2.0 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter the researcher tries to advance some theories and other researches that relate to the study. The review of related literature will be discussed under five sub headings corresponding to the four major areas of interest in the study:

1. Theories in language learning.
2. Songs and language.
3. Research done in areas of pop songs.
4. Pedagogical implication.

2.1 Theories in Language Learning

2.1.1 Behavioural Theory - Imitation

Brown (1984) notes that children are "good imitators". He concludes that imitation is one of the important strategies a child uses in the acquisition of language. He says that 'echoing' is a particularly silent strategy in early language learning and an important aspect of early phonological acquisition.

Behaviourists assume there is only surface level of imitation. However, according to Brown (1984) there is a deeper level of imitation, which is far more important in the process of language acquisition. Murphey (1990) found that children with lower scores on the mental aptitude tests were able to memorise songs with correct pronunciation compared to those with higher scores. He implies that songs can be used to teach weak students.
Therefore, we can say just by singing the English pop songs, students subconsciously imitate the singers articulating English words. This will help weak students to learn English at the basic level. When these students have already grasped the basic words of English and have gained self-confidence to say the words out loud, the teacher then may progress further by exploiting the song chosen for other skills such as learning meaning of words, grammar and so on. Otherwise, they can just let the students sing the pop songs until they are able to learn to articulate the words and learn them subconsciously.

2.1.2 Krashen's Theory

Krashen (1981) (1982), (1983) explains five main hypotheses in his theory. The first is the Acquisition–learning Hypothesis that makes a useful theoretical distinction between two distinct ways of developing skills and knowledge in a second language. He says that to acquire a language one has to involve a sub – conscious development of ability in language through use in natural, communicative situations. As learning involves conscious knowledge of grammar and rules of the language, Krashen suggests activities that foster acquisition rather than learning. Based on the above hypothesis, the researcher believes pop songs are able to help students to acquire the second language, in this case English, naturally.

Krashen’s second hypothesis is ‘The Natural Order’ hypothesis, which recognises the fact that even in acquisition there is a predictable order of learning grammatical structures. This recognition has
implications for the structuring and sequencing of syllabi. The implication for the classroom is that students are able to acquire certain structures before others if sufficient exposure to comprehensible input is given. With the aid of English pop songs, students may learn and acquire certain structures subconsciously and further activities based on the songs may enhance the acquisition of the language. Krashen and Terrel (1983) however, do not imply that grammatical structure needs to be supplied in the natural order.

Krashen and Terrel (1983) suggest that teachers should not emphasise on error correction, as this will cause anxiety in students. Grammatical errors are to be expected but no correction should occur in input lessons. Correction should be left for written work so as not to inhibit communication. By using English pop songs, students would not feel any anxiety, as the teachers would not emphasise on error corrections because the lyrics have certain grammar patterns that will be repeated many times. Further activities given after the songs input like writing can help students to reduce errors. If the errors still occur, students would not feel too embarrassed and be inhibited in their learning as they already feel at ease with their learning situation.

The Monitor Hypothesis relates to the distinction between learning and acquisition to second language performance. Krashen reasons that learning and acquisition should not be mutually exclusive but learning should sub serve acquisition. He means that focus should be on acquisition and learning is the outlying aspect. He says that our utterances in a second language are initiated by acquisition. It is responsible for our fluency. So he says that learning has only one function that is as a monitor or editor. In learning, students will be expected to use conscious
grammar, if they know the rule, and have time to process it. In conversation however, grammar use will be of a lesser degree than in written work. Pop songs serve this purpose wonderfully. First, students will acquire the language by singing the lyrics and further activities will help the learning of the language.

The Input Hypothesis is most relevant as it is our pedagogical goal to encourage acquisition. In this hypothesis, Krashen makes several important points. First, the acquirer must understand the input. This implies that the focus should be on the meaning and not the form of the message. It is through meaning that structure is acquired. Thus, input holds centre stage and the classroom will be the source for obtaining input. If English pop songs are used as the input, the possibility to focus on the meaning is higher and the structure is easy to acquire.

Secondly, acquisition involves understanding structures, which is sometimes a bit beyond the level of competence of the speaker. To help students understand structures, we must know the level of the students and choose our input accordingly. Understanding involves the use of aids like the context or extra-linguistic information. Pop songs cater these. Thirdly, if the acquirer understands the input and if there is enough input then the understanding and the competency of the language will be catered for. Lastly, one cannot teach fluency as it emerges over time and on its own, once the student is ‘ready’. This implies that the student will go through a silent period.

This Input Hypothesis has several classroom implications. Krashen (1983) points out that any aid can be used as long as it helps students to understand. Thus any aid that facilitates understanding is
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useful and should be used to speed up the acquisition process. He also says that vocabulary is important. Whereas in the structural approaches there has been a tendency to exercise some control over vocabulary, the comprehensible input theory believes in exposure to a wide vocabulary to enhance comprehension and thereby promote acquisition.

However the primary pedagogical aim of the Input Hypothesis is the comprehension of the message and not the use of structures. Acquisition will take place provided there is enough communication in the classroom and understanding of the messages. It is Krashen’s belief that the acquisition approach caters for all kinds of students. He says that all second language learners are acquirers and only some of them are learners. This is used to justify the comprehensible input as a language teaching method.

This theory suggests that the classroom may be a very good place for second language acquisition, especially at the beginning and average levels. The classroom is a place where we can regulate the kind of comprehensible input, rather than expose the students to the informal linguistic environment where the amount of support they receive is questionable.

It is to be noted that the study of grammar does have a role to play in the acquisitional language programme, although in a limited sense. The rules of grammar come into play in the use of the monitor but only simple rules need to be taught. Krashen firmly believes that grammar should not interfere with communication, i.e. the message must always take precedence over the form. His theory is based on the belief that learning grammatical forms does not in any way help language acquisition. He
recognises that some students enjoy grammar but feels that teachers should cater to them not as the main part of the course but as an optional part of it.

On the other hand, the role of speaking is not absolutely essential for language acquisition under the input hypothesis. Acquisition depends on what is read or heard. The input hypothesis holds that if the focus is on listening or reading then fluency will emerge on its own. Speech emerges with many errors and with a mixture of mother tongue words. If input continues and is comprehensible and the affective filter is low, then the chances of students resorting to the target language alone are greater. A teacher then has to use a greater proportion of class time on such input provision for acquisition. The teacher’s task then is to balance the learning and acquisition activities the student is exposed to. Such balance will vary according to the age of students, their aim in studying the target language and the level of interest in grammar.

The fifth, the Affective Filter Hypothesis states that language acquisition and not necessarily language learning is the main attitudinal variable to success in second language acquisition. It is suggested that attitudes affect second language acquisition. The right attitude will encourage the student to try and get more input and be more receptive to the input he gets. Both the Affective Filter Hypothesis and the Input Hypothesis imply that effective classroom input must be interesting.

Gates (1983) warns that in discussing the Affective Filter Hypothesis it is inappropriate in assuming that both cognitive and affective components have clear and separate existences in the real world even though they can be isolated. Cognitive behaviour is when the
'learning' or mental element predominates. Affective behaviour is used when the 'acquisition' elements or emotional element predominates. In both areas teachers have a professional duty to respect the dignity and integrity of the individual student.

In the theory of ego development by Loevinger (1979), ego is defined as one's overall frame of reference, as well as his customary orientation towards oneself and the world he lives in. Thus an educational experience will have different impact on different students depending on the ego level they operate at. If this is to be considered then comprehensible input does not act only to create interest but also to contribute to the growth of the total self. In another sense, what the acquisition theory means is that if the messages are to register in the positive memory of the students, they have to feel good about themselves first.

Another difficulty when Krashen first introduced his acquisition model is providing suitable material for input in order to fulfil all his criteria. Several schools of thought have emerged to cater for this area. For example, the natural approach focuses on personal topics such as about oneself and family meanwhile the Community Language Learning approach has students generate their own output for example discussing the topic brought up by the students such as current issue.

No matter, which approach, is used; materials are still needed to help with the teaching and learning procedures. Stevick (1980) discusses the use of poetry for second language students. Then Krashen (1983) suggests alternatives like conversation, pleasure reading and using subject matter. However, the researcher believes that pop songs are one
of the better options in terms of effectiveness. It also deals with the problems of lack of appeal of other materials to many students. Furthermore, pop songs have the ability to get students so involved that they forget that they are in a second language classroom.

Krashen has devised a checklist for requirements for optimum input. This serves to guide us in our evaluation of pop songs as suitable material for teaching and learning purposes.

Below are the checklists:

i. Comprehensibility

This criterion is easily met if care is exercised by the teacher in the pop songs selected. The songs can be selected by teachers or by the students themselves. However, it would be more meaningful and interesting if the students choose the songs because if chosen by teachers may be not to the students' liking. If students choose the songs, the songs should be given earlier to the teachers for screening purposes in order to ensure the songs are suitable for teaching and learning. No matter who chooses the songs, the most important part is that the lyrics must be understood. The meaning can be negotiated among students or between students and the teacher by discussing it after listening to the song and coming up with mutual agreement.

ii. Interest/Relevance

Krashen believes that conversation is the best source he can think of possibly because of extra-linguistic features such as gestures and facial
expressions that help determine meaning. Pop songs if sung also have those extra - linguistic features and in addition have special appeal to students and allow almost or total immersion of the students.

iii. *Not Grammatically Sequenced*

This requirement is clearly satisfied in pop songs, as language teaching is hardly a consideration of the composer or lyric writer. Pop songs not only reflect authentic language use but also contain the kind of language that appeals to students of all kind of walks.

iv. *Quantity*

Murphey (1990) says students in many countries have access to English pop songs and many students spend large amounts of time and money in pursuit of pop music.

v. *Filter Strength*

Carefully chosen pop songs give students an experience of a spectrum of emotional life. Nordoff and Robbins (1975) say that songs can arouse the excitement of children, please them and enable them to think. Teenagers amidst various pressures seek solace in music and songs, which offer them a form of relaxation.

Furthermore, if group activities follow the input, many students tend to engage in free and open discussion provided that the learning environment is conducive. Students tend to be sympathetic with each other and this lowers the filter. There tends to be no error correction
of form, accuracy or completeness among peers. Thus the filter is lowered with the use of pop songs.

vi. *Tools for Conversational Management*

By this Krashen means the tools for students to continue improving without teachers. It must be pointed out that pop songs and music form a sub-culture among students and if given guidance in the interpretation of the lyrics then it is a good core of knowledge around which wider linguistic abilities may be built up. Murphey (1990) says that one only needs to look round at the multilingual versatility of singers. The sound and the rhythm of the language that is being acquired will inspire confidence in the students. Celce-Murcia and Hilles (1988) mention that even shy and withdrawn students will somehow internally verbalise the song. This is a far superior form of providing input than where there is passive acquisition.

2.1.3 Piaget’s Egocentric Language VS Vygotsky’s Inner Speech

Piaget (1962) was the first to explain a child’s involuntary repetition. Piaget’s egocentric language is listed in three categories. They are:

a. Echoic repetition – a child speaks just for the pleasure of speaking. At this stage a child does not need a listener nor concerned with the meaning of the words.

b. Monologues – a child may be doing ‘thinking aloud’ with or without action.
c. Collective monologues – children who look like they are speaking to each other (communicating communicatively) but actually they are speaking for themselves.

By the age of six or seven, this egocentric language will disappear. Krashen (1985) explains this as “Language in the Crib babbling” and Weir (1962) explains it as “the Din externalised.” Murphey (1990) explains “that this egocentric language is in fact an ‘external Din’ and a manifestation of the LAD (Language Acquisition Devise) at work and a process of ontogenetical language acquisition” (p.109). He suggests that instead of disappearing, the egocentric language “may also see its extension into songs in its many manifestations”. (p.109)

Vygotsky (1962) proposes that instead of ‘disappearing’, egocentric becomes inner speech. “In the beginning, egocentric speech is identical in structure with social speech, but in the process of its transformation into inner speech it gradually becomes less complete and coherent’. (p.145). Murphey (1990) is in agreement with Vygotsky’s inner speech proposal.

Murphey (1990) justifies that inner speech developed after egocentric speech differentiates itself from other social speech and again develops further in three important ways. He says this “can be seen as processes of simplification, or reduction, of external speech:

a. Inner speech uses principally syntactical predication, as children ‘leave out the subject and all words connected with it, condensing ... speech more and more until only predicates are left’, a process
already manifest in egocentric speech. Inner speech becomes
governed by an almost entirely predicative syntax.

b. Hand in hand with this change goes decreasing vocalisation.
When we converse with ourselves, we need even fewer words....
Inner speech is speech almost without words.

c. With syntax and sound reduced to a minimum, meaning is more
than ever in the forefront. Inner speech works with semantics, not
phonetics. Inner speech deals with sense (the sum of all the
psychological events aroused in our consciousness by the word
not with meaning), which is one of the zones of that sense,
namely the most stable, unified and precise zone. (pg. 110)

d. Murphey (1990) says that pop songs can be compared to these
three aspects of inner speech. These are predication, sense over
meaning, and the loss of superficial vocalisation (miming). These
are because the vague quality of the lyrics that gives no precise
referents seems to encourage predication and leave nominalization
to the listener. The fact that the number of verbs in pop songs is
exceedingly high supports this conclusion.

e. Furthermore, Murphey (1990) adds that at the same time, the
mere use of words give the pop songs "illusion of understanding" as
they do in egocentric speech but what one understands is
constructed from a framework of sense, not from specific
meaning. It seems clear that pop songs play upon these reductions
of exterior speech, prediction and sense–making, leaving
nominalization and meaning, when desired, up to the listeners.
Like pop songs, Murphey (1992) explains that motherese also works upon semantics. That pop songs also place the importance of sense over syntax seems clear from the earlier remarks about their incomplete sentences.

The final characteristic of inner speech, that it is no longer exteriorised, may at first seem inconsistent with what we know of pop songs. However, Murphey (1990), (1992) says the song ‘stuck-in-my-head phenomenon’ may be evidence that we process songs somewhat similarly to inner speech. He says our brains seem to adopt the discourse of pop songs’ for replay more readily than other forms of discourse.

Murphey (1990) explains that the words and melodies of pop songs continue to echo in our minds apparently much more than other forms of language and this may be evidence of pop songs’ similarity to inner speech. He says that our brains may be bio-genetically preordained to play with, or treat, information in this form first, for language acquisition may account for the fact that we even echo songs and melodies that we dislike. Finally, he concludes that pop songs may reflect our inner thinking in that thematically they treat subjects that we usually only think about and do not talk about such as sex. Pop songs, he says, like egocentric speech, may verbalise these thoughts and allow for certain release.

Although Murphey (1990) does not imply that pop songs are inner speech but insists that pop songs reflect some of inner speech discourse properties, which he says, may be the reason why pop songs are attracted to the brains. He says that pop songs furnish a pleasant environment where our inner thoughts flow freely. On the other hand, he has doubt
whether pop songs might be beneficial or harmful to different kinds of inner speech such as creativity, memorising, monitoring reality and others. However he suggests that there are some indications that language acquisition might be aided through the use of pop songs that find isomorphic with one’s inner speech such as listening to a song, which is similar to one’s experience for example falling in or out of love.

In conclusion we can draw further parallels between the Din, egocentric and inner speech, and our processing of songs. Notably the song–stuck–in–my–head (SSIMH) phenomena will help us to further construct a model of natural song use and how it might be used beneficially in education.

2.1.4 Motivational

Harmer (1991) explains motivation is commonly thought of as an inner drive, impulse, emotion or desire that moves one to a particular action or the choices people make as to what experiences or goals they will approach or avoid, and the degree of effort they will exert in that respect. Psychologists define motivation in terms of certain needs or drives.

Ausubel (1978) identified six needs of understanding the construct of motivation. They are the need for exploration, manipulation, activity, stimulation, knowledge and ego enhancement. Motivation can be global, situational or task-orientated. Cunningworth (1984), Krashen (1988), Cook (1991) and Littlewood (1992) claim that motivation is the most important factor to establish success in language learning. In second language learning, motivation is the crucial force that determines whether
a learner embarks on a task at all and how long he maintains it in the memory. This includes many components such as the individual’s drive, need for achievement and success, curiosity, desire for stimulation and new experience.

Gardner and Lambert (1972) first made the distinction between integrative motivation or intrinsic motivation and instrumental motivation or extrinsic motivation. Integrative motivation is when the learner has a genuine interest in the second language community where he wants to learn their language in order to communicate with them more satisfactorily and to gain closer contact with them and their culture. As for instrumental motivation, the learner is more interested in how the second language can be a useful instrument towards furthering other goals, such as gaining a necessary qualification or improving employment prospects.

In Malaysia, English is studied normally not by choice so the motivation is more instrumental. McDonough and Shaw (1993) say ‘the classes are on the whole conditioned by the examination system, but a minority of pupils are able to select classes in line with their own interests, which in turn means that teachers may be less bound by course books and able themselves to be more autonomous in choice of materials and methods’ (pg.11). Based on the researcher and her colleagues’ experience as teachers, what is said by McDonough and Shaw above is true. It is found those parents, teachers and students in Malaysia view the exams as the culmination of school life. It is no wonder that students get put off by language study as they do not find learning for exams exciting.
In this thesis, the researcher would relate how pop songs are able to develop intrinsic motivation. Harmer (1991) says what happens in the classroom will determine students’ attitude to language. Physical conditions, methods of teaching, the teacher and success of learning are factors, which Harmer thinks affect intrinsic motivation.

As for physical conditions, most classes in Malaysia have more than 35 students and some classrooms are without fans. Teaching a second or maybe a third language during midday in a hot room is not conducive to learning. Therefore changing the technique of teaching, e.g. using pop songs outside the classroom such as under a tree is more practical than trying to “drill” students in the classroom. Then the love for the language would come gradually. Pop songs are capable of making learning experiences relevant to students’ needs and interests as Murphey (1992) explains that ‘for whatever reason, songs and music ‘stick’ in the head’ (pg.7). This is because pop songs are ever present in the teenagers’ life.

Murphey (1984) (1985), (1989), (1990) suggests that even the topics of teenagers’ “music” would improve class participation considerably. It seems that relatively few teachers actually use contemporary pop music, as most prefer to use music and songs that they have grown to appreciate. He says, they do not realise that their students may be using other material, which may be equally valuable for its language exploitation possibilities and more valuable for its motivational capacity. He emphasises that for teachers to continue to ignore an extremely rich resource, which is their students own musical interests would be a pity. Therefore, it is all up to the teachers to give the right motivation. Littlewood (1992) suggests that teachers should produce
specific experiences and materials for examples discussing fire or robbery from the news or using newspaper cutting apart from preparing conducive classroom activities to motivate them.

2.1.5 Attitude

Gardner (1985) defines attitudes as a part of motivation. He says that motivation is the combination of effort and desire to achieve the goal learning the language as well as favourable attitudes towards learning the language. Therefore attitudes maybe viewed as subsets of motivation, for example as the persistence shown by the learner in striving for a good.

Simanek (1997) explains that “attitude is a genuine desire to learn and the willingness to do hard intellectual work to achieve understanding”. (pg.1). He says that attitude is also shown by how well one applies oneself even to subjects which one has little interest and how much one can achieve even though the style of the teacher is not to one’s liking. Musgrove (1998) says that ‘attitude’ is a term that frequently use in school. He says that if a student has a bad attitude, the student will find it hard to complete the assignment given by teachers.

2.1.5.1 Origin of Attitude

According to Musgrove (1998) attitude is the word that comes from the same Latin root aptitude ‘aptus’ which means fitted, suitable, and appropriate or the quality of being apt for a specific purpose. He says “According to the Oxford English Dictionary
“attitude” became distinct from aptitude in the late 17th and early 18th centuries as it became synonymous with the terms “disposition” and “posture” in the arts of design.” (pg.1)

He says the meaning of attitude shifts from physiological to psychological in the early 19th century. It represents emotion and belief especially those related to politics. He explains only in this century, attitude is referred to the habit of one’s thinking toward a certain object or action. Furthermore, he explains student dispositions are revealed by their body language or facial expressions to any number of tasks, idea or people.

2.1.5.2 Theoretical Definitions

Richards (1925) asks, "What gives the experience of reading a certain poems its value?" (pg.5). Musgrove (1998) agrees that Richards (1925) has made a conclusion that value is located in the effect the poem has upon our attitudes rather than in the knowledge one has about the poem. Thus, Musgrove concludes the value of the literacy experience must be described in terms of its effect upon our attitudes. Here, the researcher would say that pop songs have a special effect upon our attitudes such as describe by Richards on the poem as "imaginal or incipient activities or tendencies to action" (pg. 112), "faint preliminary preparations for doing this or that" (pg.113) and "emotive beliefs" (pg.279). In other words, like Richards, the researcher is very interested in the effects pop songs have on refining a learner’s attitudes or predisposition just as Richards is most interested in the effect
poetry has. As he says, "it is the attitudes evoked which are the all-important part of any experience" (pg.132).

Burke (1969) investigates how language and thought shape human behaviour. According to Burke, attitudes are ambiguous as they can both substitute for an action or lead to action. To justify his belief, he develops a method called "dramatism". This is to discover why people do what they do. He assembles five principle terms to assist him. The five principles are act, scene, agent, agency and purpose. However, Ford - Martin (1955) says that there is a complex relationships between attitudes and behaviour "that are further complicated by the social factors influencing both". (pg.1).

She explains that behaviour usually reflect established beliefs and attitudes. However, she says, "Ideally, positive attitudes manifest well-adjussted behaviours." (pg.1) She says those studies, which point out inconsistencies between attitudes, and behaviour can redirect the behaviour. She concludes that attitude and behaviour are woven into the fabric of daily life. She justifies that by saying "research has shown that individuals register an immediate and automatic reaction of good and bad towards everything they encounter in less than a second, even before they are aware of having formed an attitude." (pg. 1) She gives examples such as "advertising, political campaigns and other persuasive media message are all built on the premise that behaviour follows attitude and attitude can be influenced with the right message delivered in the right way." (pg.2)
According to Ford - Martin (1955), a clinical psychologist and educator George Kelly introduced his psychology of personal constructs. She says that Kelly's construct was based on the idea how each individual looks at the world through one's unique set of preconceived notions about to constructs. She continues at the point of Kelly's theory is the idea that one can seek new experiences and practice and adapt new behaviour in order to change one's attitude.

However, Ford - Martin justifies, "when behaviour is inconsistent with attitude, it is sometimes a result of social or peer pressure. While adult behaviour generally follows from held attitudes, for children, attitudes are often shaped by observed behaviour. From a very young age, children copy the actions of others and, to a degree, build their attitudes and beliefs from this learned behaviour. As children grow into adolescence, the behaviour of their peers can have significant impact. Sometimes this peer pressure factor can be used to an advantage." (pg.3)

With this belief in mind, the researcher tries to show that if majority of the adolescence students have positive attitude towards English pop songs, the rest of the students somehow will have the positive attitude towards English pop songs even though they have never heard English pop songs before.
2.1.5.3 Practical Applications

Musgrove (1998) explains that recent claims about "constructivist learning" by Weaver (1996), "the value of self-evaluation" by Camp (1992), students' responses to literature by Rosenblatt (1995) and student-centred approaches by Standard (1996) suggest explicit attention to students' attitude. For example, in Richards' sense of attitude as tendency (1925), he explains that teacher should better prepare the ground for learning in the English classroom. He emphasises more towards reading and writing where he gives example that many teachers use writing portfolios where the students see themselves progressing. He says teachers can help students to identify their predisposition towards reading and writing and recount how they believe their attitudes have been developed before asking them to compose lists of reading and writing goals.

The researcher tries to impose more or less the same idea on how to change students' attitude towards learning the second language, in this context not only for reading and writing skills but all skills needed to master the second language learning.

In this thesis, the researcher tries to create interest among students in learning English by introducing pop songs. If the findings show that students have positive attitudes toward English pop songs, this would be beneficial for teachers to create various activities based on English pop songs. The researcher believes that by studying these positive attitudes of the students towards English pop songs may advance students' learning. This is by
making connection of this positive attitude over others such as "persistence over laziness, courage over fear, consideration over narrow - mindedness, or hope over fear" Musgrove (1998 - pg. 2) and the teachers give the class more explicit work to help students to understand better of how specific attitudes help to contribute with their studies.

However, if teachers do not have positive attitude towards the material use like using pop songs because they have to try something new to gain students' interest meanwhile they themselves are not interested, the teaching and learning process would not work well. Teachers' attitudes towards their students and teaching contribute to their success because students are good at reading their teachers' attitudes towards them, teachers' attitude among them, teachers' attitudes towards materials and even teachers' attitude towards their jobs.

Therefore, according to Musgrove (1998), teachers should go to the very basic in attending to attitudes "and making attitudes towards learning an explicit component of English studies should provide students and teachers alike with new understanding of the foundations of learning and resistance in the classroom". (pg. 2).
2.2 Songs and Language

2.2.1 The Origin of Songs

Jespersen (1925) proposes a theory of language origin, that language, before it was spoken, it would have been chanted. Murphey (1990) believes that Jespersen, Freud and Piaget have the same thought that there was rapport between language, song, sex and work.

Livingstone (1973) notes that only human beings can talk and sing. He debates that a man could sing before he could talk, as singing is a simpler system than speech with only pitch as a distinguishing feature. Therefore, he says that songs are languages due to the fact that singing was a prerequisite to speech. He distinguishes speech as being innate and songs being learnt.

Blacking (1981) claims that like language and religion, music is a ‘species-specific trait of a man’. He says the need of physiological and cognitive processes that generate musical composition and performance, which are present in almost every human being is possibly genetically intended. Murphey (1990) agrees to this by saying “ecstasy, agony and motherese also appear to be universal and manifested vocally. The expression of these emotions may very well have been at the origin of Homo sapiens’ natural vocal music and certainly remain strong stimuli for expression today” (p.94).

Murphey (1990) concludes that developing infants do attune to “song-like language first before perceiving and producing the finer articulations of language” (p.97). According to him, “the brain is
extremely complex and begins ordering its universe even before birth” (p.107). Therefore he suggests there may already be music in the womb. Music in the womb can be referred to the bass rhythm of the heartbeat, the melodies of circulatory, respiratory and digestive systems, the mother’s voice and any external sounds that stimulate the growing brain of the child.

In conclusion, children have heard music since they were in their mother’s womb. Therefore music and songs are already part of their lives that may have consoled them tremendously since then. It would be a great advantage if teachers use music and songs in presenting their lessons in order to create a less threatening classroom atmosphere.

2.2.2 Speech and Song

Underwood (1989) describes authentic speech as having the following characteristics:

- Natural rhythm;
- natural intonation;
- natural pronunciation (i.e. not especially carefully enunciated);
- some overlap between speakers (including interruptions);
- normal rate of delivery (sometimes fast, sometimes slow);
- relatively unstructured language, which is used spontaneously in speech;
- incomplete sentences, false starts, hesitations;
- background noises and, sometimes, background voices;
- natural starts and stops;
Less densely packed information than in written language. (pg.100).

Most of the characteristics mentioned by Underwood above can be found in the pop songs. Pop songs have natural rhythm, intonation and pronunciation. In some duet songs, there are even some conversations between singers. Pop song lyrics are normally unstructured just like those found used in spontaneous speeches. It has less densely packed information normally found in written language.

Nordoff and Robbins (1975) also agree that songs are parallel to speech. They identify that both have tonal inflection with stress upon syllables and particular words in a phrase. Songs and speech have syllables for example the tones are higher when the voice is raised than when the voice is down. They also notice that accented syllables and important one-syllable words are emphasised by being given a relatively longer time value meanwhile less important words and unaccented syllables are given shorter time values and are usually lower in pitch.

Before this, List (1963) has made the finding that speech and song are both vocally produced, are linguistically meaningful and melodic. However he could not determine the boundaries between speech and song because of cultural variations. Nevertheless, he has identified the main area of difference is that they are rhythmically distinct. Surprisingly, the rhythm in song is the factor that draws people to it. This can be proven right as many cultures throughout the world choose songs rather than speech especially in ceremonial and funeral laments such as described by Karpeles (1973). This is echoed by Jolly (1975) that song and speech exist on the same continuum of the sounds we produce.
Murphey (1990) also argues that pop songs can be categorised as a framework of simple, affective, conversational discourse because:

1. The words of pop songs are short and repetitive.
2. The sentences are short.
3. Both the sentences and words contain a great deal of personal references.
4. These personal references have practically no precise referents.
5. The settings of time and place are absent, or at most vague.
6. The sex of the text's enunciator and addressee are open categories. (pg.54).

For adolescents, according to Murphey (1990) too, "pop songs could be seen as the motherese of adolescence" (p.233). He says that the language of pop songs resembles foreigner talk because of its simplicity and motherese. Murphey (1990) however argues while foreigner talk usually is linguistically too simple for even school children and lacking in affectedness and motherese but pop songs, in remaining "young adult" in speech and has topics with simple language and high affect, is well adjusted to the topics and language of adolescence.

Murphey (1990) stresses that pop songs' availability, simplicity, affect, and conversational quality as well as songs' hypothesised philogenetical and ontogenetically importance, similarity to motherese and associative – semantic capabilities, all relate or can be explained by Vygotsky's inner speech. He comes to this conclusion because he says that pop songs are "isomorphic" to inner speech where both are "highly predicalized, work with sense as opposed to meaning, are simple, and lack referents of time, place and persons" (p.129)
2.2.3 Rhythm, Intonation and Pronunciation

Rhythm, intonation and pronunciation are the drawing factors for teachers to choose songs as a teaching material. Richards (1969), Techmeier (1969), Shaw (1970), Zola and Sandvoss (1976) and Rees (1977) confirm these. Jordan and Mackay (1976) claim the main value of using rhymes and songs, is the "disguised in practice" for individual sounds, stress and rhythm.

Jolly (1975) stresses that teachers enhance natural response just by using songs in the foreign language classroom because he believes that "there is an innate receptiveness" in everybody to respond to the rhythmic patterns of language.

In teaching contractions, slurs, and getting students to pronounce whole sentences in one go, songs are the answer as noticed by Osman and Wellman (1978). Conventional drills are totally out compared to songs in motivating students, as claimed by Shaw (1970).

2.2.4 Listening

Instead of being considered as passive, listening is now viewed as an active process. Rivers (1983) explains that listening involves active cognitive processing where it involves the construction of a message from phonetic material. Furthermore, listening is active because the nature of listening is normally for communicative purposes.
Therefore, students need to be encouraged to listen and guess for meanings in context instead of finding the meaning of all words used in a dictionary, argues Chastin, (1976). Littlewood (1981) added that using linguistic cues as well as non-linguistic knowledge, can achieve this. In real life, Anderson and Lynch (1988) say listeners actively build a "mental model" as a representation of a spoken message by combining the new message with their background knowledge or schematic knowledge (Widdowson, 1983).

Teaching listening in the classroom is to prepare students to cope with listening in real life situations. However, Rixon (1986) says there are a large variety of different types of listening in real life situations. Galvin (in Underwood, 1989) identifies 5 main reasons for listening.

i. To engage in social rituals.

ii. To exchange information.

iii. To exert control.

iv. To share feelings.

v. To enjoy yourself.

Rost (1990) identifies 4 major types of listening activities to help students develop a range of skills and strategies i.e. attentive, intensive, selective and interactive listening. In this thesis, only selective and interactive listening will be discussed which is more appropriate to the use of pop songs in the classroom.

In selective listening exercises, students are helped to derive specific information from text even if the texts themselves are beyond the students' current level of linguistic and content knowledge. I have found this occurrence in many pop songs. By using selective listening exercises,
three vital and equally important points can be fulfilled in language development.

These exercises:

i. Help students to predict the form information will take and enable them to select the cues that surround this information.

ii. Allow students to become familiar with the organisation of different types of discourse: e.g. – metaphor, idioms and poetic languages.

iii. Allow for acquisition of language such as suggested by Krashen (1988) who advocates teaching input to be comprehensible and slightly above students’ current competence level.

Stevens (1982) agrees that pop songs are a good devise for listening comprehension. He says that pop songs are useful where the task outcomes are usually “closed” or with suitably focused choices to be made by the listeners. This is to provide the listeners with support that they need to derive further information from the text.

On the other hand, further manipulation of the pop songs would be able to create interactive listening activities such as real–life simulations of aural–oral performance. Interactive listening activities are also more challenging, as they are intellectually demanding and certainly very communicative in nature. It makes the learning more learner-centred, as the teacher takes the role of observer or facilitator. Therefore it will reduce stress and anxiety in students as the focus of the activity is on accomplishing the task not on the linguistic task itself.
2.2.5 The Communicative Approach

Most teachers are more comfortable with the structuralism school of approach to teach their students. Even the parents agree to such approach. The communicative approach seems quite an ineffective approach to them where learning is concerned. To these teachers and parents, learning should involve formal process of using conscious strategies such as vocabulary drilling, comprehension exercises, drilling of structures, the use of memory aids such as mnemonics.

On the other hand, the communicative approach implies greater emphasis on authentic language with activities to develop fluency rather than linguistic competence. The emphasis is on the affective as much as cognitive factors. This approach is suitable for individual learner and small group activity. Krashen (1981, 1982) defines acquisition as the way in which children learn their mother tongue through natural, informal and subconscious means.

Communicative approach can be used to deal with pop songs' activities. It is even more effective if pop songs in the video clip are used. This is because in a video clip, students can look at pictures as well as listen to the songs. As Murphey (1990) observes that this is because of the extensive contact youths having is pop songs. He says it is also important that songs and clips are simple and repetitive (cf. Foreigner talk) and get stuck in our heads. Furthermore, he emphasises that they have to be audio-lingual, audio-visual, affective (humanistic teaching, motherese of adolescents, teddy-bear-in-the-ears) as well. The most important factor, Murphey (1990) says is, it has to be interactively communicative and the teacher does not use them passively. Here it
means the pop songs used should involve the students in predicting, describing, commenting, and sharing what students feel about the song.

2.2.6 Authenticity

Lynch (1982) emphasises the authenticity in language teaching. The use of English pop songs is considered very authentic as they are easily available outside classroom. They are also spread worldwide. Murphey (1990) claims all kinds of sound media enable music and songs to be heard everywhere by everyone. This has a great impact on teenagers as they have their own kind of music and songs. He says it would be an advantage to manipulate "students' own information sources" (p.223) meaning their favourite pop songs in the classroom.

These pop songs hold messages ranging from warning of nuclear war to condemning apartheid. There is a wide range of topics to be discussed from socio-political messages, entertainment, art to big business for students and teacher. Therefore students would be able to use English meaningfully and the teacher would be able to enrich students' understanding of certain issues through the use of authentic material, which Murphey (1990) states, the youth use as equipment for living.

Some teachers, however, are reluctant to use authentic materials as they are too difficult for their students. Then only creative and innovative teachers may think of manipulating the materials by giving different tasks to suit the different abilities of students.
Murphey (1990) argues that if teachers are against using pop songs in the class, "school becomes even more rife with irrelevance" (p.215). However he justifies, if teachers could manipulate this media intelligently, students would benefit from this medium tremendously.

2.2.7 Meaning / Discourse

Pop songs can be looked at as an act of communication. According to Austin (1962) an activity should perform or promote language use in the learner. The message of a song will get through to audience if composers write lyrics or the messages and music, which provide the mood and setting. Furthermore, the voice of the singer can heighten its effect on the audience. These certainly will provoke different reactions from different listeners depending on one's life experience. Therefore, pop songs provide a good stimulus for encouraging communication.

Albert and Murphey (1985) describe pop songs as the "motherese of adolescents" and as "affective foreigner talk". This is because pop songs are a form of affective languages. The pop songs register is also characterised as a "teddy-bear-in-the-ear" to show that it has risk less communicative qualities. Murphey (1989, 1990) in his detailed analyses supports the above description. He furthermore shows that pop songs are repetitive, conversation-like (in terms of how the words or sentences are said or constructed) and are about half the speed of spoken discourse.

Murphey (1992) in another study of the discourse of pop songs says that pop songs have dialogic features and their vague references e.g. no specific individual is mentioned and listener may feel that the event is
happening to them, which he refers to as “ghost discourse”. These enable listeners to use them to refer to their personal lives depending on one’s mood and experience. Therefore he concludes that because of these discourse features and the “song–stuck–in-my–head phenomenon” pop songs can be used as potential learning materials in and out of the classroom.

The researcher holds the same opinion. The mass media can exploit songs for various ends such as raising funds for various causes like the World Wildlife Fund and the Ethiopian Famine and has managed to get billions of dollars for such courses because people like listening to pop songs. Therefore, it would be possible, too, for teachers to use pop songs to get attention from their students to learn the English language.

It can be said that meaning in language is not static at all. Murphey (1990) says that with the advent of communicative approach in teaching, the stress in on providing conversational language, which is multifunctional, is expected. He explains that pop songs can be characterised as situational discourse, which stimulates dialogue. He notes that “in the more impressionistic analyses that pop song borrows a great deal from everyday conversation” (p.128). However, he stresses that the extreme characteristics of pop songs may mean that it approximates egocentric and inner speech more than actual conversation.

In Murphey’s research (1990), he concludes that pop songs were found to resemble situational discourse, which had several peculiarities. Pop songs have exceedingly high verb and personal pronoun counts, timeless, place and person referents, which correlate well with Vygotsky’s inner speech. In a song, the time, place and the people
referents are missing. The listener is able to personalise the song. Therefore it can be said that the absence of referents leads to high predication and an emphasis on sense over meaning in both inner speech and pop songs.

2.2.8 Culture

Culture and songs share close ties. Many scholars share this opinion. Jolly (1975) states that the use of songs gives students better understanding of the cultural heritage, which underlies the target language. Through songs, one can express the deeper feelings of oneself or everyday life of the people. Even the strongest emotions are expressed, be it joy or sorrow, love or hate.

Songs then become a direct avenue for the transference of the basic values of culture. Iantorno and Papa (1979) agree that songs offer a great opportunity to present some of the most important aspects of the foreign culture. Therefore it seems right to say that songs always provide groups with feelings of unity, be they national, ethnic, religious or a combination of these.

Brooks (1968) distinguishes language into three bands. They are the syntax, semantics and pragmatics. Syntax refers to the grammar, marks, forms and orders of words and their relationship to each other. Semantics refers to how signs give meaning, what they mean and how the modification in the syntactic area brings about parallel modifications in meaning. Pragmatics is the study the manipulation of syntax and semantic codes by an actual user of language. Brooks points out that a user of
language may use different syntax and semantics depending on their upbringing, age, status, attitude, intent and other factors in order to convey a message.

The cultural dimension in language is brought to play through the 'genetic heritage of the speaker' as well as the 'social' context such as beliefs, habits and practices of those with whom the individual comes into contact. In songs, it is found that culture is included incidentally or intentionally. Therefore, what is involved in culture then is studying how an individual differs from one locality to another in this world. This can be seen in the context of personal need and group-approved behaviour.

2.3 Research Done in Areas of Pop Songs

2.3.1 Research of Pop Songs

Raychaudhuri, (1976) surveyed Indian males between fifteen and twenty-two years of age in India. He found that all of them listened to radios, record players and tape players for music and English pop songs more than eight hours per week and 44% of the correspondents listening for more than fifteen hours per week.

Axelsen, (1981) based on his survey of two thousand correspondents of seventeen and eighteen-year-old Swedish youth reported that:

i. 55% of them wake up with music,

ii. 66% go to sleep with music,
iii. 75% begin their day by listening to their favourite music before going to school,
iv. 60% listen to more than five hours a day when at home because of illness,
v. 60% listen to music while doing homework,
vi. 96% of them listen to music after school and;
vii. 75% play the same music again and again.

Rosing (1984) in his research found that the groups from the age of ten to twenty nine in Germany preferred English ‘beat & pop music’ and ‘English Disco & Rock music’. Rosing estimated that these groups used more than three hours to listen to this music per day.

Murphey (1984) surveyed 160 adolescents between the ages of eleven to nineteen years in three different settings in Switzerland. He found these adolescents spent about eight to twelve hours on English language music per week. Murphey (1985) in his research in Switzerland claimed that the language of pop is predominantly English compared to other languages in the world. He surveyed four radio stations in Switzerland with the finding that youth oriented stations play 75% and 90% English language music and even the traditional mainstream stations of Switzerland still play about 20% of English language music.

Roe and Lofgren (1988) reported than in Sweden for those families who have cable–television, they watch English music video just under an hour during weekdays but rising to more than one hour during weekends.
In conclusion, based on the above researches, people of any age groups especially teenagers love pop music. Most of them listen to English pop songs even if they do not understand the language. Some teenagers are able to memorise the lyrics of the songs without any difficulty at all. Therefore, the researcher believes it would be a great advantage for teachers to use English pop music to teach English as the second language.

2.3.2 Linguistic Studies of Pop Songs

Gammon (1984) analysed popular songs based on English folk song collections. Three different singers that appealed to three different social groups were chosen. He analysed 318 songs of the singers. He described three kinds of song discourse. They were narrative, lyrical and situational.

Murphey (1990) analysed 50 pop songs corpus, which was familiar to Swiss youth. He found that:

i. All songs but one had an 'I' referent, while 88% had a 'you', with only one each of these referents being specified by proper names.

ii. Only 6 of the 50 song lyrics explicitly mention the gender of the singer (male or female) and only 17 mention the gender of 'you'. This means that usually the pronouns could refer to either gender.

iii. 94% of the songs mention no time reference and 80% have no place reference.
In conclusion, to some people it does not matter what language songs are sung in because to them music is the most important factor. Although these statements may be true in some cases, on the other hand it is the words or lyrics in songs that make them potentially linguistically communicative. The analysis of linguistic features would be able to contribute some information therefore it allows a better understanding of the total phenomenon that song and its application in pedagogical situations. For listeners who attend to the lyrics, definitely there is information available.

However, for those who do not understand the language, their brain still works on the phonological and supra-segmental qualities of the language and to those who understand the language may interpret the referential quality invested in lyrics. Nevertheless, the total impact of lyrics combined with music interacting with cognitive processes in social setting will have to be considered.

2.4 Pedagogical Implications

Music and songs have been used in language teaching for quite some time, although perhaps not always to a great extent. However, currently some teachers use pop songs as materials or tools to teach a variety of skills and functions in a variety of pedagogical approaches. Clearly, teachers can manipulate pop song materials to suit their own particular teaching philosophies, techniques, and styles. They can be used with such different approaches such as behaviouristic structuralism, audio-lingual, audio-visual (when used with video clips),
Suggestopedia, Total Physical Response (with actions), and along with communicative and humanistic teaching techniques.

The use of pop songs may encourage the development of several pedagogical trends in language teaching, namely:

i. Using authentic materials,

ii. Student-centring through the use of student interests, schema, emotions, and self direction,

iii. Interactive language teaching and the creation of socio-cognitive conflict, and

iv. Appealing to multi-modal representational systems.

The problems encountered and suggested by teachers in song-use often have to do with how one perceives the materials and the management of it. The "faults" of many songs merely highlight pop songs' authenticity and can be turned to advantages with a bit of creativity. Other problems may stem from poor adjustment of materials and tasks to the level and interests of the students.

As valuable a resource as pop songs may be for motivation and class enjoyment, their full potential for instruction is only possible through the construction of bridging and transfer exercises. Pop songs chosen by students will normally be more motivational and encourage interactive class participation, and may have the result that students accept, and respect, the teacher's choices more readily.

While made — for — EFL material in the children and traditional categories seem well developed; collections of more recent songs are just beginning to appear. Those EFL songs written by teachers in the pop-genre seem
to be less valid alternatives due the great amount of authentic materials already available, popular, and known by students. In the future, more recent collections of pop songs and of video clips will probably make teaching adolescents with songs more up to date with their realities.

2.5 Summary

In conclusion, based on previous researchers’ findings, pop songs are useful motivational language learning materials. This is because pop songs have simple, highly affective, conversational examples of language. They are suitable for a variety of reasons for language acquisition. Furthermore, pop songs are present in the environment and receive such positive reactions from youth. This can be a great reason for exploiting them in EFL classes. Pop songs increase motivation as and are relevant to our students’ interests and lives. It would be interesting to find out if similar patterns exist in the Malaysian context, which is multicultural and multiracial.