วารสารครุศาสตร์
ปีที่ ๔๑ ฉบับที่ ๓ (กรกฎาคม - กันยายน ๒๕๕๖) หน้า ๑๖๐-๑๗๒

เพลงช้างและเพลงแมงมุมลาย: การสืบทอดความนิยมของบทเพลงสำหรับเด็ก

Thai Elephant and the Itsy Bitzy Spider: Continuing Popularity of Children Songs

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บทคัดย่อ

ในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ผู้วิจัยมีเป้าหมายในการหาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างเพลงสำหรับเด็กที่มีท่าทางประกอบกับการสืบทอดความนิยมของเพลงประเภทดังกล่าว ผู้วิจัยได้รวบรวมข้อมูลโดยใช้แบบสอบถามครูดนตรีจำนวน ๙๑ คน จาก ๗๖ จังหวัดทั่วประเทศไทย ซึ่งมีอายุระหว่าง ๒๗-๕๔ ปี ข้อคำถามในแบบสอบมี ๒ ข้อ คือ ๑) ท่านคิดว่าเพลงสำหรับเด็กที่ได้รับความนิยมแพร่หลายได้แก่เพลงอะไรบ้าง ๒) ท่านคิดว่าเพลงสำหรับเด็กที่ได้รับความนิยมเพลงใดบ้างที่มีท่าทางประกอบ

ผลการวิจัยพบว่า ๑) เพลงไทยสำหรับเด็กยังมีจำนวนจำกัด เพลงที่ได้รับความนิยมสูงสุดตามลำดับ คือ เพลงช้าง (70.3 %) เพลงลอยกระทง (60.4%) เพลงแมงมุมลาย (15.3%) และเพลงงามแสงเดือน (12 %) จะเห็นได้ว่ามีเพียงเพลงช้างและลอยกระทงเท่านั้นที่ได้รับความนิยมเกิน 50 % ๒) เพลงสำหรับเด็กที่ได้รับความนิยมและมีท่าทางประกอบที่ได้รับคะแนนมากกว่า 10% อยู่เพียง ๔ เพลง ได้แก่ เพลงช้าง (43.9 %) เพลงเป็ด (24.1 %) เพลงไก่ย่าง (12.1 %) และเพลงแมงมุมลาย (13.2 %) จากการที่เพลงช้างและเพลงแมงมุมลายได้รับความนิยมในทั้ง ๒ ข้อคำถาม ชี้ให้เห็นว่าท่าทางประกอบในบทเพลงสำหรับเด็กอาจส่งผลดีต่อการได้รับความนิยมและและการสืบทอดของเพลงประเภทดังกล่าว

Abstract

In this study, the author aimed to determine the relationship between children's songs with accompanied movementand the popularity of the songs. A survey of Thai music teachers was conducted to gather opinions on the following two questions. First, what are the children's songs that music teachers think have been popular over the years? Sec ond, which of those well-known children's songsareaccompanied by movement?Selected participants inclused 91 Thai general music teachers aged 27 to 54 from the 76 provinces across Thailand.

The study found that 1) there is a limited number of Thai children's songs. Regarding the most popular children's songs, *Chāng* [Elephant] (70.3%) and *Lo̱i Krathong* (60.4%) were the only two to gain more than 50% recognition followed by Itzy Bitzy Spider (sang in Thai version) (15.3%) and *Ngām Sa̱ng Duan* (12%). 2) Only four songs received more than 10% for recognition among the teachers: Chāng (43.9%), Ped (Duck) (24.1%), *Kai Yāng* (Roasted Chicken) (12.1%), and Itsy Bitsy Spider (13.2%). *Chāng* and *Itzy Bitzy* Spider were the only songs listed by the teachers as an answer to both questions. This implies their popularity may be a consequence of the positive effect of the movement or the actions accompanying the song.

Introduction

Young children learn best with active learning through many modes. Some are visually active, some are aurally active, and some are kinesthetically active. Effective instruction for young children needs to facilitate and inspire children to learn actively through music activities (Choksy, 1988). Music through song and movement allows both teachers and students to participate joyfully and actively in the didactic process. Sincechildren also have an innate ability to listen to music attentively (Kodly, 1971; Standley, 2002; Whipple, 2000), teaching with songs proves to be an effective instruction method that can naturally draw learners' attention (Howe & Sloboda, 1991).

Children's songs facilitate early childhood instruction in many ways. They serve as an effective mnemonic device for young brains to memorize and learn new words and complex concepts. They can also function as a good transition background in a classroom. The songs themselves allow many instructional activities. Children practice creative thinking when singing an improvised melody(Suttachitt, 1997). Teachers can increasestudents' attention span viaengaged listening activities. Body awareness also increases when children dance or move to the rhythm of the song. Playing instruments to accompany songs can promote hand-eye coordination. Action songs or play songsare appealing to young children for the fact that they serve well as an outlet for creative physical expression, coordination, and body awareness(Feierabend, 1990; Mallett,

2000). Listening to and singing songs suits young learners learning styles both aurally and kinesthetically, therefore children tend to enjoy learning through music. It can be said that early childhood instruction which uses music can effectively facilitate all three domains of learning, i.e. the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. While teachers use songs and movement in early childhood instruction to serve many instructional purposes, many parents also value music for young children for the fact that it promotes the development of musical aptitude (Dai & Steadier, 2002; Mallett, 2000).

Children's songs also serve many cultural values ranging from musical identity tolinguistic grammar (Udtaisuk, 2007). Being simple in verse and melody, children's songs are usually based on the rhythms and melodic contours of the language itself. Folk songs have major influences on children's songs such as melody line and musical form (Kodly, 1971). However, globalization has had a major influence on the 21st century learning environment as well as on music resources. Children's songs from around the world have never been as easyto access as they are now. As a result, some Thai children's songs may be influenced by Western music especially with respect to melodic and rhythmic patterns.

Many Thai children's songs of the 21st century have been influenced by Western musical idioms, in terms of phrasing, key, and rhythmicdevices. Many Western nursery rhymes and children's songs have been translated into Thai with some adapted Thai content. Such translations have been done by many early Thaimusic educatorsincluding M.L Dussadee Boripat, M.L. Maneerat Bunnag, Orawan Banjongsilp and others (Banjongsilp, 2009). While some original Thai children's songs remain in the music classroom, many Western-influenced children's songs are rapidly increasing in popularity in both households as well as the school system.

The researcher was interested to find the answers to two questions. First, what are the children songs that Thai general music teachers think are the most well-known through the ages? Second, which of those well-known children's songs have accompanied movement? The hypothesis is that the songs that are accompanied by movement, for example, action songs, should be more popular than the ones that are not accompaniedbymovements or action.

The researcher gathered 91 Thai general music teachers representing all five regions of Thailand to answer these questions in a questionnaire. The

teachers' agesranged from 27 to 54 years. It is important to know,based on their experience, how they have learned the songs themselves as well as how they teach the songs. The information from these participants is applicable for the years 1952-2007 in Thailand. In this period of 55 years, the research sought to describe the differences for each teacher over time where each period may have had varying degrees of influence from the forces of globalization. Accordingly, the results have been divided into 3 sections according to the age of the informants.

Research Question

1. Which children's songs do music teachers think have been most well-known through the time period studied?

2. Whichof those well-known children's songs are accompaniedby movement?

Research hypothesis

1. As there are few songs that have remained well-known through time with each generation of Thais,

2. Songs that are accompanied by movements, or action songs, will have greater recognition among people.

Research Assumptions

1. Answers from music teachers should represent a valid source for children's literature in current use.

2. Answers from music teachers with an age difference of 27 years should provide usefulinformation about songs' popularity in different periods of time.

3. Movements that accompanied the children's songs may explain the continued popularity of thesongs. These types of songs, sometimes known as action songs, are generally appealing toyoung children.

4. The selective sampling method using financial and professional criteria should not affect the research findings significantly due to the fact that children's songs can be heard, sung, and learned from various sources. Differenteconomic or social backgrounds should not limit the experience of and access tochildren's songs.

Method

Participants

A purposeful sampling method was used to select Thai general music teachers from 76 provinces in Thailand. These teachers were applicants to the *Free-handed Music Teacher Workshop* 2008 provided as an academic scholarship for those music teachers around the country who metboth the financial and professional requirements of the workshop. The workshop was

sponsored by The School of Music, Mahidol Universityand was conducted from March 30, to April 8, 2009. The surveys were given to 91 music teachers who were selected from the applications for the workshop. The surveys were given out at the beginning of a class session of the *Free-handed Music Teacher Workshop.* The participants were 91 teachers from 76 provinces from 27 to 54 years of age. This range of 27 years difference in participants' ages should providea generalizable sample of answers for the survey. Accordingly, the researcher divided the participants' answers into 4 groups in order to find additional details regarding age as a possible influencing factor. Thus, the participants were divided into 4 groups: 1.aged 27-33, 2. 34-46, 3. 47-54, and 4. age unspecified.

Procedures

After the data were collected from the survey, descriptive statistical methods were applied in order to find the answers to two questions: which children's songs do music teachers think have been most well-known through the time period studied? Which of those well-known children's songs are accompaniedby movement?

Design

Besides the two research questions, the researcher also wanted to find if different age groups would have different perceptions about which songs were popular over time. Therefore, after converting raw data into a percentage of the whole group (N = 91), the raw data of each age group was converted to a percentage for each group (N= 22, 22, 16, and 31). This was done to find the popularity of the songs across each age group, for instance, one song might have been popular for a certain age group, but not others.

Independent Variables

In this study, the ages of the participant music teachers were the independent variables. Only few songs have remained well-known through time with each generation of Thais. Therefore, the researcher wanted to find if there is a difference in the answer to the repertoire of well-known children's songs between the teachers with experience of children's songs from different periods of time. Accordingly, the participants were divided into 4 groups by age.

Dependent Variables

The answers from the participants were names of the songs (nominal variable) that they thought were most well-known in their period and the names of those songs

that are accompanied by movement. The nominal data (song names) were collected in raw scores in order to find which were the most popular children's songs as well as their ranking. Later, the raw scores for each song were calculated to find the relative popularity of that song across each age group.

Results

Results of the research reveal that there are only two children's songs that remained popular across all teacher groups with the threshold beinga higher than 50% response rate. Those two songs were *Chāng* and *Lǭi Krathong*. *Chāng*received votes from 64 teachers (70.3%), while *Lǭi Krathong* received votes from 55 teachers (60.4%). *Chāng* is a Thai children's song whose melody originated from a Thai folk song and which uses a pentatonic scale. The melody of the song is familiar to all Thais and has been used in pieces for Thai Classical Dance known as *Phamā Khwē* (Burmese Dance). The second most popular song was *Lǭi Krathong*. This song is sung during the annual *Lǭi Krathong* festival in November. The song's lyrics explain the significance of the activities related to the festival. It also uses a pentatonic scale.

When considering the age factor of the answers among the three identified age groups, research data reveals that *Chāng* received more than 70% of votes in all groups. The song was more popular in the older age group. There were 15 out of 16 teachers in group 3 who voted for *Chāng* (93.75%), whereas 18 out of 22 teachers in group 2 (81.82%), and 16 of 22 teachers in group 1 (72.73%). *Lǭi Krathong*was the second most popular song from the data. Itreceived only 45% of votes across the three identified age groups. In this case, there were 18of 22 teachers in group 1(81.82%) who voted for *Lǭi Krathong,* whereas 8 out of 16 in group 3 (50%), and 10 out of 22 teachers in group 2 (45.45%) voted it the most popular song.

Table1 *Children's Songs that are most well-known over the time period studied*

Song	Group	Age 27-33	Age 34-46	Age 47-54	Unidentified
	N	22	22	16	31
Chāng	*n*	16	18	15	15
	%	72.73	81.82	93.75	48.39
	Rank	3	2	1	4
Lǫi Krathong	*n*	18	10	8	19
	%	81.82	45.45	50	61.29
	Rank	1	4	3	2

The other songs that were listed as popular children's songs did not receive enough votes to be statistically significant. Among those songs,*Itsy Bitsy Spider* and *Ngām Sāng Duaan* received more votes than other low popularity songs at15.3% and 12% respectively. The Thai version of *Itsy Bitsy Spider* (with Thai lyrics) preserved the meaning and accompanied action as the original Western version. *Ngām Sāng Duaan* is one of the songsof the ten *10 Ram Wong Māttrātān* [Standard 10 Thai Ram-wong Pair Dances]. Although the song may not be classified as a children's song, the participants voted for the song because the content may be suitable for pedagogic purposes with young children.

Regarding the answers to the second question on well-known children songs accompanied by movement, more children's songs emerged from the list of answers. Of the fourmost popular songs listed, two are action songs or songs to beaccompanied by movement *namely, Chāng*and *Itzy Bitzy Spider.* The second question revealed two songs that were not voted most popular in question 1. These were*Ped (Duck)* and *Kai Yāng* [Roasted Chicken]. *Ped* and *Kai Yāng* had actions - imitating aswimming duck or roasted chicken - for children to perform while singing.

Table 2 *Well-known Children's Songs that are Accompanied by Movement*

Song	Group	Age 27-33	Age 34-46	Age 47-54	Unidentified
	N	22	22	16	31
Chāng	*n*	12	13	9	6
	%	54.55	59.09	56.25	19.35
	Rank	1	1	1	1
Ped	*n*	7	11	7	2
	%	31.82	50	43.75	6.452
	Rank	2	2	1	2
Kai Yāng	*n*	6	5	1	0
	%	27.27	22.73	6.25	0
	Rank	3	3	4	
Itsy Bitsy Spider	*n*	4	5	3	0
	%	18.18	22.73	18.75	0
	Rank	4	3	3	

Chāng received highest popular recognition as a children's song usually accompaniedby movement across the four age groups (43.9%). Three other songs were recognized as well-known children songs withaccompanied movement: *Ped, Kai Yāng,* and *Itsy Bitsy Spider.*The three songs received 24.1%, 12.1%, and 13.2% of votes respectively. Table 2 demonstrates raw score as well as ranking of the votes from each age group for the four songs.

Discussions

As shown in the findings, there is a very limited number of well-known children's songs in Thailand. This suggests that the children's national songrepertoire, which conveys cultural values, is very limited. As shown in this research, *Chāng* and *Itzy Bitzy Spider* were the only songs listed under both questions. One of the reasons for this may be that children's songs in Thailandhave different roots than Western children's songs. Thai children's songs might have a closer relationship to rhymes that often accompany children's games. Due to the fact that Thai is a tonal language, the words in the rhyme themselves usually suggest the tone of the sound,

whether high or low pitched, in certain points. Therefore children's singing games or rhyming games were not considered as songs. Many documents on rhyming games and verses that accompany children's games do not necessarily identify the notation or pitch for how to pronounce the rhymes or verses although they can be notated. This may be a topic for future research about children's songs to distinguish Thai children's songs from Thai roots and standards, not Western standards where pitch and notation are prominent features. Although some original Thai children's songs and rhymes remain, many Western children's songs are rapidly becoming popular in households as well as in the school system due to the rapid growth of inter-cultural and social exchange.

Both *Chāng* and *Itsy Bitzy Spider* share the featureof havingassigned body movements that go along with the words and song. It could be that this has contributed to their popularity with children. While *Chāng* has arm and hand actions, *Itsy Bitsy Spider* has finger and hand movements. Moreover, both songs share a similar meter and beat division (see appendix). Unequal beat subdivision gives an enjoyable pattern for children to sing and to move along to.

Since *Incy Wincy Spider* (or many times called *Itsy Bitzy Spider*) is considered the most popular children's song sung by parents to their children in the US (Johnson-Green & Custodero, 2002), the researcher has proposed that accompanying movements may play an important role in helping the two songs maintain their popularity over time.

In conclusion, children's games, nursery rhymes, playing chants as well as playsongs often associate movements with music. The combination of movement and music appeals to young children thereby sustaining their memory and affection for the songs which will be passed on to the next generation. This process also plays an important role in preserving each nation's cultural and musical heritage. Every generation makes a contribution to the existence of the nation's cultural and musical heritage by preserving it. Older generations preserve and pass on their cultural values to younger generations. The more the young enjoy and value children's games, nursery rhymes, and playing chants, the better the chances they will survive and be carried on.

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Appendix A

Chāng



Chāng Chāng Chāng. Nong kœ̄i hen Chāng rư plaw? Chāng mun tūa tō mai bao. Ja mūk yāo



yāo, rīak wā ngūang. Mī khīao tai ngūang, rīak wā ngā Mī hū mī tā, Hang yāo.

Action/Movement details

Verse	*Translation*	**Movement**
Chāng, Chāng, Chāng	*Elephant elephant elephant*	Walking like elephant
Nong kæ¯ihen Chāng rưplaw?	*Have you ever seen elephant?*	Pointing to others
Chāng mun tūa tōmai bao	*The elephant is very big.*	Opening two arms out
Jamūk yāoyāo, rīak wā ngūang.	*Its nose is calledNgūang*	Extending one arm as a trunk
Mī khīao tai ngūang, rīak wā ngā	*Its teeth under the trunk is called Ngā.*	Extending two arms as ivory
Mīhū mītā, Hangyāo.	*It has ears, eyes, and long tail.*	Pointing at ears, eyes and making wiggling long tail with one arm

Note

Khun Ying Chinn Silapabanleng (คุณหญิงชิ้น ศิลปบรรเลง)created the lyrics for the song after a traditionalThai folk tune, the composer of which is unknown. The melody of this tune also conveys a Burmese character. Therefore, the tune is called *Phamā Khwē.* (พม่าเขว)

Appendix B

Itsy Bitsy Spider



Itsy Bitsy spider went up the water spout. Down came the rain and washed the spider out



Out came the sun and dried up all the rain. And the It-sy Bit-sy spider went up the spout again.

Action/Movement details

Verse	Movement
Itsy Bitsy spider went up the water spout	Walking the thumb and index finger on the thumb and index finger of the other hand up high (like a spider climbing up)
Down came the rain	Wiggling fingers down from head to waist
and washed the spider out.	Swinging arms to sides
Out came the sun and dried up all the rain.	Raising hands above head, make a circle for the sun
And the Itsy Bitsy spider went up the spout again.	Walking the thumb and index finger on the thumb and index finger of the other hand up high (like a spider climbing up)

Note

Itsy Bitsy Spider is a Western nursery rhyme which also has many other titles including Eency Weency Spider, Ipsy Wispy, and Incy Wincy Spider. The author chose Itsy Bitsy Spider as the title as it was the most common one in the resources.

ผู้เขียน

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