

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Research Background

The use of music, particularly song-based approaches, has gained increasing attention in English language teaching, especially in the context of English for Young Learners (EYL). Young learners tend to learn languages more effectively through activities that involve rhythm, repetition, movement, and enjoyment. Song-based approaches, with their melodic patterns and repetitive structures, are therefore considered suitable instructional tools for supporting language learning in primary education. As a result, songs are frequently used in English classrooms at the elementary school level.

Previous studies have demonstrated that song-based approaches can support young learners' pronunciation and vocabulary development while fostering a more engaging and enjoyable classroom atmosphere (Houlahan & Tacka, 2015; Goh & Taib, 2016). Through musical activities, learners can practise pronunciation, vocabulary, and basic grammatical patterns in meaningful and memorable ways. The rhythm and repetition of songs facilitate language retention and help children internalise new language forms more naturally. In addition, music has been found to lower learners' anxiety and create a positive classroom environment that enhances motivation and participation (Murphey, 1992; Medina, 1993). These findings suggest that song-based approaches function not merely as entertaining activities but as pedagogical tools in English teaching for young learners.

Despite their widespread use, the pedagogical value of song-based approaches depends largely on how teachers perceive and implement them. Teachers may regard songs as effective instructional tools, as motivational strategies, or simply as supplementary activities to create a pleasant classroom atmosphere. Since teachers' beliefs significantly influence instructional decisions,

understanding what teachers believe about the use of song-based approaches becomes essential in examining how such activities are positioned within English for Young Learners classrooms. Teachers' beliefs shape their choices of materials, instructional strategies, and the extent to which songs are aligned with learning objectives (Borg, 2003; Pajares, 1992).

In addition to teachers' beliefs, students' perceptions also play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of song-based approaches. Students may experience songs as enjoyable, motivating, and helpful for learning, or they may perceive them differently depending on classroom conditions and instructional delivery. Exploring students' perceptions provides valuable insight into how song-based activities are experienced in practice and whether they support engagement and language development from the learners' perspective.

Although research on song-based approaches in language teaching continues to expand, many studies primarily emphasise learning outcomes rather than examining teachers' beliefs and students' perceptions simultaneously. Studies that specifically investigate how teachers conceptualise the role of songs and how students interpret their classroom use remain limited, particularly in elementary school contexts. This gap highlights the need for research that explores both teacher and student perspectives in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the pedagogical use of song-based approaches in EYL settings.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the teacher's beliefs regarding the use of song-based approaches and examining students' perceptions of these instructional practices in an elementary school context in Thailand. English is taught as a foreign language in Thailand, similar to Indonesia, where English for Young Learners faces challenges related to curriculum constraints, limited resources, and the need for age- and culturally appropriate teaching materials (Cameron, 2001; Musthafa, 2010; Zein, 2017). Situated within this Thai context, the study seeks to provide contextual insights that may inform similar English for Young Learners practices in Indonesia. This study does not aim to conduct a direct

empirical comparison between Thailand and Indonesia, but rather to offer transferable insights relevant to comparable EFL contexts.

## **B. Research Questions**

This research focuses on the teaching and learning of English among elementary school students. It examines two issues. First, it examines the strategies teachers employ when teaching English to young learners through a song-based approach. Second, it identifies the factors that influence the teaching of English to elementary school students. Related to these issues, the following questions arise:

1. What beliefs does the teacher hold regarding the use of song-based approaches in teaching English to young learners?
2. How do the students perceive the use of song-based approaches in their English for Young Learners (EYL) lessons?

## **C. Research Purposes**

Based on the research questions, this study aims to explore the teacher's beliefs regarding the use of song-based approaches in teaching English to young learners and to examine students' perceptions of the implementation of song-based activities in their EYL lessons. The study focuses on how the teacher perceives the pedagogical value of songs as instructional tools and how students experience and interpret the use of songs in their English learning process. Furthermore, the findings are expected to provide relevant insights for the Indonesian context, where English for Young Learners faces comparable challenges related to curriculum demands, limited resources, and the need for age-appropriate and culturally appropriate teaching materials.

## **D. Research Significances**

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of the role of song-based approaches in English for Young Learners by examining teachers' beliefs and students' perceptions within an EFL context. By exploring how teachers conceptualise the pedagogical value of songs and how students experience their

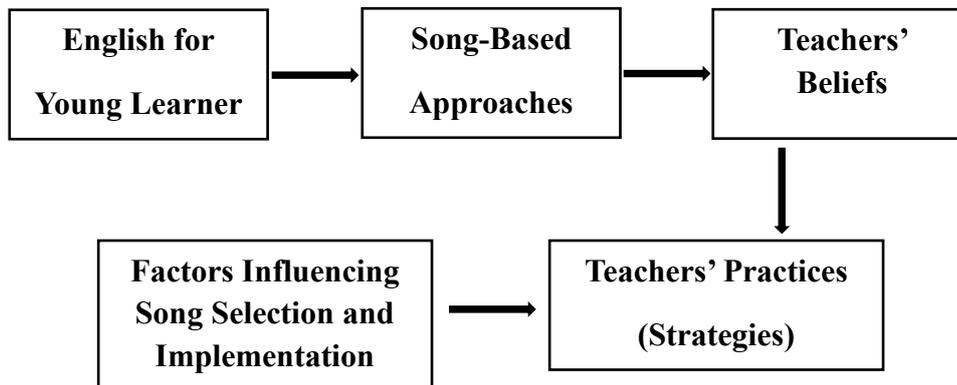
classroom use, this study enriches discussions on teacher cognition and learner perspectives in language education. Practically, the findings provide English teachers with valuable insights into how song-based approaches are perceived both from the teachers' and students' viewpoints. Understanding teachers' beliefs may help educators reflect on their instructional decisions, while awareness of students' perceptions can support more responsive and meaningful classroom practices. Furthermore, the study offers contextual insights that may inform English teaching practices in similar educational settings, particularly in Indonesian elementary schools facing comparable challenges.

### **E. Research Scope**

This study will investigate 5th-grade English teachers' beliefs regarding the effectiveness of a song-based approach for enhancing language acquisition and student engagement in Thai elementary schools. It will explore the specific strategies teachers use to integrate a song-based approach into their language instruction, including song selection, adaptation, and implementation. In addition, the study will identify the challenges teachers face when using a song-based approach and the strategies they employ to address them.

### **F. Conceptual Framework**

This concept emphasises the importance of social connection and active learning in the learning process. The framework will examine how song-based methods facilitate group learning and help students utilise music to create meaning.



*Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework 1*

presents the relationship between English for Young Learners, song-based approaches, teachers' beliefs and practices, and factors influencing classroom implementation.

- a. **English for Young Learners:** English for Young Learners refers to English teaching in elementary school contexts that requires developmentally appropriate, engaging, and child-centred instruction. At this level, learning focuses on building basic language exposure, motivation, and positive attitudes rather than linguistic mastery. Understanding young learners' characteristics is essential for selecting suitable instructional approaches.
- b. **Song-Based Approaches:** Song-based approaches involve the purposeful use of song-based approach as instructional tools in English teaching for young learners. Song-based approach are selected and integrated into lessons to support language learning through rhythm, repetition, and meaningful exposure. These approaches are used to enhance engagement and support instructional objectives, rather than merely serving as entertainment.
- c. **Teachers' Beliefs:** Teachers' beliefs refer to teachers' perceptions and understandings regarding the instructional value of the song-based approach in English teaching. These beliefs influence how teachers view the role of the song-based approach in supporting language learning and guide their instructional decisions. Teachers' beliefs are shaped by professional knowledge, experiences, and classroom contexts.

- d. **Teachers' Practice (Strategies):** Teachers' practices describe how song-based approaches are implemented in the classroom, including the frequency of song use and the strategies employed during lessons. These practices reflect the application of teachers' beliefs and their adaptation to classroom conditions. Song integration varies depending on instructional goals and teaching contexts.
- e. **Factors Influencing Song Selection and Implementation:** Factors influencing song selection and implementation include students' characteristics, curriculum demands, time constraints, classroom management, and available resources. These factors interact with teachers' beliefs and practices in shaping how song-based approaches are applied in the classroom. Understanding these factors helps explain variations in implementation across contexts.

## G. Previous Studies

Previous studies have examined the use of song-based approach in English language teaching, particularly in relation to teachers' beliefs, practices, and perceptions of song-based learning. These studies provide important insights into how song-based approach are used as instructional tools in teaching English to young learners across different educational contexts.

Zulfa, Amalia, Bahari, and Akmal (2019) investigated teachers' perceived benefits and limitations of using song-based approach in English language classrooms. Employing a qualitative research design, the study collected data through open-ended interviews with experienced English teachers. The findings revealed that teachers viewed song-based approach as effective tools for increasing learner motivation and engagement, as well as for supporting vocabulary presentation and pronunciation practice. However, teachers also reported several challenges, including limited instructional time, classroom management issues during musical activities, and difficulties in selecting song-based approach appropriate to learners' age and proficiency levels. This study

highlights the role of teachers' beliefs in shaping the practical use of song-based approach in the classroom.

Similarly, Nguyen and Nguyen (2020) explored English teachers' perceptions of using song-based approach for vocabulary instruction among young learners. The study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using questionnaires supplemented by semi-structured interviews with 75 teachers over a fifteen-week period. The findings indicated that teachers held positive views of the use of song-based approach, reporting that song-based approach helped capture learners' attention, supported vocabulary retention through repetition, and fostered a joyful learning environment. Teachers also believed that song-based approach contributed to the development of pronunciation, reading, and writing skills. These findings demonstrate that teachers' positive perceptions influence their instructional practices in early language-learning contexts.

Şevik (2011) examined the attitudes and practices of EFL teachers in Turkish primary schools regarding the use of song-based approach in English instruction. Using questionnaires administered to state primary school teachers, complemented by qualitative follow-up data, the study found that teachers generally believed in the pedagogical value of song-based approach, particularly for enhancing learner motivation and listening skills. However, the study also identified constraints, including limited emphasis in the curriculum on song-based activities and insufficient resources to adapt song-based approach to lesson objectives. This research underscores the connection between teachers' beliefs, institutional factors, and classroom practices.

Khumairo, Inayati, and Tyas (2022) investigated the perceptions of pre-service and in-service teachers concerning the use of English children's song-based approach in language teaching. Using a qualitative approach with narrative interviews and classroom observations, the study found that teachers perceived song-based approach as effective in increasing student motivation, engagement, and vocabulary retention. Nevertheless, teachers reported challenges related to

song selection, time management, and classroom control. The study highlights how teachers' experiences and contextual constraints influence the implementation of song-based approaches.

Overall, previous studies have demonstrated that teachers generally hold positive beliefs about the pedagogical value of song-based approach in English language teaching for young learners. These beliefs often encourage teachers to integrate song-based approach into their instructional practices, although practical and contextual challenges may limit the systematic implementation of such practices. Despite the growing body of research on teachers' perceptions and practices regarding song-based learning, little attention has been paid to the use of song-based approaches in Thailand's elementary schools. Moreover, few studies have specifically examined how teachers' beliefs and practices influence song selection and classroom implementation. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by exploring teachers' beliefs and practices in using song-based approaches in a Thai elementary school context, with implications for English for Young Learners in similar contexts such as Indonesia.

