The Effectiveness of Song Technique in Teaching Paper Based TOEFL (PBT)'S Listening Comprehension Section

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Abstract

Among three sections that follow the Paper-Based TOEFL (PBT), many test takers find listening comprehension section is the most difficult. Thus, in this research the researcher aims to explore how students learn PBT's listening comprehension section effectively through song technique. This sounds like a more interesting and engaging way to learn language because music is a very powerful motivational tool for learning language. To reach the goal of this study, the researcher applied the grammar approach. It is an appropriate approach since the main idea of grammar-based listening exercises is to analyze the language by its components and reconstruct an incomplete text. Besides, the researcher employed an English song as the media the researcher uses the top- down model for the Listening Process. In this research, the writer tries to share his experience in teaching listening in English department of Teknokrat College by implementing song technique.

Keywords: Effectiveness, top- down model, grammar approach, listening, English song

> *The use of particular language teaching techniques is justified to the extent that they achieve learning goals.* (Nation, I., & Newton, J. 2009).

1. Introduction

This research explores the using of song as the effective technique in teaching Paper -Based TOEFL's listening comprehension section in Teknokrat College, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. The present writer intends to do this research mainly inspired by the fact that there are so many test takers who failed in taking this kind of test. Even, they failed in several times. Furthermore, among three sections that follow the Paper-based TOEFL (listening comprehension, structure and written expression, reading comprehension), many test takers find listening comprehension section is the most difficult. As Rahbar & Khodabakhsh (2013) pointed out "listening comprehension ability is one of the most difficult ones to master, especially in an EFL context in which students are not exposed to the natural speech of native speakers and therefore are usually reluctant in attending listening classes". Besides, as defined by Oxford (1993), listening comprehension is a complex problem solving skill and it is more than just perception of the sounds. It includes comprehension of meaning, words, phrases, clauses, sentences and connected discourse. Based on Underwood (1989), there are seven problems in listening skill that students may encounter: (1) lack of control over the speed at which speakers speaks; (2) not being able to get things repeated; (3) the listener's limited vocabulary; (4) failure to recognize the signals; (5) problem of interpretation; (6) inability to concentrate; and (7) established learning habit.

According to that point of view, students in Indonesia, Especially, in Teknokrat College, Lampung face a great deal of difficulties in learning listening comprehension of Paper -Based TOEFL. Thus, the problem of this study states as (1) how was the English song developed as an effective way to teach listening section in Paper -Based TOEFL version? And (2) what are the advantages of English song for teaching listening comprehension section in Paper -Based TOEFL version? The previous study by Arevalo (2010) stated that songs are the most suitable type of authentic material to develop listening comprehension. He also added that songs are easily available; songs present new vocabulary and expressions in context. Furthermore, Keskin (2011) in Lo and Li (1998), songs are able to change the monotonous mood in the class and with the smoothing effect of music: they provide a comfortable class environment so that students can develop their lingual skills more easily. Besides, as Oanh (2011) states, " music can improve concentration , improve memory, bring a sense of community to a group, motivate learning, relax people who are overwhelmed or stressed, make learning fun, help people absorb material".

2. Listening Comprehension

Nation, I., & Newton, J. (2009) have identified that over 50 percent of the time that students spend functioning in a foreign language will be devoted to listening. However, they are rarely taught how to listen. In result, the learners still face any problems. As emphasized by Flowerdew & Miller (2005), humans are born with an innate ability to hear. However, hearing is not listening, and many factors need to be considered in the development of effective listening skills. Thus the present writer employed the song technique as the development of listening skill. Besides, Nation, I., & Newton, J. (2009) also stated that Listening was traditionally seen as a passive process by which the listener receives information sent by a speaker. More recent models view listening as a much more active and interpretive process in which the message is not fixed but is created in the interactional space between participants. In addition, Nunan (2003) listening is active, purposeful process of making sense of what we hear. Language skills are often categorized as receptive or productive. Speaking and writing are the productive skills. Listening, along with reading is receptive skill. That is, it requires a person to receive and understand incoming information (input). He added that listening is active because as people listen, they process not only what they hear but also connect it to other information they already know. Furthermore, Flowerdew & Miller (2005) explained that to teach effective listening we must be aware of how our students approach their learning in general and how they prefer to develop their listening skills.

2.1 The Top-Down Model

To understand how people make sense of the stream of sound we all hear, it is helpful to think about how we process the input. Flowerdew & Miller (2005) explained that there are three models of the listening process. They are the bottom-up model, the Top-Down Model and the Interactive model. Yet, in this study, the present writer applied the second model that is the top-down model since it is the most effective listening process. It emphasizes the use of previous knowledge in processing a text rather than relying upon the individual sounds and words. As Nation, I., & Newton, J. (2009) point out it involves the listener is going from the whole- their prior knowledge and their content and rhetorical schemata-to the parts. In other words, the listener uses what they know of the context of communication to predict what the message will contain, and uses parts of the message to confirm, correct or add to this.

2.2 The Grammar Approach

According to Richard in Flowerdew & Miller (2005), the main idea of grammar –based listening exercise is to analyze the language by its components and reconstruct an incomplete text. By understanding the grammar of a language and the principles of how words are put together, or parsing. Furthermore, a grammar approach to listening usually has students look at a written text while they listen to a recording. This force them to do several things: identify words by their position in the sentence, work out the relationship between words and phrases, use forward and backward inferencing cues, and make intelligent guesses based on textual cues. In addition, the listening exercises are treated as purely classroom-based activities, which usually have little or no relevance to the outside world, and tasks students are asked to perform have no real-life function. For example; the international TOEFL test uses this method extensively in the listening section of the test.

2.3 The Importance Of English Song As The Technique In Foreign Language Teaching

Oanh (2011) stated that no one can deny that music has played a very important part in our life. In Indonesia, an English song has strategic position. It is proven by the acceptance on the various music genres and the use of music based curriculum. As Pasaribu (2005) stated in Widyasih (2013) the existence of English songs give big impact to every life aspects that is not only at informal and non-formal but also becomes a national program through interdepartmental and private enterprise. Further, Arevalo (2010), stated as follow;

> When designing lessons and teaching materials to further develop listening comprehension skills, students need to be motivated and stay motivated. This is best accomplished by determining the suitable of the listening material such as the use of Song as authentic material. The use of song stimulus and motivates students to comprehend the content of materials.

Besides, Orlova in Arevalo (2010), songs and mainly lyrics are employed as a stimulus for class discussion. Medina in Oanh (2011) it is currently a common practice to use songs in the classroom to support second language acquisition because music can stimulate and motivate students to learn a new language. In addition, Keskin (2011) pointed out, "Using songs as tools for teaching a foreign language has many benefits". It can be said that songs amuse students: they reduce the level of boredom existing in ordinary language teaching and increase student enthusiasm towards studying. Besides, Cheung in Keskin (2011) as students more easily learns the things about which they have background knowledge. Student motivation is increased when the elements belonging to the popular culture of the target language are involved in the class. It increase student's desire to learn and enables them contribute to the process of learning by making use of their own musical knowledge. As it explained in introduction, song also can strengthen student's memory. According to Maley in Keskin (2011) songs offer many codes that strengthen student memory such as choruses, rhymes and melodies.

2.4 Song –Based Activities

To make learners actively engaged, the lecturers should make the learning as relax as possible. Besides, Nunan (2003) also stated that if learners need experience with different types of listening texts, they also need to work with a variety

of tasks. Song –based activity is one of good way for learning. As Klancar (2006) pointed out in Lestari, W.A. & Rachmawati, Y.(2013) using songs, poem, rhymes and chants is a wonderful way of making students sing/talk and at the same time (unconsciously). Lecturers can design various tasks with a listening text. According to Ur (1984) in Oanh (2011) there are various kinds of listening tasks such as dictation exercise, ticking off items, true/false, detecting mistakes, gap-filling, pictures, answering question etc. according to the previous point of view, the lecturers should consider the text itself whether the task is easy or not. Further, It depends on the age and level, whether the listening text is authentic or not.

2.5 Format For Developing A Listening Lesson

According to Field (2008) the listening lesson that one encounters in good ELT practice today, as follow:

Pre-listening

    Pre-teach only critical vocabulary

    Establish context

    Create motivation for listening

Extensive listening

    General questions on context and attitude of speakers

Intensive listening

    Pre-set questions

    Intensive listening

    Checking answers to questions

Post listening (optional)

    Functional language in listening passage

    Learners infer the meaning of unknown words from the sentences in which they appear

    Final play; learners look at transcript

Figure 2.1 Current format for a listening lesson

Pre-listening

In this stage, the teachers ensure to not pre-teach all the unknown vocabulary in recording. In another word, they should pre-teach only critical words. There are some reasons for that. *First*, it takes time-time which is much better spent listening. *Second*, it also leaves student unprepared for what happens in a real life listening encounter where, inevitably, there will be words which they do not know and have to work out for themselves. And the *Third* is the effect upon the listening process. Besides, the teachers establish the context. They should give students a general idea of what they are going to hear. Then, the last, the teachers create motivation by writing a title for the listening passage on the board and asking the learners to predict what they will hear.

During listening

The teachers in this stage should do two actions. They are *pre-set questions* and *checking answers*. Further, the teachers set questions before the second play of the cassette and make sure that they know in advance what they are listening for. The last is the teachers allow learners time to write up their answers and then checks them with the class as a whole. In addition, it is better for them to compare answers in pairs first before submitting them to the whole class.

Post-listening

There are four points that should be considered by the teachers. *First*, functional language, many of the dialogues which feature in published listening materials represent common types of human interaction ;language function such as refusing, apologizing, offering etc. In addition Arevalo (2010) explained that teachers can use post-listening activities to check comprehension, evaluate listening skills and use of listening strategies, and extend the knowledge gained to other context. *the second* is inferring vocabulary. The teachers identify a number of useful words in the recording which may be new to the class and whose meanings are relatively clearly illustrated by the context within which they occur. Then, the teachers write the words on the board, and replay the sections of the listening passage which contain tem. *The third* is Paused play. It can serve some purpose, as a way of checking whether learners can divide up short sections of connected. And the last is Final play. The students are given a transcript of the listening passage. Further, it is a valuable activity, since it allows learners, on individual basis, to clarify sections of the recording which they have not so far succeeded in decoding.

3. Materials And Methods

The data were analyzed qualitatively based on the theory of listening lesson by Field, (2008). Besides, the theory of grammar approach and model of the listening process by Richard in Flowerdew & Miller (2005) also employed. In general, qualitative methods are subjective and humanistic as they deal with meanings. As Clarke and Dawson (1999)

stated in Ridho (2010), it is different from quantitative method which is regarded as more objective and scientific as they deal with numbers. Furthermore, the data gathered through participant observation and document review. Catherine M and Gretchen B. Rossman (1995) explained that the fundamental methods relied on by qualitative researchers for gathering information are , participation in the setting, direct observation, in-depth interviewing, document review.

This research is proposed to the students of Teknokrat College, Lampung, Indonesia and conducted in laboratory work III class during even short semester of 2012/2013. Most of them are from 2nd semester majoring English Literature. Further, they have to do this kind of test because it is one of requirement to bear their bachelor degree and because they are students of English department which is English as not their first language. Thus, TOEFL test is required primarily to them. As Phillips (2001) explained that The TOEFL Test is a test to measure the level of English proficiency of non-native speakers of English.

The material used in this study was song which has been chosen based on their languages, age and language level of the students. Not only that the writer also tried to find songs which grammar and language focus complemented the topics studied in the textbook. In this study, the writer used *Longman Complete Course for the TOEFL Test* by Deborah Phillips as the textbook. Further, the present writer also presented for every song its corresponding video clip.

4. Results And Discussion

The present writer shows the findings in relation to report how students learn PBT's listening comprehension section effectively through song technique**.** In addition, the following data are gathered from the results of data collection.

4.1 The development of English songs for teaching listening section in Paper -Based TOEFL version

According to the previous studies, there are many diverse ways to conduct the song as technique in the classroom. One of them is about the lesson format. Thus, in this study, the present writer has implemented the current lesson format that designed by Field (2008). As it explained in the theoretical framework, that lesson format has three stages as Pre-listening, during listening and post listening. Moreover, his idea is really supported by the appropriate listening process that is the top-down model and grammatical approach that the present writer used.

A) Pre-listening

The lesson started by establishing the general context. In addition, the listener used what they know of the context of communication to predict what the message will contain, and uses parts of the message to confirm, correct or add to this.

Activity 1: you're going to hear a song from an English singer (display the picture on the screen). He is Daniel Bedingfield. He will sing a song entitled *if you're not the one*

Figure 1. Photo of Daniel Bedingfield

Activity 2: What do you think Today's song will be about?
Activity 3: Can you predict the words that will appear in the song lyric?

The lecturer wrote any kinds of answers from learners on the whiteboard.
Activity 4: some of you guessed correctly and some of you are wrong.
Let's listen and see who was right.

B) During listening

Before the learners heard the recording (song) on the second play, the lecturer showed them the instrument on the screen.

Task 1.Gap-Filling

(1)
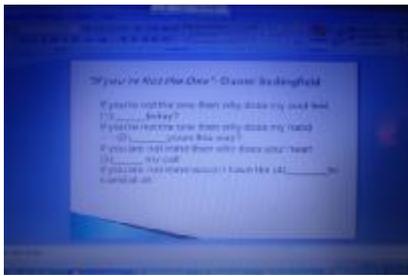
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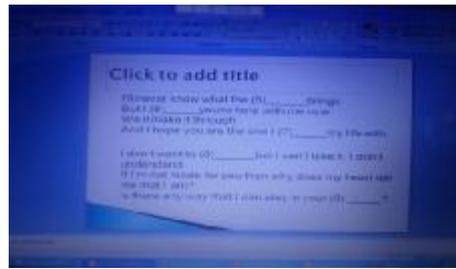
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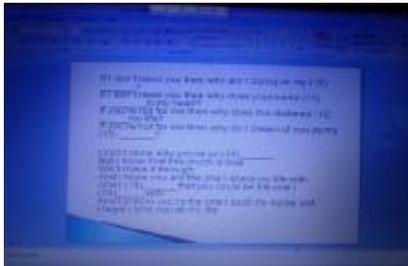
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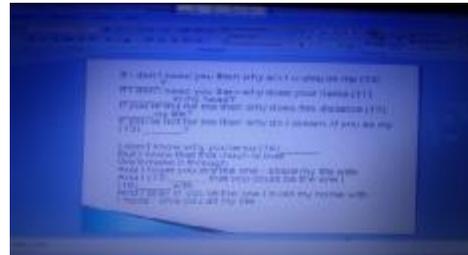
Next, the lecturer told to the learners what they are listening for.

Activity 5: Listen the song carefully and complete the missing words/phrase (Learners wrote notes of their answers during listening)

Then, Learners compared their answers in pairs before submitting them to the whole class.

C. Post-listening

In this stage, the lecturer drew attention by linking the song lyric to TOEFL strategies or skill. In this study, the writer took the sample for strategies skill 3 that is avoiding similar sound.

Activity 6: How does the singer's soul feel today? (The learners answered differently such as *happy, glad,* etc and the lecturer wrote on the whiteboard)

Activity 7: Where is he crying? (They answered "*on his bed* and the lecturer wrote on the whiteboard)

Activity 8: Where does the girl's name resound? (They answered "*it is in his head* and the lecturer wrote on the whiteboard)

Activity 9: Could you identify the similar sound to those answers? (They answered "*Glad-bed-head*"

Then, the lecturer told to the learners that one of the strategies or skill in TOEFL listening section is avoiding the similar sound. Besides, there are some other strategies or skills that matched to the song lyric such as Listen for wishes, listens for negative expression, listen for expression, listen for untrue condition, listen for idiomatic language etc.

Next, the lecturer replayed the sections of the listening passage which contain them and conduct paused play to practice the intonation pattern also as a way checking whether learners can divide up short sections of connected speech into individual words. Finally, the Lecturer gave the lyric of the song, play the song in video & sing along together.

4.2 The advantages of English song for teaching listening section in Paper -Based TOEFL version for learners
According to the observation, the present writer found that teaching English in using song, the learners involved get six benefits towards their listening development. These benefits cover their motivation to comprehend the content of material, their motivation to learn new vocabulary, to reduce their level of boredom in the class, to help the learners to pronounce English words correctly, to raise student confidence and comfort, easily to link the Listening TOEFL strategies or skills to the song lyric and to build positive environment.
The First, they are motivated to comprehend the content of material since the use of song is as an authentic material. As Arevalo (2010) points out' wherever we are, songs always follow us at home, at school, at office, at cars and so on. Thus, we can directly listen to the song and also interest to learn the value of language in it. The second, they are motivated to learn new vocabulary. According to Jecminkova (2009) music and song in ESL classroom can increase student's vocabulary. This study revealed that there were some new vocabularies that learners didn't know such as glad, fit, resound, maim etc. the third benefit is English song can reduce learner's boredom in the class. The present writer saw the learners eager to listen. In addition, they demonstrate their enthusiasm towards studying.
The fourth benefit showed that English song can help learners to pronounce English words correctly. It can be proved that in the study, some students might find some sounds difficult to pronounce such as *Main, breathe, breath away* etc. because song is authentic material and rhymes in songs provide listeners with repetition of similar sound the learners can acquire the sounds. Besides, English song also can raise the student's confidence and comfort. It can be said so since song can make student fun and relax. Next, English song give a benefit in linking the listening Paper-

Based TOEFL strategies or skills to the song lyric. In this study, the present writer could teach easily in developing the strategies or skill. It can be shown in the following lyric.

If you're not the one then why does my soul feel **glad** today?
If you're not the one then why does my hand fit yours this way?
If you are not mine then why does your heart return **my call**
If you are not mine would I have the strength to stand **at all**

I'll never know what the future brings
But I **know** you're here with me **now**
We'll make it through
And I hope you are the one I share my life with

I don't want to run away but I can't take it, I don't understand
If I'm not made for you then why does my heart tell me that I am?
Is there any way that I can stay in your arms?

If I don't need you then why am I crying on my **bed**?
If I don't need you then why does your name resound in my **head**?
If you're not for me then why does this distance maim **my life**?
If you're not for me then why do I dream of you as **my wife**?

The lyric above revealed that there are some words that have similar sounds such as *Glad-bed-head, my life-my wife, know-now, my call-at all.* As we studied that one of the strategies to face the problem of Paper Based TOEFL Listening is avoiding similar sounds. As Philips (2001) stated that often the incorrect answers in the short dialogues are answers that contain words with similar sounds but very different meanings from what you hear on the recording. He added that in this strategy we first identify the words in the answers that contain similar sounds, and do not choose these answers.

5. **Conclusions**

Based on the results above, the present writer can conclude that in this study song can be used as an effective way to develop listening comprehension skill in Paper-Based TOEFL. It can be seen when the learners joined listening activities in the class willingly and showed very enthusiasm.

Regarding to the research question, There were three stages that present writer conducted in this study to develop english song as an effective way. they were Pre-listening, during listening and post listening. The present writer also found that this technique motivates the learners to learn new vocabulary, to reduce their level of boredom in the class, to help the learners to pronounce English words correctly, to raise student confidence and comfort, easily to link the Listening TOEFL strategies or skills to the song lyric and to build positive environment. To gain all of the benefits above, choosing the appropriate song was required. In addition, it should consider the level of learners, ages etc. Not only that it also should be followed by the proper activity that enggage the learners to involve in it.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1a
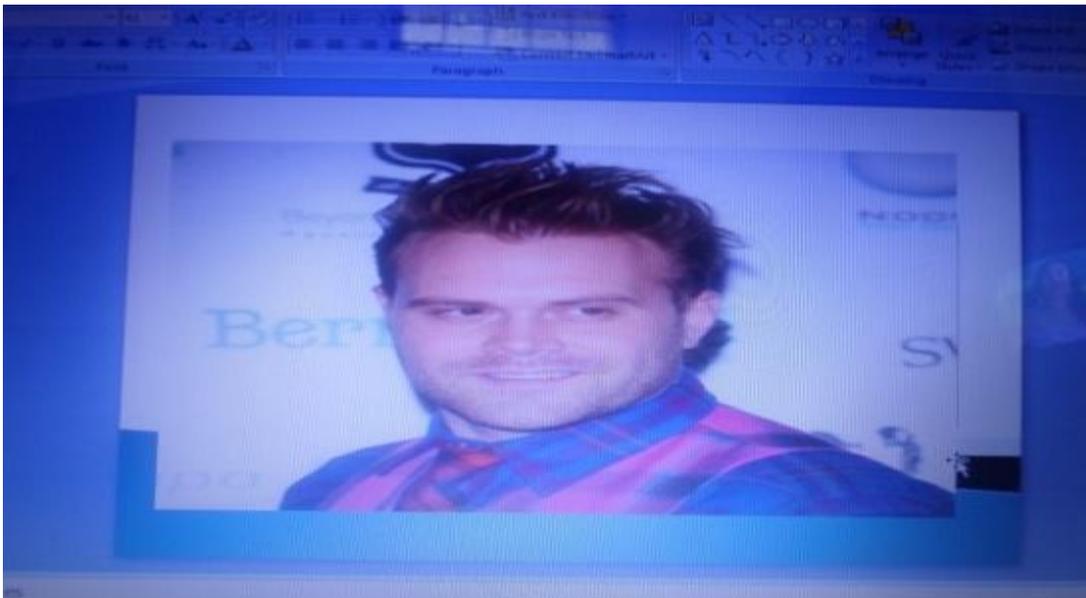
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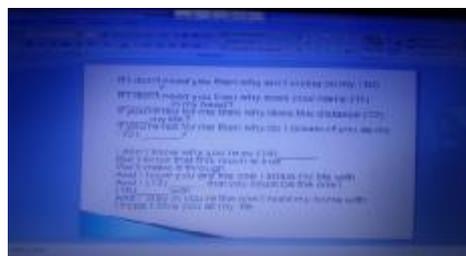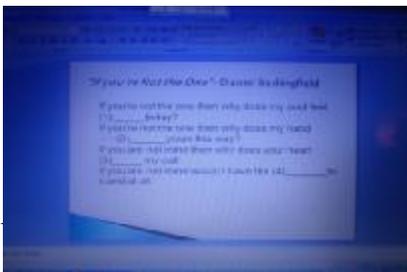
Appendix 1c

"If you're Not the One"- Daniel Bedingfield

If you're not the one then why does my soul feel glad today?
If you're not the one then why does my hand fit yours this way?
If you are not mine then why does your heart return my call
If you are not mine would I have the strength to stand at all

I'll never know what the future brings
But I know you're here with me now
We'll make it through
And I hope you are the one I share my life with

I don't want to run away but I can't take it, I don't understand
If I'm not made for you then why does my heart tell me that I am?
Is there any way that I can stay in your arms?

If I don't need you then why am I crying on my bed?
If I don't need you then why does your name resound in my head?
If you're not for me then why does this distance maim my life?
If you're not for me then why do I dream of you as my wife?

I don't know why you're so far away
But I know that this much is true
We'll make it through
And I hope you are the one I share my life with
And I wish that you could be the one I die with
And I pray in you're the one I build my home with
I hope I love you all my life

I don't want to run away but I can't take it, I don't understand
If I'm not made for you then why does my heart tell me that I am
Is there any way that I can stay in your arms?

'Cause I miss you, body and soul so strong that it takes my breath away
And I breathe you into my heart and pray for the strength to stand today
'Cause I love you, whether it's wrong or right
And though I can't be with you tonight
You know my heart is by your side

I don't want to run away but I can't take it, I don't understand
If I'm not made for you then why **does my heart** tell me that I am
Is there any way that I could stay in your arms

Worksheet 1 -Teacher's guide

"If you're Not the One"- **Daniel Bedingfield**

If you're not the one then why does my soul feel (1) _____today?
If you're not the one then why does my hand (2)_____yours this way?
If you are not mine then why does your heart (3)_____ my call
If you are not mine would I have the (4)_____to stand at all

I'll never know what the (5)_____brings
But I (6)_____you're here with me now
We'll make it through
And I hope you are the one I (7)_____my life with

I don't want to (8)_____but I can't take it, I don't understand
If I'm not made for you then why does my heart tell me that I am?
Is there any way that I can stay in your (9) _____?

1). Glad
2). Fit
3). Return
4). Strength
5). Future
6). Know
7). Share
8). run away
9). Arms
10). Bed
11). Resound
12). Maim
13). Wife
14). far away
15). Wish
16). Die
17). Strong
18). Pray
19). Wrong
20). side

(*)
If I don't need you then why am I crying on my (10) _____?
If I don't need you then why does your name (11) _____in my head?
If you're not for me then why does this distance (12) _____my life?
If you're not for me then why do I dream of you as my (13) _____?

I don't know why you're so (14)_____
But I know that this much is true
We'll make it through
And I hope you are the one I share my life with
And I (15)_____that you could be the one I (16)_____with
And I pray in you're the one I build my home with
I hope I love you all my life

Back To (*)

'Cause I miss you, body and soul so (17)_____that it takes my breath away
And I breathe you into my heart and (18)_____for the strength to stand today
'Cause I love you, whether it's(19) _____or right
And though I can't be with you tonight
You know my heart is by your (20) ____

Back To (*)