

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This chapter is composed of five sections: (a) summary of major findings, (b) discussion of the findings, and (c) discussion of the conclusions. The first section provides a reorientation to the study, including the methodology, and reiterates results of data analyses. The second section reviews the findings and their meaning. The third section provides a discussion of this researcher's interpretation of the findings. The fourth section examines the study's methodology and proposes how the study might be improved in this regard. The last section presents recommendations for future research in the development of using songs in learning English vocabulary and concluding remarks. A summary concludes the chapter.

5.1 Summary of the Major Findings

The results of the current study continue to add to our understanding of the effects of using songs to enhance English vocabulary achievement of Prathomsuksa 5 students. As stated earlier, the purposes of this study were to construct and test the efficiency of the English songs for Prathomsuksa 5 students, and to compare the vocabulary achievement of students before and after treatment by using songs. The samples consisted of 26 Prathomsuksa 5 students, selected by simple random sampling from 2 classes at Khetkarthangsongkroh 5 School under Buriram Educational Service Area Office 1 in the first semester, 2010 academic year. The data

students, 10 song lesson plans, and English vocabulary achievement tests. . The statistics used in analyzing the data were mean, standard deviation, and Dependent Samples t-test. The findings revealed that the using English songs to enhance English vocabulary achievement of Prathomsuksa 5 students had an efficiency of 85.00/88.36 which was higher than the established requirement, and the Prathomsuksa 5 students who learned by using songs after learning had higher achievement than before learning at the .01 level of statistical significance.

In order to investigate the use of songs to enhance English vocabulary achievement of Prathomsuksa 5 students in a wide range of dimensions, the present study attempts to address two research questions which are reiterated below for convenience.

1. Do CD English songs improve Prathomsuksa 5 students' English vocabulary learning?
2. Are there any significant differences between the pre-test and post-test scores?

In this final chapter, the researcher discusses the results of each research question above which were presented in the previous chapter. In addition, based on the findings and the discussion, the implications for research and practice are provided. Lastly, this chapter ends with the suggestions for further studies and the conclusion of this research study.

The results presented in the previous chapter seemed to confirm the hypothesis that there is a link between the Thai primary students' using songs to enhance English achievement. Even so, further discussions of some findings are needed. In the

following sections, the results of the study will be interpreted, related to previous research and checked against existing theory.

5.2 Songs Improvement of Prathomsuksa 5 Students' English

Vocabulary Learning

Overall, the using English songs to enhance English vocabulary achievement of Prathomsuksa 5 students had an efficiency of 85.00/88.36 which was higher than the established requirement.

It is also possible that the song intervention was not intense enough, providing merely extra exposure to the target words, but not enough to really learn the new vocabulary as stated by McKeown and Beck (2004). While McKeown & Beck's (2004) study was a quasi-experimental design, and therefore different from the present study, their findings indicate that perhaps the breadth and depth of the instruction in the present study was not enough. In the same way, songs benefit from talking about what they are learning as it relates to their own funds of knowledge and their own background knowledge about a particular topic, as was concluded in Hinrichs' study in 2009 of song vocabulary knowledge with children. A future study might benefit from including a speaking and discussing portion of each cycle to let students discuss the meanings of the words among themselves more thoroughly, which may have added more depth to the song vocabulary instruction than what occurred in the present study.

Another consideration with regard to vocabulary knowledge is the level of "knowing" a word's meaning. The present study looked at how well the student knew the song words after learning about the words for ten songs. Future research

exploring the level of “knowing” would benefit classroom teachers’ instruction. Graphic organizers, making connections of synonyms and antonyms, or classifying words in other ways may allow songs to know the word more completely (Phillips, Foote, & Harper. 2008).

Research exists improving explicit vocabulary instruction and an increase in song vocabulary knowledge. The results of the present study were consistent with the Curtis and Longo (2001) study. Both the present study and Curtis and Longo’s (2001) study are examples of how intentional teaching of selected song words while providing multiple types of information and multiple exposures to those words characterizes effective song vocabulary instruction (Blachowicz et. al. 2006).

Although most research regarding vocabulary improvement indicates early intervention is best (Chall, Jacobs & Baldwin. 1990), educators in schools with large populations have to be mindful of the students who may not enter a school until fifth grade. These students must be provided every instructional opportunity to prepare for middle school. Very often, explicit instruction of vocabulary wanes in the late-elementary years, and intermediate-grade students are expected to learn new vocabulary through incidental exposure like wide reading. Incidental exposure for learning vocabulary through songs is not enough for young learners (Wesche & Paribakht. 2000) and adults, and explicit instruction of song vocabulary is necessary.

The present study provided explicit song vocabulary instruction of 10 songs. This explicit instruction was effective in increasing participants’ song vocabulary knowledge. It is important to remember that, with vocabulary instruction, all instruction helps (Blachowicz & Fisher. 2002), and educators have to start somewhere.

Martin-Chang and Levy (2005) trained students on a set of words and drilled the meanings of these words, and the reading rates of the students improved. In the present study, the students had four days of instruction on the set of ten songs, including drawing a visual representation of the words and playing a word game, which resulted in improvements in their words per minute from pretest to posttest. The results in these two studies differed because Martin-Chang and Levy had 48 fourth-grade students learning high-frequency words (Tier One Words), whose meanings may be easier to learn because they are more common than the Tier Two words learned by the fifth graders in the present study.

5.3 Differences between the Pretest and Posttest Students' Mean Scores

From the results of the English comprehensive test, it is not surprising that the using songs after learning had higher achievement than before learning at the .01 level of statistical significance as this also corroborates the results found in others' studies such as Kakir's (2000) and Phanchan's (2002). The use of song seems to be the easiest one for the underachievers to master as it requires relatively less cognitive efforts and specific knowledge. However, using songs to enhance vocabulary are used mainly by all the students in Dee's (2003) study. The reason behind the comparatively high perceived usefulness of song strategies is mainly due to the fact that new vocabulary can usually be stored in one's short-term memory after several repetitions of it. Therefore, the subjects who had experienced this found it as effective, though it is doubtful in its effectiveness in long-term consolidation of the vocabulary knowledge and in turn whether this can facilitate the learners' vocabulary range and language proficiency is uncertain. One thing to note is that the subjects

favored doing the repetitions in mind rather than saying aloud the words or writing the words repeatedly. This also reflects the learning style of this group of learners.

Besides using songs, linking the word to a Thai word with similar sound predominates the use of other vocabulary learning strategy among the subjects in contrast to their rare use of association strategies. It is found that inexperienced language learners are bound up in the orthographic and phonological aspects of vocabulary (Nation, 1990). Temporary phonological encoding and storage skills are involved in learning new words. Oxford and Scarcella (1994) suggest that “representation of the novel sound sequence of a new word in phonological short-term memory promotes its longer term consolidation both for later articulation and as an entity with which meaning can be associated”. This explains the mechanism of the subjects in their vocabulary learning process. Most of them try to represent the new L2 vocabulary with a familiar word in their L1, that is of similar sound and store the representation in their phonological short-term memory for the long-term vocabulary consolidation later on.

On the other hand, the relatively higher demand of the users’ cognitive resource may cause the infrequent use of the other association strategies like keyword techniques and linking the word to an image or storylines. The lower proficient learners are probably unable to apply such strategies without specific training.

Therefore, it does not make sense to say that strategies that involve deeper processing are less useful to the low achievers as the learners are actually lack of the knowledge and skills to apply the strategies.

6.4 Pedagogical Implications

The researcher has touched upon pedagogical implications of each finding in this study as she went along. This section will be reiterating some of the most important implications that the researcher believes are particularly relevant to Thai EFL learners at the tertiary level.

The discussion above suggests the course effected a change in students' awareness of song vocabulary acquisition and their attitude, bringing about an increase in motivation. At this point, they were committed and ready to take action to enlarge their vocabulary but whether the intention would be enacted is in question. Despite this, instruction on song vocabulary learning strategies is an impetus which initiates learning. If the concern is not on what learners actually do, but what they can do – the capacity “for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making and independent learning” (Little, 1991: 4), the researcher will argue that strategy instruction partially succeeds in sowing the seeds of autonomy, exemplified in Murphey's (1990) increasing metacognitive knowledge. In his diaries, he consistently expressed his wish to continue using the strategies learnt; he assessed these strategies to see what was the best for his learning; he started to plan what to do and most important of all, he knew he should learn new words on his own. For Lo and Li (1998), their strategy knowledge grew, though not significantly, and their motivation increased but it could be transient. Like Murphey (1990), they wanted to make continual effort, but for guessing from context and analyzing affixes only. When it came to strategies which could consume much of their time, they declined to form any plan to practice them. Despite this, the course opened them up to strategies they barely knew beforehand and let them reflect on what would be best for themselves.

They realized the importance of being proactive, only that their locus of control seemed weak at this stage.

In brief, the promotion of learner autonomy is a challenging task. Vocabulary instruction can develop learners' metacognition to take responsibility for their own learning. However, it may also end up in failure when its effect is undercut by a myriad of unfavorable factors like the learners' own values of learning and their context of learning. The difficulty is what can be done to make these factors harmonious to the development of autonomy.

5.5 Suggestions for Future Research

The following recommendations were based on the finding resulting from the study:

The influential powers of song are beyond the scope of this paper. Very little research has been done to provide information about the way song instruction can benefit literacy instruction. More research on the variety of ways that song can enrich literacy should be conducted and teachers should explore ways to incorporate song into literacy instruction.

Future studies about the use of song to repeatedly read text could be done over a longer span of time, and include a no contact control group to examine the benefits of this practice. Additionally, engagement with text could be measured by documentation of each reading attempt for a single song text. For students to be motivated to repeatedly read song text they need to be interested in learning the song. Research examining the qualities and characteristics that make a song worth repeatedly reading should be considered.

If you are going to use repeated reading to improve reading fluency and comprehension, use song text as well. It is fun, easy and effective. Teach songs, give the students a copy of the texts and just see what happens. They will read it and doing so may lead to measurable academic achievement.

5.6 Concluding Remarks

Both teachers and students agree that use of songs hardly has a place in teaching English in primary schools in Thailand. At the same time they emphasize that learning songs in English could play a significant role in vocabulary growth in the target language. They suggest that using songs in teaching practice could be a motivating factor for students in their learning experiences, but lack of materials in English and music courses and teachers' deficiencies in music education make using songs difficult in primary schools. Majority of the students and teachers who participated in this study stressed the importance of the contributions of music to vocabulary teaching. Although the students in the study are 4th and 5th graders, their ideas and comments on the current practices in ELT are meaningful and original. In addition, teachers emphasized that they had no facilities and devices such as VCD, DVD and printed materials in terms of using songs in teaching English.

The series of activities that can be developed from the songs can offer a great deal of advantages in promoting the learning of English by stimulating students' interest and enhancing students' involvement. It is also important that language teachers should be creative and innovative in their teaching practices. Using songs in the classroom they can deviate occasionally from the routines and do something refreshing and different in the classroom. This does not require too much effort to

find a song. This means students' participation in the lesson. In addition, several techniques can be incorporated into English language teaching with the songs used. Songs can bring about communicative aspects of language teaching in our language classrooms. With songs, successful and enthusiastic learning can be provided.

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