# Malaysian ESL Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding the Use of Music and Songs in Second Language Teaching

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## Abstract

Regardless of numerous studies supporting the effectiveness of utilizing music and songs in second language teaching, there is a remarkably limited amount of research investigating how music and songs are actually used by language teachers and the beliefs underpinning their practices, particularly in the Malaysian educational context. This qualitative study explored Malaysian ESL teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to the use of music and songs in language instruction at different levels of education as well as factors influencing their instructional practices. The research participants consisted of five primary-level, five secondary-level and five tertiary-level ESL teachers working at public and private educational institutions, who were selected using purposeful sampling strategy. Data were gathered through individual semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework for qualitative data analysis. Findings of the study indicated the ESL teachers from all three levels of education held overall positive beliefs about the benefits and appropriateness of music and songs as a teaching tool and utilized them in various ways to promote students' language learning. A number of factors were found to influence the teachers' use of music and songs in their classrooms. The findings of the study have implications for various educational stakeholders.

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Regardless of numerous studies supporting the effectiveness of utilizing music and songs in second language teaching, there is a remarkably limited amount of research investigating how music and songs are actually used by language teachers and the beliefs underpinning their practices, particularly in the Malaysian educational context. This qualitative study explored Malaysian ESL teachers' beliefs and practices with regard to the use of music and songs in language instruction at different levels of education as well as factors influencing their instructional practices. The research participants consisted of five primary-level, five secondary-level and five tertiary-level ESL teachers working at public and private educational institutions, who were selected using purposeful sampling strategy. Data were gathered through individual semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework for qualitative data analysis. Findings of the study indicated the ESL teachers from all three levels of education held overall positive beliefs about the benefits and appropriateness of music and songs as a teaching tool and utilized them in various ways to promote students' language learning. A number of factors were found to influence the teachers' use of music and songs in their classrooms. The findings of the study have implications for various educational stakeholders.

*Keywords:* music, songs, second language teaching, ESL, Malaysia, language teacher cognition, beliefs and practices, semi-structured interviews

## Introduction

More often than not English language teachers are faced with the challenge of devising efficient ways to keep students interested in language learning in spite of frequent monotony and repetitiveness in the classroom. Because music and songs are present in virtually all aspects of everyday life and are enormously appealing to most people, they can be used as effective teaching aids in the English language classroom, which bring a number of supplementary benefits for second language instruction. A review of research literature suggests the efficient application of music and songs in second language teaching can potentially foster multiple intelligences, lower anxiety, raise motivation, stimulate imagination, enhance retention of facts and produce an atmosphere emotionally conducive to learning. Language teachers can utilize music and songs not only to make classes more interesting, but also to facilitate the acquisition of practically all areas of the language and promote learners' cultural awareness (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2016; Arévalo, 2010; Coyle & Gómez Gracia, 2014; Džanić & Pejić, 2016; Fisher, 2001; Gardner, 2011; Green, 1993; Kara & Aksel, 2013; Lee & Lin, 2015; Legg, 2009; Ludke, 2010; Medina, 1990; Rukholm, 2011; Salcedo, 2010; Schön et al., 2008; Setia et al., 2012; Tegge, 2015).

However, despite the available research evidence for using music and songs in language teaching, the relevant literature appears to reveal a common concern over the underutilization of music and songs in second and foreign language classrooms. For instance, Failoni (1993) states music in the classroom is often "relegated to recreation and entertainment status," rather than being utilized as "a systematic method to reinforce communication skills and demonstrate culture" (p. 98). This opinion is shared by many other authors, who either implicitly or explicitly encourage teachers to augment music activities in their classrooms in view of the evident advantages of music and songs to learning outcomes (e.g., Engh, 2013b; Griffee, 1988; Jolly, 1975; Salcedo, 2010). Nevertheless, in all but very few cases, it proves rather difficult for the authors to provide evidence to support their views to the effect that music is being underutilized in language classrooms.

To date, there have been only few empirical studies investigating the actual use of music and songs by language teachers as well as the beliefs underpinning their instructional practices (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2017; Engh, 2013a; Şevik, 2011; Tegge, 2018; Tse, 2015). The few available studies allow us to better understand the ways second and foreign language teachers use music and some of the problems they encounter. Yet, most of those studies were conducted outside Malaysia. To the best of the researchers' knowledge, only one study in this area has been conducted within the Malaysian context, investigating primary school ESL teachers' perspectives on using songs in language instruction (Tse, 2015), and no research to date has been done on Malaysian ESL teachers' beliefs, practices, and constraints related to the use of music and songs in secondary-level or tertiary-level classrooms.

In addition, despite the fact qualitative and mixed methods approaches are commonly used in research into language teachers' cognitions, beliefs, and practices (Barnard & Burns, 2012; Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2003, 2009, 2012, 2019), nearly all previous studies on teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of music and songs in language instruction have utilized exclusively quantitative research methods, particularly questionnaires, which alone can hardly provide sufficient data on teachers' reasoning behind the use or non-use of music and songs as well as contextual factors mediating between teachers' beliefs and instructional practices (Dörnyei, 2007; Munn & Drever, 1990; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

The present study addresses these issues by exploring Malaysian ESL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of music and songs at primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education, as well as the role of various factors influencing their instructional choices using qualitative data collection and analysis methods.

## Language Teachers' Cognitions, Beliefs, and Practices

The focus on ESL teachers, their beliefs, and classroom practices locate this study in the vicinity of research into "language teacher cognition," that is to say, "what teachers think, know, and believe and the relationship of these mental constructs to what teachers do in the language classroom" (Borg, 2003, p. 81). Research into teacher cognition arose from the realization that cognition is absolutely indispensable for the true understanding of teachers and teaching to examine the beliefs, thoughts, and knowledge which affect the teachers' actions (Borg, 2009). Since the mid-1990s, there has been growing interest in empirical research into language teacher cognition with a particular focus on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and teaching practices (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2003). The substantial body of research indicates that teachers' beliefs are not always reflected in their classroom practices despite having a lasting impact on their teaching preferences (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2009; Crawley & Salyer, 1995; Farrell & Kun, 2008; Phipps & Borg, 2009; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1986). A pivotal role in this complex relationship is played by contextual factors, which "mediate the extent to which teachers can act in accordance with

their beliefs" (Phipps & Borg, 2009, p. 381). Therefore, it is crucial that researchers investigating language teacher cognition do not restrict themselves to identifying and comparing teachers' stated beliefs and their classroom practices, but also examine the factors responsible for possible tensions between the two.

In order to illustrate this complex phenomenon, Borg (2006), based on his breakthrough work in the field and analysis of educational research, developed a model of language teacher cognition (shown in Figure 1), which is commonly used as theoretical framework in studies investigating language teachers' cognitions, beliefs, and practices (Attia, 2011; Barnard & Burns, 2012; Borg, 2003, 2006). The model outlines the relationship among teacher cognition, teacher learning (schooling and professional education), classroom practice, and contextual factors. In addition to language teachers' personal factors, it also addresses context-specific factors, thus substantially overcoming the shortcomings in previous models, which focused only on individual teachers' perceptions (Pratt & Associates, 1998; Woods, 1996).

**Figure 1**
*Elements and Processes in Language Teacher Cognition (Borg, 2006, p. 283)*
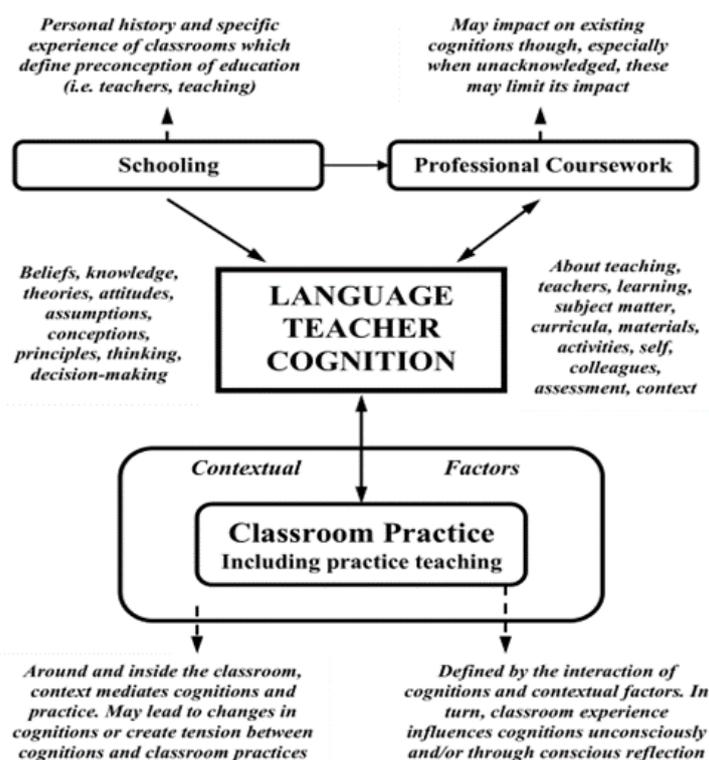


As indicated in Figure 1, the major factors that influence the cognition of language teachers are (1) schooling (prior learning experiences), (2) professional coursework (teacher education), and (3) classroom practice, from among which schooling stands out as the sole factor that has irreciprocal effects on language teacher cognition. Likewise, schooling affects professional coursework in a unilateral manner. The model demonstrates the interplay between professional work and cognition of language teacher. This implies, notwithstanding that professional training has an enormous impact on the cognition of language teachers, "programmes that disregard trainee teachers' long-held beliefs may be less effective at influencing these" (Borg, 2003, p. 81). The model also shows there is a bidirectional relationship between language teachers' cognitions and classroom practices, with contextual

factors inside and outside the classroom playing an important role in "mediating the extent to which teachers are able to implement instruction congruent with their cognition" (Borg, 2006, p. 284). These factors, among others, may include social, institutional and classroom context, time constraints, prescribed curriculum, high-stakes examinations, situational constraints, as well as planned and unplanned aspects of teaching (Basturkmen, 2012; Phipps & Borg, 2009).

**Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Regarding the Use of Music and Songs in Language Instruction**

Notwithstanding that teacher cognition came to prominence as a field of study more than 30 years ago, researchers started to focus on second and foreign language teacher cognition in the middle of the 1990s with continuously growing interest until present (Borg, 2009, 2019). With regards to the focus of investigation, various aspects of foreign and second language teaching have been explored through the lens of teacher cognition. Some of the previous studies have investigated language teachers' beliefs, knowledge and practices in relation to teaching and learning in general (e.g., Farrell & Ives, 2015; Farrell & Kun, 2008; Karim et al., 2020; Tamimy, 2015), while others were concerned with beliefs and practices of teachers regarding specific aspects of language instruction, such as teaching grammar (e.g., Farrell & Lim, 2005; Liviero, 2017; Ng & Farrell, 2003; Phipps & Borg, 2009), teaching pronunciation (e.g., Couper, 2017; Lim, 2016; Nguyen & Newton, 2020), Communicative Language Teaching (e.g., Mason & Payant, 2019; Rahman et al., 2018), learner autonomy (e.g., Ahmadianzadeh et al., 2020; Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019), assessment (e.g., Büyükkarcı, 2014; Wang et al., 2020), corrective feedback (e.g., Baker & Burri, 2016; Ha & Murray, 2020; Kartchava et al., 2020; Ölmezer-Öztürk, 2019) and the use of technology (e.g., Al-Awidi & Ismail, 2014; Ding et al., 2019; Ertmer et al., 2012; Van Praag & Sanchez, 2015). As far as second and foreign language teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of music and songs in language instruction are concerned, this are of area of investigation remains underexplored.

To date, there have been only few attempts to examine the actual use of music and songs by language teachers in a systematic way. Some of the studies investigated the use of music and songs by language instructors from multiple countries, while others focused on one educational context. In one of the studies adopting a broad perspective, Engh (2013a) attempted to "examine current teacher attitudes and practices towards music use in the language classroom" (p. 60). The researcher conducted an online survey aimed at 50 ESL teachers from 18 countries who taught teenagers and adults, apart from conducting interviews with seven of them. The findings suggested a "high level of theoretical support" (p. 60) for the use of music in English language classrooms; however, the researcher commented that music "is currently being vastly underutilized" (p. 55) in language teaching. According to the researcher, this discrepancy could be explained by such issues as prescribed curriculum, time constraints, and difficulty in finding suitable lyrics and appropriate music for adult learners (Engh, 2013a).

In a similar yet more comprehensive study, Tegge (2018) investigated "teachers' attitudes towards and use of songs in adult L2 classrooms around the world" (pp. 1-2). Data were collected through a self-constructed online questionnaire consisting of closed, semi-open and open questions. The participants were selected using non-random convenience sampling and included 398 language teachers from 41 countries teaching 20 different languages at different levels of education, with most respondents being language teachers in New Zealand and working at higher education institutions. The findings indicated many teachers had a favourable attitude about songs and used them as a teaching resource. The

study also examined the challenges experienced by language teachers using songs, which often partly coincided with the justifications given for not using them. The most stated issue was related to identifying suitable songs. Another common complaint was that the preparation and implementation of lessons based on songs made demands in terms of time and effort. Tegge's (2018) and Engh's (2013a) studies are useful in that they provide a valuable insight into the use of music and songs in second and foreign language instruction in various countries as well as the constraints experienced by teachers. However, because the participants in both studies come from many different contexts and the research reports do not include country-specific information, the findings of these studies are only to a limited extent applicable to teachers in any one setting.

Only few studies have so far investigated language teachers' perspectives and practices concerning the use of music and songs within one specific educational context. One such study was conducted by Alisaari and Heikkola (2017), who examined various facets of beliefs and practices of teachers of Finnish as a second language. The respondents comprised 94 teachers of Finnish as a second language who worked in multiple contexts, including kindergarten up to higher education institutions. Data collection was carried out by means of a questionnaire designed by the researchers. The results indicated that the teachers held highly favourable beliefs about songs as a teaching tool. Even with teachers' having highly positive beliefs about the use of music in language teaching, the study concluded: "overall, reported teaching practices did not completely align with teachers' stated beliefs" (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2017, p. 231). However, the study did not examine factors responsible for the mismatch between the two.

With respect to how language teachers perceive the use of songs in teaching English to young learners, two studies provide some valuable insights into song use at primary level. Şevik's (2011) study explored Turkish public primary school English teachers' opinions "about songs and using songs in teaching English to young learners" (p. 1027). Participants were 52 English language teachers working in 24 state primary schools located in two different cities. Data were collected through a questionnaire designed by the researcher. The analysis of data revealed that the English teachers held firm beliefs about the usefulness of songs for language teaching in general and for teaching English to young children in particular. However, the results revealed that it was difficult for the teachers to draw on suitable songs for classroom use and to assess student performance when using songs. In the Malaysian context, the study undertaken by Tse (2015) aimed to survey the "beliefs, perspectives, and thoughts" (p. 87) of primary school ESL teachers concerning the use of songs in teaching English to young learners. Data were collected by means of an adopted questionnaire. The respondents comprised 60 ESL teachers from ten state primary schools located in one of the states of Malaysia. Results indicated that the vast majority of ESL teachers perceived songs as a valuable teaching tool for promoting language skills. However, similar to the results of Şevik's (2011) study, the teachers reported to have difficulties in finding suitable songs for classroom use and evaluating "the learners' erudition of English when songs are being adopted" (Tse, 2015, p. 88). Tse's (2015) study provides some insights into the Malaysian ESL teachers' perspectives on the use of music and songs in the classroom as well as challenges faced by them. However, because the study involved only primary school ESL teachers, its results cannot be generalized to secondary-level or tertiary-level ESL teachers. In addition, the study focused only on the teachers' beliefs and did not investigate their practices, in particular to what extent, for what purposes and how the teachers are actually using music and songs in their classrooms.

In view of the scant research into language teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of music and songs in language classrooms, especially in the Malaysian educational context, the present study explores to what extent, for what purposes and in what ways

Malaysian ESL teachers use music and songs in language instruction at primary, secondary and tertiary levels as well as the beliefs underpinning their practices. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are Malaysian ESL teachers' beliefs regarding the use of music and songs in language instruction at primary, secondary and tertiary levels?
2. What are the main sources of Malaysian ESL teachers' beliefs regarding the use of music and songs in language instruction at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels?
3. What are Malaysian ESL teachers' practices regarding the use of music and songs in language instruction at primary, secondary and tertiary levels?
4. What are the factors influencing Malaysian ESL teachers' use of music and songs in language instruction at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels?

The first author of this article is a graduate student in Language Education and a musician, while the second author is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Educational Studies of the university. As educationists, we are firmly convinced that music and songs are a valuable educational tool that language educators in general and ESL teachers can use to engage their students and to promote enjoyable and effective language learning. Even though it can be asserted that music and songs are being purposefully used by ESL teachers at different educational levels, no empirical studies have yet been conducted to that effect, particularly in the Malaysian context. Our intention as researchers is to provide insights into the actual use of music and songs by Malaysian ESL teachers at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education, the beliefs guiding their instructional choices as well as contextual factors influencing their practices. We hope that the findings of our study will enable us to come up with some recommendations on how to facilitate the integration of music and songs in Malaysian ESL classrooms.

**Methodology**

We employed qualitative research methods to answer the research questions in the present study. As noted by several authors, qualitative approach has been increasingly widely used by researchers in the field of second and foreign language teaching, particularly in the research into teacher cognition (Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2003, 2009, 2012). One of the key characteristics of qualitative research is that it is exploratory in nature and involves "an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3), which means that researchers study phenomena in their natural settings in an attempt to make sense of and to interpret them in terms of the meanings the participants bring to them, "not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers from the literature" (Creswell, 2007, p. 39). Rather than seeking to test preformulated hypotheses, qualitative researchers aim "to discover what people think and how they act, and why" (Schutt, 2009, p. 316). Given the exploratory nature of the present study, qualitative research methodology is deemed the most suitable approach as it allows for a focused examination of the ESL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of music in their classrooms as well as the role of various factors influencing their instructional choices.

**Participants**

As stated by Dörnyei (2007), "qualitative inquiry is not concerned with how representative the respondent sample is. Instead, the main goal of sampling is to find individuals who can provide rich and varied insights into the phenomenon under investigation so as to maximize what we can learn" (p. 126). Therefore, in the present study, we used purposeful sampling to select participants who were expected to be "information rich" (Patton, 1990, p. 169). We selected the teachers based on the following criteria:

- Holding at least a Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language
- Having at least two years of English language teaching experience
- Teaching English at primary, secondary or tertiary level
- Using or having used music and/or songs in the classroom
- Willing to participate voluntarily in the study

To enhance the "transferability" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the findings, we employed maximum variation sampling, which involves "purposefully picking a wide range of cases to get variation on dimensions of interest" (Patton, 1990, p. 182). Consequently, the decision was made to select for participation in the study ESL teachers with varying years of experience (two years and above), holding various qualifications (Diploma / Bachelor / Master), working at distinct types of institutions (public / private) located in different areas (urban / rural).

A total of 15 teachers from five different states of Malaysia participated in the study. Five of them were teaching at primary level (pseudonyms: PL1-PL5), five were teaching at secondary level (pseudonyms: SL1-SL5), and five were teaching at tertiary level (pseudonyms: TL1-TL5), with the class size varying from 20 to 45 students. The teachers ranged in age from 25 to 47 years. All the teachers had received their teaching qualifications from local higher education institutions, two of them holding a diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), six holding a bachelor's degree in TESL and seven holding a master's degree in TESL. The total teaching experience of the study participants varied from 2 to 21 years, with 8 teachers having more than five years of working experience. At the time of this research, the teachers were working at different educational institutions across Malaysia, ten of them at public institutions and the remaining five at private institutions. Six of the teachers were working at educational institutions located in rural areas, while nine of them were working in urban settings.

We took several measures to protect the rights of the research participants. First, the teachers were given a letter of informed consent, which included a description of the study and data collection procedures. The letter also indicated that the participation in the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. Personal data of all participants were kept secret with only the authors having access to full details. Lastly, pseudonyms were used instead of proper names to refer to the research participants when reporting the study findings. At the time of the study, no institutional review board approval of the research was required.

**Data Collection**

Given that the purpose of the present study was to investigate Malaysian ESL teachers' beliefs and practices in relation to the use of music at different levels, we deemed it the most appropriate to carry out individual semi-structured interviews with ESL teachers working at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education. Interviews have a greater

potential of obtaining detailed and in-depth information from respondents (Cohen et al., 2011). Interviewing is widely used in naturalistic research. In fact, it is described as "the most often used method in qualitative inquiries" (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 134) and is also frequently used in language teacher cognition research (Borg, 2006). The main strength of interviews is that they enable the researcher to go beyond the visible, to look into inner worlds, and gain a better insight into reality the way the respondents understand it. As Patton (1990) points out, "the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind" (p. 278). Semi-structured interviews provide respondents with an informal atmosphere to express thoughts and share experiences without being confined by a specific set of questions. At the same time, within this flexible structure, researchers have the opportunity to cover themes relevant to their inquiry (Denscombe, 2014).

We developed the interview guide based on the research questions and the review of relevant literature, as suggested by several researchers (e.g., Castillo-Montoya, 2016; Krauss et al., 2009). The interview guide consisted of demographic questions on personal and professional background of the teachers and open-ended questions designed to elicit their beliefs regarding the use of music and songs in language teaching, sources of their beliefs, their classroom practices involving music and songs, as well as factors influencing their use of music and songs. We conducted a pilot interview with a non-participating teacher in order to refine the interview questions prior to carrying out the actual interviews. Each interview lasted between 30 and 40 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded with the respondents' permission and subsequently transcribed for analysis.

**Data Analysis**

As stated by Merriam and Tisdell (2015), in qualitative research, "data collection and analysis should be a simultaneous process" (p. 195). Therefore, we set about analyzing the data immediately after completing the first interview for this study. To analyze data gathered from interviews, we adopted Miles and Huberman's (1994) framework of qualitative data analysis, which involves the systemic analysis of the qualitative data in three concurrent stages: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing and verification.

The first stage of analysis, "data reduction" or "condensation," aimed at "selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 10) the raw data and comprised interview transcription, interview data coding, and development of themes. We started the analysis of interviews after transcribing and getting familiar with the data from the first interview. We coded the data manually using a word processing programme in two cycles. During the First Cycle coding, we employed "initial" or "open coding" (Saldaña, 2013), which involved the establishment of possible relevance or connection of any data with our research questions. For instance, we identified the participant teachers' statements that pointed to different factors influencing their use of music and songs in the classroom. During the Second Cycle coding, in which we adopted "pattern coding" (Miles & Huberman, 1994), we grouped the data coded in the initial coding into relevant categories and themes in accordance with the research questions. The same coding method was applied to next interview data sets.

In the second stage of analysis, "data display," which was designed to obtain "an organized, compressed assembly of information that allows conclusion drawing" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 11), we arranged the data in a case-level meta-matrix, where individual themes and categories developed in the first stage of analysis were juxtaposed in a chart. Individual interviews were first scrutinized in search of connections between data, whereafter all interviews were examined to establish the existence of the connections between them. We proceeded with the further development of the themes identified at the initial stage. The

higher-level themes that emerged in this stage were used as the basis for organizing and presenting the study findings.

The third stage of qualitative analysis was "conclusion drawing" and "verification." For "conclusion drawing," the researchers stepped back to ponder the meaning of the analyzed data and examined their implications for the research questions. "Verification," which is integral to conclusion drawing, demanded the re-evaluation of the data for cross-check or validation of the surfacing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). We adopted several measures for drawing and verifying conclusions, thus enhancing the trustworthiness of the study. First, we carried out constant comparison among themes that emerged at each level of analysis, during which we went back and forth between the research questions and the data to secure the groundedness of the findings (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Besides, we employed maximum variation sampling (Patton, 1990) to increase the transferability of the findings. Furthermore, we applied the strategy of member checking (Creswell, 2007) by presenting the interview transcriptions to the study participants and eliciting their feedback. The responses provided by all participating teachers showed that the transcriptions accurately represented their views. As for the researchers' role in the present study, it was that of an objective outsider. The researchers made every effort to prevent their personal beliefs from impacting the study through their neutral stance during data collection and analysis processes.

## Results

In this section, we present the results of the study according to the four research questions. The findings related to each research question are reported based on the themes derived from the analysis of data gathered from interviews.

### Research Question 1: Teachers' Beliefs Regarding the Use of Music and Songs in Language Instruction

Two main themes were derived from the interview data in relation to the teachers' beliefs regarding the use of music activities in language instruction:

- Teachers' beliefs about the benefits of using music and songs as a language teaching tool
- Teachers' beliefs about the appropriateness of using music and songs with different types of students

#### *Teachers' Beliefs About the Benefits of Using Music and Songs as a Language Teaching Tool*

The majority of the teachers in all three groups (primary, secondary, and tertiary level) held highly positive beliefs regarding the use of music and songs in ESL classrooms. They were convinced that music and songs were an effective tool that ESL teachers could use to make their lessons more enjoyable and engaging. For example, one of the participant teachers pointed out: "The use of music and songs makes the classroom atmosphere livelier and less stressful" (PL2).

In the same vein, one of the secondary-level teachers highlighted the positive impact of music on students' imagination, mentioning that it "opens the medium of creativity in students and allows for unlimited language learning" (SL1). Besides, SL4 believed that the use of music and songs benefited not only students but also teachers, as the following

comment suggests: "Students and teachers are mentally stressed with heavy workload every day, so, songs are the best way to improve their mood towards betterment" (SL4).

In addition to psychological benefits, the teachers from all three levels highlighted several pedagogical benefits of music and songs for language learning. One of the frequently mentioned benefits was that songs contained meaningful lyrics, which can be used to teach various language skills. Although some of the teachers believed songs were useful for developing students' listening skills and improving their vocabulary knowledge (due to their mnemonic effect), most of the teachers believed that music and songs could be used to teach and practice all the four language skills (reading, listening, writing and speaking) as well as vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, most teachers considered the use of music and songs as compatible with communicative language teaching.

Whereas the majority of the teachers associated the pedagogical benefits of music with songs containing lyrics, some of the teachers believed that instrumental music was also a valuable resource that could be tapped when teaching language skills, especially writing skills, apart from being used as background music. As stated by one of the primary-level teachers:

> Instrumental music can be used as background music to help students relax in the classroom or while working on tasks. Sometimes, instrumental music contains more emotions than songs with lyrics, so they can even be used as stimulus to stimulate thinking or generate ideas for essays or other language tasks. (PL2)

While there was an overall high level of support recognizable among the teachers from all three levels, one of the tertiary-level teachers (TL3) was rather cautious of the pedagogical value of music and songs in language classrooms, stating that even though they might help students psychologically, they are rather "limited" for teaching language skills.

### Teachers' Beliefs About the Appropriateness of Using Music and Songs with Different Types of Students

The teachers differed in their opinions with regards to the appropriateness of using music and songs with different types of students. Three primary-level teachers and one tertiary-level teacher believed that music and songs were only suitable for primary school students, whereas one secondary-level and one tertiary-level teacher were of the opinion that music and songs were more appropriate for primary-level and secondary-level students. As far as the students' proficiency levels are concerned, a few teachers in each group believed that songs were more appropriate for beginner and intermediate level students rather than advanced level students. The majority of the teachers, however, considered music and songs as appropriate for students of all educational levels and all proficiency levels. For instance, a primary-level teacher stated: "It suits all levels. You just have to choose the one with the appropriate language level or vocabulary as well as content" (PL4). From their accounts, it was clear that, even though most of the teachers regarded song-based activities as suitable for different types of students, they believed that the song lyrics and music activities should match the students' age and proficiency level.

**Research Question 2: Main Sources of Teachers' Beliefs Regarding the Use of Music and Songs in Language Instruction**

Four main themes were derived from the analysis of the interview data in relation to the sources of teachers' beliefs regarding the use of music and songs in language instruction:

- Early language learning experiences
- Teacher education
- Previous teaching experiences
- Personal interest in music

### *Early Language Learning Experiences*

One of the main factors that appeared to contribute to the teachers' beliefs about the usefulness of music and songs in language instruction was their prior language learning experience. Almost all the teachers reported that they had been taught English using music and/or songs during their school or university years, which they believed had exerted positive impact on their language learning.

Although most of the teachers believed that their early experiences as learners had contributed to their positive beliefs regarding the use of music in language teaching, one of the teachers (TL3), who was also less convinced of the pedagogical value of music and songs in language classrooms, had rather a neutral point of view. She pointed out that English lessons involving song-based activities did not make much difference from other lessens and that she "could still learn new words from other sources or ways of teaching" (TL3). She admitted, however, that the use of songs made the lessons more interesting.

### *Teacher Education*

Another factor that seemed to contribute to the teachers' beliefs regarding the use of music and songs as a teaching tool was their professional training. While almost none of the teachers received any kind of in-service training related to the use of music and songs in language instruction, six of them (mostly primary-level teachers) reported that they had been instructed in the pedagogical use of music and songs during their professional education. In addition, one of the tertiary-level teachers stated that she had learned about the use of music and songs in language instruction during the micro-teaching sessions in the course of her first degree studies: "We were not taught how to use music and songs the right way in classroom, but we learned from watching our classmates' micro-teaching sessions, in which they used songs and music as teaching tools" (TL3).

Even though most of the teachers had not received any specialized training in the pedagogical use of music and songs, the statements given by the teachers suggested that their professional education had to some extent contributed to the formation of their beliefs about the usefulness of music.

### *Previous Teaching Experiences*

The teachers' previous experiences of using music and songs in their classrooms appeared to be another important factor that had affected their beliefs about the usefulness of this teaching technique. Almost all the teachers reported that they had positive experiences of using music and songs with their students. For instance, PL4 noted: "My personal experience as language teacher makes me have positive view regarding the application of music in

lesson." One of the tertiary-level teachers (TL3), however, pointed out that she did not find her previous experience of using music in her classroom "motivational enough" to make her want to continue using it, though she conceded that this experience was pleasant.

### *Personal Interest in Music*

Apart from prior language learning experiences, teacher education and previous teaching experiences, the teachers' personal interest in music appeared to be a major factor that contributed to the formation of their beliefs about the usefulness of music and songs in language teaching.

Almost all the teachers stated that music played an important role in their lives and exerted beneficial effects on their general well-being and health. For instance, PL2 commented:

> Music is important in my personal life. ... I listen to music when I study because it helps me to concentrate better. Music also helps me physically, emotionally, and socially. I enjoy working out with songs. They are therapeutic when I am sad or stressed. (PL2)

Apart from listening to music and songs, the majority of the teachers had participated in music activities (choir or musical theatre) during their school or university years. Moreover, five of the teachers reported having music-related hobbies (singing or playing a musical instrument), though most of them did not use their musical skills in their daily teaching. Furthermore, some of the teachers reported that they kept themselves abreast of research and trends in relation to the use of music and songs in language teaching, mainly by reading articles or attending conferences. For instance, TL1 pointed out:

> I went to a MICELT conference [Malaysia International Conference on English Language Teaching] many years ago and chanced upon a talk by Dr. Carolyn Graham. She presented about using jazz and chants in classroom and I was entranced with the idea. (TL1)

In addition, two teachers stated that they had discovered more about the benefits of music and songs in language teaching while reviewing literature for the bachelor's degree final year project (TL4) and master's degree research project (SL1), which had dealt with the use of songs in English language teaching.

### Research Question 3: Teachers' Practices Regarding the Use of Music and Songs in Language Instruction

The findings on the teachers' practices in relation to the use of music and songs in language instruction are presented according to the following themes:

- Frequency of using music and songs
- Purposes of using music and songs
- Types of music and songs
- Types of music activities

### Frequency of Using Music and Songs

All the teachers reported they had previously used or still utilized music and songs in their classrooms. The primary-level teachers generally conducted music activities one to four times a week. Only one of them (PL1) reported using music and songs no more than once a month (due to lack of facilities), which she believed was not sufficient. The secondary-level teachers used music activities less frequently than primary-level teachers (between once a month and four times a year), but generally considered it to be sufficient, though some of them would like to conduct music activities more often. As far as tertiary-level teachers are concerned, the frequency of using music activities ranged from twice a month to once a year. Some of the teachers stated that they would prefer using music and songs more frequently. For instance, TL1 pointed out: "Not as often as I'd like to. Usually, only at the beginning of the semester when things are less hectic."

Interestingly, one of the tertiary-level teachers (TL5), who also believed that music and songs were more appropriate for primary and secondary school students, reported that she had used them often while teaching at primary and secondary level, but did not conduct any music activities when teaching at tertiary level.

### Purposes of Using Music and Songs

The teachers reported using music and songs for various purposes. The majority of the teachers utilized them as a teaching tool to stimulate their students' interest and to teach language skills as well as vocabulary and grammar. For instance, a primary-level teacher commented:

> I use them for different purposes. Sometimes, they will be used as background music when the kids work on some writing tasks. I also use songs as teaching materials to teach language content or vocabulary. Some songs also come with grammar features that can be taught to students. (PL2)

Similarly, one of the tertiary-level teachers stated: "I use music and songs as teaching tool to teach a certain component of the lesson, to motivate the students when the lesson gets hard and also when I want to introduce a certain vocabulary" (TL1).

Although the teachers generally believed that music and songs can be used to teach all the four language skills as well as grammar and vocabulary, most of them reported using them to teach listening comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, speaking, and/or writing skills. Only few of the teachers reported using songs to teach reading skills. One of the teachers (TL5), who also believed that music and songs were not suitable for teaching language skills, reported using them exclusively as background music.

As far as the language proficiency level of students is concerned, the majority of the teachers reported using music and songs with students of all proficiency levels, while some of the teachers, in line with their beliefs, used them only with beginner and intermediate level students.

### Types of Music and Songs

Depending on the purpose of the music use, the teachers reported using different types of music in their classrooms. Instrumental music was used to produce a positive and relaxing learning atmosphere, whereas songs with lyrics were primarily used to teach and practice specific language skills. Primary-level teachers used mainly nursery rhymes and specially

written ESL songs with controlled vocabulary and grammar, while all the secondary-level and tertiary-level teachers reported using exclusively authentic songs.

Regarding the recording format, the majority of the teachers reported using songs in the audio format. Some of the teachers (mostly primary-level teachers), however, used songs in the video format (with lyrics), as preferred by their students.

The teachers considered several factors while selecting music and songs for their classroom activities. The factors mentioned by the teachers included purpose of the lesson, age, and proficiency level of students, language content and message of the song, length, and speed of the song, recording quality and content of the video (in cases when music video was used). In addition, four of the teachers stated that they also considered their students' musical preferences when selecting songs.

### *Types of Music Activities*

The teachers reported using various music activities in their classrooms. The most frequently mentioned activities were sing-along (mostly at primary and secondary level), gap-fill (at all three levels), song review and discussion (mostly at tertiary level). In addition, one of the secondary-level teachers reported using song lyrics as "catalyst of ideas for narrative writing" (SL1). While the majority of the teachers used one to three music activities in their classrooms, one of the secondary-level teachers reported conducting four different activities (gap-fill, genres of music, presenting favourite song and identifying main ideas).

Most of the teachers reported structuring their music activities by dividing them into pre-listening, while-listening and post-listening stages, which, they believed, enabled them to make full use of the song that they had spent time on selecting. Although some of the primary-level and secondary-level teachers reported using ready-made music activities from textbooks or online resources, the majority of the teachers from all three levels stated that they usually designed their own music activities. For instance, PL2 noted: "Most of the time, I design my own music activities, but when I am busy with other work, I would just adapt ready-made ones from online resources."

The teachers in all three levels reported spending between 20 minutes and 3 hours to prepare a music activity, though some of the teachers admitted that finding a suitable song might take several days. As for the classroom time spent on conducting music activities, the primary-level teachers generally reported spending between 10 and 30 minutes on a music activity. The secondary-level teachers dedicated considerably more classroom time to music activities (between 1 and 2 hours). The length of music activities reported by the tertiary-level teachers ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours.

### Research Question 4: Factors Influencing Teachers' Use of Music and Songs in Language Instruction

This section presents the findings of the study in relation to the contextual factors perceived by teachers as influencing their use of music and songs in language instruction. The factors are organized into two groups:

- Factors facilitating teachers' use of music and songs
- Factors impeding teachers' use of music and songs

**Factors Facilitating Teachers' Use of Music and Songs**

The following five factors were found to facilitate the teachers' use of music and songs in the classroom:

- Positive responses from students
- Pre-service training
- Curriculum (primary level)
- Teacher collaboration
- Teacher autonomy

*Positive Responses from Students*

Positive responses from students appeared to be the main factor contributing to the teachers' use of music and songs. Almost all the teachers stated that use of music promoted their students' engagement, which in turn motivated them to use song-based activities more frequently. For example, PL1 commented: "The enjoyment and understanding of students of the lesson keep me using music and songs despite the challenges." Most of the teachers' accounts revealed that their students' reactions encouraged them to continue using music and songs in their classrooms.

*Curriculum (Primary Level)*

All the primary-level teachers acknowledged that the English textbooks included song-based activities, which made it easier for them to incorporate music and songs into the classroom. Some of them remarked, however, that the textbooks for lower levels (Years 1-3) contained considerably more varying music activities than those for upper levels (Years 4-6).

*Pre-Service Training*

While most of the teachers did not receive any kind of pre-service training related to the use of music and songs in language instruction, few of the primary-level and tertiary-level teachers reported that the training in the pedagogical use of music and songs they had received during their pre-service education proved helpful when designing and conducting music activities.

*Teacher Collaboration*

Several teachers from all three levels stated that the collaboration with other teachers facilitated the integration of music and songs to some extent. One of the tertiary-level teachers (TL1) from a public university's centre for foundation studies reported that all of the teachers in the institution worked collaboratively and most of them used music activities in their teaching.

*Teacher Autonomy*

Most of the teachers from both private and public institutions reported that they were given freedom to use various teaching techniques in their classrooms. For instance, one of the secondary-level teachers working at a public school commented: "We teach skills, not content. So, we can use any means necessary to get the students the skills" (SL1). In a similar

vein, SL5 teaching at a private school stated: "Because I teach in a private school, I'm not very limited to the curriculum as much. As long as I finish the syllabus on time, I'm allowed to do whatever I want" (SL5). The comments made by the teachers suggested that the autonomy they were given with regard to the use of various teaching techniques facilitated the incorporation of music and songs in their classrooms.

**Factors Impeding Teachers' Use of Music and Songs**

The following six factors were found to impede the teachers' use of music and songs in the classroom:

- Lack of teaching materials
- Difficulty in finding suitable songs
- Time constraints, curriculum, testing and workload
- Lack of classroom facilities
- Large class size
- Lack of training and peer-support

*Lack of Teaching Materials*

A major factor found to impede the teachers' use of music and songs was the lack of musical teaching materials. All secondary-level and tertiary-level teachers stated the textbooks they were using did not include music activities. Even though English textbooks for primary schoolchildren included music activities, some of the primary-level teachers pointed out that the activities found in the textbooks for higher levels (Years 4-6) were rather one-sided and lacked variety.

Almost all the teachers expressed the need for ready-made teaching materials for each educational level, which should include music activities and songs matching the students' proficiency levels and lesson objectives. Even though most of the teachers designed their own activities, they believed that prepared materials would allow them to add more variety to their teaching.

*Difficulty in Finding Suitable Songs*

Nearly all the teachers reported that one the main challenges faced when using music and songs in their instruction was identifying the songs that would serve the purpose of the lesson, match the proficiency level of their students and be appropriate for classroom use.

*Time Constraints, Curriculum, Testing and Workload*

The majority of the teachers in all three levels reported that they did not often had sufficient time at their disposal to find appropriate songs, to design meaningful activities that would suit their students' proficiency levels and to integrate music activities into their lessons. The main reasons for the lack of time stated by the teachers included the curriculum, examinations, and workload. For instance, PL2 noted:

> I only have three hours to spend with each class and I have 20 topics to cover annually. So, sometimes I just can't find the time or spare some time to use music and songs. When workload is there, it's difficult to choose songs or music and plan good lessons using them as well. (PL2)

Overall, the participant teachers believed that time constraints, curriculum, testing, and heavy workload were among the key factors preventing many Malaysian ESL teachers from using music and songs in their classrooms, especially at secondary and tertiary levels.

### Lack of Classroom Facilities

The majority of the teachers, especially those working in primary and secondary schools located in rural areas, reported that lack of appropriate facilities was a major obstacle in using music and songs in their classrooms. For example, PL1 pointed out:

I need to bring and set up my own devices - laptop, radio, speaker - before the lesson. It would take several minutes when there was another lesson before mine. ... Loud music might disturb other classes as the classes are next to each other. (PL1)

In fact, the teachers from all three levels believed that lack of facilities was among the major factors hindering many Malaysian ESL teachers from integrating music and songs into their classrooms. One of the tertiary-level teachers (TL3) even perceived it to be the main inhibiting factor.

### Large Class Size

The large number of students was mentioned by some of the teachers as another factor impeding their use of music and songs in their classrooms. For instance, a primary-level teacher pointed out: "I have 45 students in one class ... This makes it difficult to carry out music activities in the classroom" (PL2). Some other teachers at secondary and tertiary levels also admitted that the large class size was an obstruction in using music and songs in their teaching.

### Lack of Training and Peer-Support

Several teachers, especially those who had not received training in the pedagogical use of music and songs during their pre-service education, reported having difficulty in preparing music activities, and believed that lack of pre-service and in-service training in music use was one of the main factors limiting many Malaysian ESL teachers' use of music and songs in their classrooms. All the participants were unanimous in the opinion that both pre-service and in-service ESL teachers should be informed about the benefits of using music and songs for language learning and be given training in how to use them in the classrooms. For example, one of the tertiary-level teachers stated: "Future ESL teachers must be aware that they can use music and songs in the classroom. They must be aware of the benefits and they must be taught to use it in the correct way" (TL5).

Apart from pre-service and in-service training in the pedagogical use of music and songs, peer-support in educational institutions was mentioned by some of the teachers as a factor that would considerably facilitate the integration of music and songs in ESL classrooms. For instance, TL4 commented: "So, I think we need the support system from the school itself, especially from other teachers. They need to open their minds up and be more accepting and open-minded."

Overall, the teachers from all three levels of education believed that lack of training and peer-support along with other factors, such as lack of time, teaching materials and appropriate equipment, were the main reasons due to which music and songs, in their

opinion, were underutilized in Malaysian ESL classrooms, especially at secondary and tertiary levels.

## Discussion

The purpose of the current study was to examine Malaysian ESL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of music and songs in language instruction at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. The first research question focused on the ESL teachers' beliefs concerning the use of music and songs in language instruction. It was found that the teachers from all three levels of education held overall positive beliefs about music and songs as a teaching technique and recognized their psychological and pedagogical benefits for language learning. The teachers' beliefs generally reflected research findings in linguistics, education, and cognitive psychology on the positive impact of music and songs on second language teaching and learning (Engh 2013b; Jolly, 1975; Richards, 1969). Most of the teachers believed music activities can be used at all educational levels and are appropriate for students of all proficiency levels. Similar findings were also reported in the study by Tegge (2015), where teachers considered songs to be useful for learners of all proficiency levels, although most of the respondents believed music activities are more suitable for beginners and low-intermediate students. Likewise, the majority of teacher participants in the study by Alisaari and Heikkola (2017) considered song-based activities appropriate for students of all ages. Overall, the findings concerning the teachers' beliefs are consistent with earlier studies, which reported generally positive views of language teachers on the use of music and songs in language classrooms (Alisaari & Heikkola, 2017; Engh, 2013a; Şevik, 2011; Tegge, 2018; Tse, 2015).

The second research question was related to the main sources of the ESL teachers' beliefs regarding the use of music and songs in language instruction. The findings suggested that the teachers' early language learning experiences, teacher education, previous teaching experiences and personal interest in music had considerable impact on the formation of their beliefs. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, these findings are unique, as no previous study has investigated the sources of language teachers' beliefs about the use of music and songs in language instruction. However, the findings are, to a large extent, in line with previous research on language teachers' beliefs on teaching and learning in general, which pointed to the impact of prior language learning experiences (apprenticeship of observation), pre-service education, and previous teaching experiences on the formation of teachers' pedagogical beliefs (e.g., Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010; Freeman, 1993; Holt Reynolds, 1992; Lortie, 1975).

The third research question addressed the ESL teachers' classroom practices concerning the use of music and songs. The findings indicated that the vast majority of the teachers from primary, secondary and tertiary levels were purposefully using music and songs as a teaching tool to promote student engagement and to teach language skills, grammar and vocabulary. This is consistent with the findings of the study by Tegge (2018), which reported that most teachers utilized songs as teaching material "to foster second language acquisition" rather than viewing them as "special treats without pedagogical purpose" (p. 4). In addition, in line with the results of the study by Tegge (2018), the most widely used music activities among the teachers included gap-fill, sing-along, as well as discussion and writing activities. Furthermore, the findings indicated that music activities were conducted considerably more frequently at primary level than at secondary and tertiary levels.

With regards to the relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices, the findings of the study indicated that, for the majority of the teachers who reported using (or not using)

music and songs, their practices were in line with their beliefs. However, some of the teachers were not able to fully put their beliefs into practice. This corroborates previous research, which suggests that teachers' beliefs are not always reflected in their classroom practices (e.g., Alisaari & Heikkola, 2017; Basturkmen, 2012; Borg, 2003, 2009; Dobson & Dobson, 1983; Farrell & Lim, 2005; Ha & Murray, 2020; Ölmezer-Öztürk, 2019; Pearson, 1985; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1986).

Finally, in relation to the fourth research question, a number of contextual factors were identified that either facilitated or impeded the ESL teachers' use of music and songs in their classrooms. Factors facilitating the use of music activities included positive responses from students, pre-service training, curriculum (primary level), teacher collaboration, and teacher autonomy. Factors impeding the teachers' use of music and songs in the classroom comprised lack of teaching materials, difficulty in finding suitable songs, time constraints, lack of appropriate facilities, large class size, as well as lack of training and peer-support. While none of the previous studies examined the factors facilitating language teachers' use of music and songs, some of the factors impeding the use of music activities in language classrooms were reported in earlier studies, in particular difficulty in finding suitable songs, lack of prepared materials, lack of equipment, and time constraints (Engh, 2013a; Şevik, 2011; Tegge, 2018; Tse, 2015).

## Implications

The findings of the study have a number of implications for different educational stakeholders. First, it would considerably facilitate the integration of music and songs in the language classrooms if ESL teachers, especially those teaching at primary and secondary level, were provided with readily available teaching materials, which would include preselected songs and various music activities matching lesson objectives and students' proficiency levels. This would encourage teachers who had never used music and songs before to incorporate music activities in their classrooms. At the same time, this would enable teachers, who are already utilizing music and songs, to use the available time more effectively for planning lessons rather than spending it on searching for suitable songs and music activities.

Furthermore, the findings of study imply that ESL teachers need more explicit training in the pedagogical use of music and songs. Even though the majority of the teachers in the present study were aware of the benefits of using music and songs in language teaching, they generally perceived it as challenging to design meaningful and varying music activities that would address their students' needs. Therefore, it is highly recommended that both pre-service and in-service ESL teachers be provided with training in the effective use of music and songs as part of language instruction at different levels of education. While face-to-face training within teacher education institutions would be optimal for pre-service teachers, in-service teachers would take advantage of online professional development opportunities, such as MOOCs or webinars, which allow the delivery of content in a more flexible, efficient, and standardised manner.

In addition to support from educational authorities, ESL teachers would need more support from their own institutions. As the findings of the study indicate, the ESL teachers largely depend on their own initiative to integrate music in their classrooms, which suggests that teachers who are not aware of the benefits of music and lack training or experience in the use of music and songs, are less likely to incorporate music activities in their teaching. It is therefore important that especially beginning teachers are provided with continuous support from their institutions, particularly by other experienced teachers. Moreover, both novice and experienced teachers would benefit from an online support network, where ESL teachers

from all levels of education could share their experiences in using various teaching tools, including music, and songs.

Finally, it is essential that educational institutions, especially those located in rural areas, are provided with appropriate facilities, which would allow ESL teachers to make full use of music and songs in their classrooms with the purpose of enhancing their students' language learning.

## Limitations and Future Research

Several suggestions for future research arise from the scope of the present study. Firstly, the study explored the beliefs and practices of Malaysian ESL teachers with regards to the use of music and songs in language instruction, and the study's results are peculiar to this research setting. Therefore, it is suggested to conduct more studies of similar nature in other educational contexts. Apart from ESL teachers, participants could also include teachers of other languages. In addition, the present study explored the beliefs and practices of in-service teachers concerning the use of music and songs in language instruction. Further studies could focus on pre-service teachers or compare the beliefs and practices of pre-service and in-service teachers. Besides, the study utilized qualitative data collection and analysis methods, involving a relatively small number of participants. Moreover, even though the participant teachers were working at different institutions, they were located in five states across Malaysia. Therefore, a large-scale study integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods and involving ESL teachers from more states and federal territories of Malaysia would be necessary in order to obtain more generalizable results with regards to the use of music and songs in Malaysian ESL classrooms. It would also be interesting to compare ESL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of songs and poems in language instruction. Finally, due to the focus on ESL teachers' beliefs and practices, the present study did not involve analysis of the textbooks used by the teachers. Therefore, a study could be conducted in order to examine current English textbooks, especially for primary and secondary levels, with regards to the amount and types of music activities. In spite of its limitations, the current study is one of the few studies that have provided insights into the actual use of music and songs by ESL teachers working at different educational levels, the beliefs guiding their instructional choices as well as contextual factors influencing their classroom practices.

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**Article Citation**

Bokiev, D., & Ismail, L. (2021). Malaysian ESL teachers' beliefs and practices regarding the use of music and songs in second language teaching. *The Qualitative Report, 26*(5), 1497-1521. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2021.4350