or at home. Possible responses include topics comparing music in the students' country with music in the English speaking countries. This assignment draws upon the knowledge and experiences that adult ESL learners bring to language learning and provides a known context to compare and contrast, often a difficult skill for beginning writers. Many songs tell a story, and these stories can be rewritten or retold to practice narrative or summarizing skills or direct and indirect speech. Students can also complete writing prompts or answer questions from the point of view of the narrators or other characters in a song.

Vocabulary Building Activities

Pop songs are written to be easily understood and enjoyed. They tend to use a high number of repetitions that have emotional content. This makes them strong choices for word study or for reinforcing words already learned through written

means. If a series of songs is to be employed, students can be paired and given a song to teach the class. However, the songs may also have idioms in them that might be difficult to explain, depending on the level of the students.

Cultural Knowledge Activities

Songs can be employed to introduce and discuss culture. They are full of information about human relations, ethics, customs, history, humor, and regional and cultural differences. A song can be part of a lesson that also contains poems, video footage, or still photographs.

2.6 CRITERIA IN SELECTING SONGS

Songs to be employed in class for a variety of activities should have some characteristics that are suitable for students and most beneficial for learning. Lems (2001, p.1) and Poppleton (2001, p. 2 as cited in Kannika Martom, 2004) suggest the way to select songs to implement in class.

Songs should be screened in advance in case of possibly problematic content, e.g. explicit language, references to violent acts or sex, or inappropriate religious allusions. The lyrics should not be submerged in the instrumental music. It should be clear and loud. The language load for songs should fit students' interests, their proficiency level and their age. For Kavaliauskiene (2003), to foster autonomy in learners, students should have a chance to choose and prepare their own activities using songs. Saricoban and Esen (2000) also agree that it is beneficial to allow learners to take part in the selection of songs. Songs that are either repeated frequently, tell a story, give comments about life, or introduce a cultural theme are effective ones because they are regarded as authentic and meaningful materials (Saricoban & Esen, 2000). According to Lems (2001), students are often strongly motivated to learn the lyric of a new pop song or an old favorite one that they have heard and never understood before. Song lyrics are available on the internet and many recordings contain lyric sheets.