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CARRERA DE LENGUA Y LITERATURA INGLESA

Songs and Games as a Tool to Foster English Learning to Children
at the Fifth Level of Basic Education: Class Validation at “José
Rafael Arizaga” Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

The major aim of this project was to determine to what extent the use of songs and games contributes to teach English to children ranging from eight to ten years old at the fifth level of Basic Education at “Jose Rafael Arízaga” Elementary School. Moreover, the research was designed to find out whether using songs and games can be an effective way in creating a positive attitude and motivation in language learners. The research was carried out through the use of a survey, an interview, and a class validation. As findings, it has been seen that the use of songs and games not only helps the understanding, but they stimulate and increase the students’ interest to learn, to enjoy and to engage in the learning process. Also, these tools accelerate students’ confidence, learning ability and skills when activities are highly motivating and memorable. Nowadays for all the reasons mentioned above, teachers should use songs and games with children at Elementary Schools.

Keywords: games, songs, learning, motivation, young children, activities.

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DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate this work to our families since they were our inspiration for carrying out this work. Moreover, they helped us a lot throughout our higher education studies.

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INTRODUCTION

This research was carried out in order to know how useful songs and games can be for fostering English learning in children ranging from eight to ten years old at the fifth level of Basic Education at “Jose Rafael Arizaga” Elementary School. The reason why we chose this school is because children take English only during their early school years: first, second, and third grade of school. Because it is a public school located in a rural area, the Ministry of Education in Azuay does not allow children who are studying in this school to have English as a subject. This fact made the development of this research challenging, difficult and motivating at the same time. It was challenging because we had to prepare materials according to each children’s level in order to fulfill the class validation of our topic. Also, it was difficult since we had to teach English to a group of students with different needs. Finally, it was motivating because while we were teaching we arrived at the conclusion that teachers can use songs and games for fostering English since children showed interest in learning through these learning activities. Moreover, in order to carry out this research, we administered a survey to twenty-four students in this school for the advancement of this research; we interviewed an expert for his opinion about using games and songs in the classroom; and we made a class validation in order to make our project valid. In addition, this research contains five chapters. Chapter I talks about the problem, justification for it, research questions, and the stated objectives. Chapter II deals with some topics in which we developed the idea of how students learn English when they are involved in their learning process and when they are having fun. Chapter III talks about the methods we applied in order to carry out this research. Chapter IV shows the results obtained from the survey, the interview, and the class validation that we administered in the school. And the conclusion and recommendations are developed in Chapter V. In conclusion, development of this research was challenging and significant since we learned a lot about how students would like to be taught and how a teacher could use these learning activities for teaching.

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CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM

1.1 Purpose

This compilation of information will be directed at determining to what extent the use of songs and games helps foster English learning in children from the fifth level in an English as a Foreign Language classroom in an Elementary School.

1.2 Problem

The problem in “Jose Rafael Arízaga” Elementary School is that students do not have English classes. This fact makes our investigation interesting to carry out since children show a desire and are motivated to learn English. Also, this motivation and desire to learn is because they are happy about learning English through songs and games since they used to learn this language with a teacher presenting grammatical structures without using any variety of activities related to their context. That is why our investigation deals with the use of songs and games to foster English learning. In fact, nowadays teachers have lots of tools to help students learn English. These tools may be useful for children since they motivate and help them to learn in a fun way. Most of all, these tools may be applied in real contexts in which children feel they are involved and that they are taken into account as part of their learning-teaching process. Children, in fact, want to be involved in their learning process since they want to focus on activities related to their lives and experiences. According to Jeremy Harmer, in his book *How to Teach English*, children acquire language quicker than adults. The teacher may use different methodologies and tools to help them in acquiring a language because children do not learn in the same way as adults learn (40). This is the reason that games and songs are useful tools to foster English learning to children.

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1.3 Justification

The need for teaching English to children in a way in which they can be involved in their learning process encourages one to use songs and games in an EFL class. Since these tools are useful and help them to be engaged, teachers may begin forgetting about traditional ways of teaching and they may begin using these tools in order to ensure their students' learning.

According to Mary Ashworth and Patricia Wakefield, in their book *Teaching the World's Children*, "Children learn English best through play, games, make believe, storytelling, and songs. Both the context and the content of the activities need to be varied, holding the children's interest and giving them the opportunity to participate at their own level" (34). Taking this into account, this topic is focused on two main reasons: To determine how songs and games help to foster English learning to children, and to determine how songs and games stimulate and increase the student's interest to learn.

On the one hand, the use of songs and games help foster English learning in children since they like playing and singing. Moreover, songs and games capture students' attention and give them a chance for real communication because when they are playing and singing, they do not worry about grammatical points. They are having fun and learning at the same time. The teacher may be able to apply them in the classroom if he/she wants his/her students to learn best.

On the other hand, songs and games stimulate and increase students' interest to learn. Songs and games are not a waste of time in the classroom as long as the teacher takes advantage of them since these tools catch students' attention and interest and help them to be engaged in their learning process.

In this way songs and games provide tools that contribute to the course book that students use in their normal process of learning English. For this reason this work will compile information to determine to what extent the use of songs and games in the classroom is useful.

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1.4 Research Question

How do songs and games contribute to children´s English learning process?

1.5 Objectives

General Objective

- To determine to what extent the use of songs and games contribute teaching English to children at the fifth level in an Elementary School.

Specific Objectives

- To find out how useful the use of games and songs can be in the English learning process.
- To analyze how songs and games contribute to the English learning process.
- To explore strategies to teach English to children using games and songs.

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CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

The topic of this project is Songs and Games as a tool to foster English learning to children ranging from eight to ten years old. For this reason, we have considered the following topics in order to build a theoretical framework to support our research.

2.1 Motivation and Learners

If you are asked to teach English to children ranging from eight to ten who do not have any interest in learning English, what should you do? Perhaps, you think about catching children's attention through motivating them, but what is motivation for you? Which factors have to do with decreasing and increasing motivation? Once you find the answers to these questions, you can be sure about how you can motivate children.

According to Félicien Baloto in his article, "How to Motivate Learners of English", "[Motivation] is what makes us act; it is a desire to work towards a goal or to reach an objective" (31). Therefore, motivation is that "something" that makes us interested and passionate in doing something. In the field of education, motivation is a significant factor since children are interested in learning for themselves. In fact, motivation should be kept from the beginning to the end of children's learning process although motivation can vary according to age. For example, children from eight to ten years old would like to have a space where they can connect their school activities with their interests. As a result, they feel motivated when they are being taken into account since they have a space for interacting with others.

In spite of the reason mentioned above, there are some aspects which make motivation decrease. Teachers' and parents' attitude is one of these aspects. Teachers and parents are involved in the children's learning process because children are surrounded by them. As a result, they have to encourage

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children positively to learn the language because some children learn a language not because they feel passionate about doing it, but because they receive a reward from their parents or from the teacher or maybe they are forced to study. According to Ignacio López, another reason for the motivational decline is the lack of relationship between what children are learning and what they expect to learn because they think that what they are learning will not be useful for their future. They feel bored when learning insignificant things (17). Therefore, teachers should find children's likes and dislikes in order to planning extra activities related to what children are interested in and like.

On the other hand, there are some aspects that can enhance children's motivation. As Félicien Baloto suggests that teachers make use of the learners' environment, use appropriate visual aids, and become an efficient manager (31).

First, "teachers can link the environment of the school ... to any activity or exercise that they want to carry out in the classroom (Baloto 31). The result of this connection helps to increase children's motivation since the teacher uses activities which are related to their ages and to what children want to learn.

Second, visual aids are useful tools for teachers since they help to avoid long and confusing explanations and help to have a lively class (Baloto 31). In this way, visual aids such as posters, pictures, advertisements, puppets, drawings, and photos can be posted on the wall in order to enhance the English classroom atmosphere and to encourage children's learning. Visual aids catch children's attention because they are so colorful.

Finally, the teacher should know how to talk to his/her children and how to establish a good relationship if he/she wants the children to participate in lessons (Baloto 31). That is, children's success is attributed to the way they are managed. The way the teacher talks to his/her children is a deciding factor for the children's learning success. Therefore, the teacher should create a space in

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which everyone gets along with and respects each other thus permitting children to feel part of the group. Since they feel part of the group, the teacher can be more confident about children's participation in their learning process.

Another aspect that Ignacio López points out is the use of songs for increasing children's motivation. Songs are one of the enrichment activities which a teacher can play when students are tired, bored, and discouraged (17). Since children have a short span of concentration, they tend to get bored easily, so a song can be used for inviting children to relax. As a result, children feel motivated to participate, learn and sing a song unconsciously.

In conclusion, motivation helps to wake children's interest in learning. It should be used often for many activities and for all participants although there are some aspects which are mentioned above which increase and decrease motivation. This means that motivation in the classroom is a priority issue since children's learning success or failure depends on that.

2.2 Acquisition vs. Learning

When a child starts talking, his/her first words are produced by the influences of the people around him/her and by the necessity he/she has to communicate his/her needs. However, when he/she goes to school, he/she learns some structures of the language which makes him/her use the language correctly. The first case refers to acquisition, and the second one refers to learning.

According to Krashen, the acquisition of a language occurs as the result of social interaction that a child has with others (qtd. in Hudelson 2). Since a child is born, the first social interaction he/she has is with his/her parents so he/she starts acquiring his/her first words. Then with interaction that the child has with others members of his/her family and his/her friends, he/she uses the language in authentic communication settings. In addition to social interaction, Krashen states that acquisition is a subconscious process by which new

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language is adopted, putting emphasis on the message or meaning instead of form (qtd. in Abukhattala 128). The result of this unconscious process is that children are not aware of what is happening while they are acquiring a language. As a result, they are not worried about the structure of a language because what really matters is meaning, and what they want to say.

According to Krashen, learning, on the other hand, is a conscious process which focuses on the form or structure of the language (qtd. in Abukhattala 128). Since it is a conscious process, children learn a language in the classroom where children learn grammar rules in order to produce language. In fact, each time a child wants to say something, he/she is conscious about what he/she wants to say in order to avoid grammatical mistakes. Language learning, in other words, used to happen in a traditional classroom in which students were forced to learn grammar structures in order to pass an exam.

Nowadays, “La Escuela Nueva” asks teachers for a change in their teaching process in which the teacher should not worry about teaching grammar rules as in earlier times. The teacher should be a facilitator for acquiring language. Teachers should change the type of activities they use in the classroom in order to help children to acquire language, not just to learn it (Abukhattala 128). Moreover, teachers should create opportunities in which children use and experiment with the language. In other words, the teacher should create situations which will allow children to learn something spontaneously instead of memorizing. This technique will help the learning process to be significant and memorable.

In short, if teachers want their children to acquire a language instead of learning it, they may use authentic activities and materials related to the children’s context and interests in order to help children to increase their ability to use the language.

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2.3 Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

The meaning of intelligence in the American Heritage Dictionary is defined as “the capacity to acquire and apply knowledge”. However, Howard Gardner offers an alternative definition of intelligence by which people have different cognitive strengths and cognitive styles (qtd. in Christison 3). This new definition of intelligence gives the human being the capacity to solve problems in real life situations. For this reason, Howard Gardner proposes the theory of Multiple Intelligences which deals with eight different intelligences and according to him are not the same as learning styles (qtd in Rivera 26).

If a human being wants to develop any intelligence, he/she uses different learning styles. For example, “a person can develop his/her linguistic intelligence by listening to cassettes (auditory learning style). Another person might prefer to develop the same intelligence by reading printed material (visual learning style)” (Rivera 26).

Gardner identifies a list of multiple intelligences which include bodily-kinesthetic (the ability to use one's body to express ideas and feelings, and to solve problems); intrapersonal (the ability to understand one's own emotions); interpersonal (the ability to understand other individuals' emotions); linguistic (the ability to use words both orally and in writing); logical- mathematical (the ability to use numbers and logical reasoning); musical (the ability to understand and create music); spatial (the ability to perceive the visual word and represent it); and naturalist intelligences (the ability to appreciate and understand nature and natural science) (Rivera 26; Christison 5).

According to Armstrong, the theory of multiple intelligences, moreover, seems to harbor four different implications in education. First, each person possesses all eight intelligences which function together in unique ways, but sometimes some intelligences are more developed than others. Second, intelligences can be developed to a reasonably high level of performance with appropriate encouragement, enrichment, and instruction since each person has

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the capacity to do it. Third, intelligences work together in complex ways. Since intelligences do not really exist by themselves, they are always interacting with each other. Finally, there are many different ways to be intelligent. There is not any standard set of attributes that one has to have in order to be considered intelligent; one person can be excellent or awkward for doing certain things related to one specific kind of intelligence (Christison 5).

Each one of these implications leads us, as teachers, to the importance of motivating students to develop each one of their intelligences since these implications help us to understand the student diversity that a teacher has in the classroom. In addition, these implications help each student to develop their intelligences little by little as well as help teachers to plan their lessons taking into account students' differences.

In conclusion, taking into account the definition of intelligence, the theory of multiple intelligences and its implication, the teacher should be able to develop each one of the multiple intelligences of his/her students, keeping in mind that in a classroom he/she will find a variety of learning styles. Therefore, each intelligence should be developed with patience, time, imagination, and creativity on the part of the teacher and students.

2.4 Teaching English to Children

Teaching English to children ranging from eight to ten years old involves a big challenge since they have an adult side and a side where they are still children (Scott and Ytrebreg 4). They are able to ask questions, define their likes and dislikes, and have their basic concepts formed, (childish side); they are able to tell the difference between fact and fiction, they are able to make decisions about their own learning, and are able to work with others and learn from others (adult side) (Scott and Ytrebreg 4). These are some of the characteristics which a child ranging from eight to ten years old has. However, the children's learning process is not only defined from the characteristics a child has, but also

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depends on which stages of development they are in, and some aspects that a teacher should know in order to teach English to children.

According to Jean Piaget, there are four stages of cognitive development: sensorimotor (from birth to about two years old), preoperational (from two to about seven), concrete operations (from seven to about eleven), and formal operations stages (from around 12 on). Therefore children ranging from eight to ten years old are in the concrete operations stage which deals with learning by doing (qtd. in Hudelson 2). This means that a child learns by manipulating things in the environment. For example, when children are learning English, the teacher should provide them materials which they can manipulate in order to achieve optimal children's learning.

On the other hand, as Keiko Abe states, there are some aspects that a teacher should take into account when he/she is going to teach English to children. First, teaching children and teaching adults is not the same since techniques and attitude are completely different for both (6). For example, when teaching children, the teacher should get involved in the world of children and think about the way they would like to be taught in order to make the learning process fascinating and in that way ensuring children's success in their learning. Second, the language presented to children should be introduced in natural chunks (Abe 7). In other words, when teaching English to children, teachers should talk natural, neither fast nor slow because if a teacher talks too fast, children will not understand what he/she is saying; and if a teacher speaks too slowly, rhythm and intonation of the language are destroyed and he/she failed in the comprehension of the message on the part of the children. For this reason, teachers should speak in a natural way in order to ensure comprehension of the given message instead of any other language component such as speed, grammar, and vocabulary.

Another significant aspect that a teacher should keep in mind is to include a cultural component in his/her classes whenever it is possible. Since culture is what children know best, it makes the classroom more motivating, more real,

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and more interesting (Abe 7). The teacher should take advantage of cultural components and join them with the language in order to make his/her classes interesting and fun. In this way, children get interested in learning since teachers show interest in their children.

Another aspect is the way teachers talk to their children. In other words, does the teacher keep eye contact when teaching? (Abe 7). When a teacher keeps eye contact it is not because he/she wants to shame his/her children, but because he/she wants to call children's attention, and to be cognizant if children are paying attention to him/her.

The last aspect is the use of visual aids to "make the classroom come alive and resemble more closely the outside world" (Abe 7). The use of visual aids such as pictures, flashcards, and real objects turns the teacher into a facilitator. Teachers are not the owners of knowledge as in earlier times, but they are in charge of piloting the learning process because of the new material, methodologies, and resources they count on. Children, on the other hand, feel free to learn to use the language and to communicate with others when they are participating in an active classroom.

In conclusion, in order to teach English to children, the teacher should know the characteristics that children have according to their ages. Moreover, he/she should know the stages in which his/her children are in order to plan activities that are best suited for teaching. Finally, he/she should keep in mind the most relevant aspects that a teacher should know in order to teach English to children.

2.5 Songs in the EFL Classroom

"Music is one of the basic expressions of the human spirit"
(Branko Ostojic)

Nowadays, teachers have access to a variety of resources which help to motivate students in their learning process. Songs, for example, are one of

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these resources which are applied in the classroom. A teacher uses songs to open or close lessons, to explain new topics or vocabulary, to change students' moods, to remind known language, etc. Since songs have become a significant part of foreign language teaching, teachers should know their purposes, principles, and some activities that can be used with children before applying songs in the classroom.

2.5.1 Purposes of Using Songs in the EFL Classroom

Because songs foster children's learning process, some purposes for using them in the EFL classroom such as developing listening skills, creating creative writing, improving vocabulary, improving pronunciation and intonation, and helping memory should be considered.

First, teachers can develop children's listening skills through the use of songs. According to Irene S. Coromina, "students enjoy learning English through songs. As they learn the lyrics to songs ..., they are often surprised to discover their meaning" (27). Since children like to be taught English through songs, the teacher should use them in order to develop the listening skill as well as the topic he/she wants to teach. For developing listening skills, students need to have a purpose for listening. There are many techniques to fulfill this goal. However, these techniques should be carefully selected. For example, activities including body movement and gestures are especially the most recommended.

Second, the use of songs provides creative listening and writing. As Branko Ostojic claims, "While listening to music the students are encouraged to express their feelings and ideas in the words of the foreign language" (51). Therefore, the teacher should use songs whenever it is possible because music provides inspiration. For example, if a teacher wants to develop writing skills, he/she can use songs to stimulate and develop feelings and sensations. Like this children can express their feelings, emotions, and ideas in their writings in a creative way depending on the kind of songs used by the teacher. Moreover, songs should motivate children to write creatively. If a song is melancholy,

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children might not feel motivated to write, but if songs are exciting, children might feel motivated; and they may create exceptional writings by themselves. The result of this children's expression of feelings through the interaction with songs helps development of the musical intelligence.

Third, children acquire new vocabulary and expressions in context through the use of songs. According to Addulvahit Cakir, songs make it easier to learn English words when students sing them instead of learning words that are just spoken (n. pag). In other words, the more children have fun, the more they tend to learn. Also, because songs stimulate and increase children's interest to learn, students tend to learn the lyrics of songs by heart which help them to learn vocabulary as well as common phrases that are used in English language. In addition, songs can help children to learn blocks of language which they can use in latter situations.

Fourth, the use of songs improves children's pronunciation and intonation. According to Irene S. Coromina, children's interaction with songs allows them to become familiar with the pronunciation and intonation of native speakers. Also, in order to facilitate pronunciation and intonation, Coromina recommends that a teacher should avoid "songs that are too fast-paced, songs in which the music buries the singer's voice, songs which mock religious beliefs" (27). Children can realize how the pronunciation and intonation of a word is when a song is correctly chosen. Once children notice the pronunciation and intonation of words, they will be able to pronounce and intone English words correctly.

Finally, Branko Ostojic states that "the students' memory is helped by the rhythm and melodies of the songs" (50). Since words in the songs are repeated several times, they are easily memorized by students, helping them to keep the words in memory. In addition, Mary Jackson indicates that "both hemispheres of the brain are engaged when music is played" (n. pag). Therefore, when children are involved in listening to songs, their brains are working; as a result, children receive thoughts, feelings, and emotions which come to their minds and can be

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discussed with the teacher in the classroom. Songs in which children sing along with movements help them recall information.

In brief, the purposes mentioned above are not the only ones. However, the teacher should take them into account because songs activate children emotionally, physically, and mentally.

2.5.2 Principles for Using Songs in the EFL Classroom

Since the use of songs helps children to develop listening skills, to create creative writings, to improve vocabulary, to improve pronunciation and intonation, and help children's memory, there are some principles for using songs in the EFL classroom which a teacher should take into account.

The first principle according to Peter Gravier and Peter Harrington is that students need a reason for listening (22). Sometimes children are not interested in listening to a song because they think that they will not understand what the singer is saying. However, when they have to complete a task, they will listen to a song ensuring the understanding of it.

The second principle is that listening material should be contextualized (Gravier and Harrington 22). Teachers should choose songs related to the context of children and related to something that children knew or learned in order to understand and assimilate the meaning of the lyrics of songs. Moreover, these activities should include body movements in order to make the children realize that the teacher is focusing on their contexts. According to the article "Using their heads, hands, and feet", movement is fun to young learners because it is almost a game for them. Also, movement makes each child enjoy the activity including the slower children who observe the faster children and learn by copying them.

The third principle is that students need preparation for listening (Gravier and Harrington 22). Teachers should prepare pre-listening tasks such as showing pictures in order to let the children realize what the song is going to be

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about. In this way, children will be motivated to listen to a song instead of feeling obligated to do it because they have to complete a task.

The fourth principle is that students need practice in the different listening skills (Gravier and Harrington 22). When using songs, a teacher should create activities whose aim would be to develop in children the different listening skills such as listening for gist, listening for specific information, listening for key words, and making inferences.

All in all, songs can be used and introduced into a classroom because they serve as resources to foster English learning. For this reason, teachers should keep in mind these four principles for using songs in the EFL classroom.

2.5.3 Techniques for Using Songs in the EFL Classroom

Jin O' Neill suggests 10 ways for using songs in the classroom: extra words, correct, ordering, counting, stand up, bingo, categorize, and write a letter, a new verse, and illustration (21).

1. Extra words: the teacher should provide children the lyrics of a song, but the song provided should contain more words than the lyrics really have so that children have to listen to the song and cross out the word they do not hear.

2. Correct: The teacher gives children the lyrics of a song but with some words misspelled. Children have to listen to that song and correct the mistakes.

3. Ordering: Each child is given a line of the song. When they listen to the lines, they have to stand up and come to the front in the same order as the lines appear.

4. Counting: Children have to count how many times a word or phrase is repeated.

5. Stand up: Children are given one or two words from the song. Then they have to stand up when they hear the words. They can sit down when they hear the word again.

6. Bingo: The teacher tells the title of the song to the children. After that, the children have to complete a Bingo with the words they think are in the song.

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Then they have to listen to the song and tick the words if they hear them. The winner is the one who has crossed out the most words.

7. Categorize: Children listen to the song and categorize the words they have heard, for example, colors, fruits, verbs, etc.

8. Write a letter: Children write a letter to any character of the song depending on the message of the song.

9. A new verse: Children will write a new verse depending on the style of music they are listening to.

10. Illustration: Children draw a picture about one part of the song that catches their attention.

In conclusion, these are some ways for using songs in the classroom. However, since the teacher is a creative person, he/she can create new ways for using songs in the classroom. There will be many varied ways for using songs depending on the purposes for using them.

2. 6 Games for Children in an EFL Classroom

Teachers around the world are aware of the significance of teaching English to children. They know that children need techniques which catch their interest. Since games are learning activities in which children engage, teachers should know their purposes, principles, and some games which can be used in EFL classrooms.

2.6.1 Purposes of Using Games

According to Gretchen E. Weed, there are some purposes for using games: physical activity, enjoyment, and language learning (303).

The first purpose is physical activity which deals with breaking the routine of drills (303). Because children feel motivated through games, the best games for using are those which make children move around, enjoy, and learn at the same time.

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Another purpose of using games is enjoyment. As Agnieszka Uberman states, “Games ought to be at the heart of the teaching foreign languages” (21). Teachers should choose appropriate games which children will enjoy; however, those games not only have to be meant as a way of having fun, but as a way for learning, too. According to Stephen Mark Silvers, by using games children forget that they are in a classroom (29). Children want to play so they feel motivated when using games in the classroom, for this reason, children can transfer the games, which they have learned to use, outside the class.

The last purpose of using games is that by means of games children can practice grammar, recognize pronunciation patterns, and practice vocabulary. First, as Brumfit, Moon, and Tongue argue, “Using games may certainly be an effective way of making repetition of language natural and purposeful for young learners” (149). In order to learn grammatical structures, children tend to repeat and memorize them. Thus teachers can use games which provide children a natural repetition of language in order to ensure the learning of grammatical structures.

Second, according to Gretchen E. Weed, the use of games “promote[s] and maintain[s] interest in the recognition and pronunciation of different sounds, form[s] a phonetic unit up to complete sentences and beyond” (304). For example, a teacher can bring to class a picture where he/she can tell about his/her vacation and can introduce to children simple sentences using adjectives, colors, adverbs, etc. in order to help children to realize how to pronounce words correctly. This exercise will be presented by children later on and the teacher can correct the pronunciation after their presentations. In this way games promote the correct pronunciation of a word each time it appears.

Finally, through games children practice vocabulary. According to Ndomba Benda, when children face new words, they do not really pay attention to them; they just skip those words because they are difficult or because they do not want to learn them (18). One way of helping children to feel interested in

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learning and practicing new words is by using word games. Some word games which help to practice vocabulary are puzzles, word squares, crosswords, etc.

2.6.2 Principles of Games Selection for Children

As Gretchen E. Weed suggests, when a teacher is going to use games, he/she should take into account some principles for selecting appropriate games such as purpose, space, number of children, age and level, type of game, and time (304-305).

When talking about selection of games, teachers should keep in mind the purpose for using a game. What does he/she want to do by using games? Teach vocabulary, improve pronunciation, or practice grammar. For example, if a teacher wants to practice commands, he/she could use the game called “Simon says”.

Another principle for selecting games is to consider the space the teacher has in which to play a game. If a teacher has no space to carry out a game, he/she can find a different and appropriate place where to play.

The number of children also limits teachers’ choice of games. Since teachers have a variety of children with whom they can work, they can choose games according to the number of students they are dealing with and in turn he/she can decide how to work in groups or individually.

The age and level of children is another principle to consider. As Siek-Piskozub states, “not all games are appropriate for all students irrespectively of their age” (qtd. in Uberman 21). Before selecting games, teachers should take into account the age of children and their level in order to use games correctly instead of failing and wasting time. Also, the type of game to be used depends on the age and level of children. For example, when working with children ranging from eight to ten years old and who have a low level of English, teachers can play an oral game called “telling time” for teaching and practicing how to tell the time in English.

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Finally, the time for carrying out a game should be also considered. The teacher can distribute more or less time for carrying out a game depending on the children's level, the number of children in a group, or the rules of a game.

Since teachers can use games for different purposes, they should think carefully about the principles of selection for using games with children in order to be effective and successful.

2.6.3 Types of EFL Classroom Games

According to Stephen Mark Silvers, "real learning takes place when the students, in a relaxed atmosphere, participate in activities that require them to use what they have been drilled on" (29). For this reason, he points out six categories in which some games fall into. Get-acquainted activities, matching games, games based on the combination of incongruous ideas, oral guessing games, games of observation and memory, and writing games.

The first category is related to get-acquainted activities which are used for getting to know other members in a classroom (Silvers 29). For example, the circle chat, inquisition, and secret agent's orders. In the circle chat students form two circles in which they can face each other. They introduce themselves to the person in front of them. Each time the teacher sounds a bell, students have to rotate and introduce themselves to another person. The inquisition game is almost like the circle chat, but students instead of introducing themselves, ask for as much information as they can. When they finish, the teacher asks two or three students to tell information they have found out. In the secret agent's orders, on the other hand, students are given a handout which contains incomplete information; students have to ask for the information required and fill out the handout.

The second category includes matching games which help students to participate and interact with others in the classroom. These kinds of games need space in order to be developed; for this reason, it is useful to rearrange the chairs. In this category there are two games which a teacher can use states to

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capitals and questions to answers (Silvers 31). In states to capitals, the class is divided in two groups. The members of the first group receive a card containing the name of a state. The members of the other group receive a card containing the name of a capital. Students have to stand up and look for their partners by asking, "Where are you from?" In order to play the questions to answers game, the class is divided in two groups. Each student from the first group receives a question. The members of the second group receive an answer. Each person has to stand up and look for the question to an answer, or vice versa.

The third category includes games based on the combination of incongruous ideas in which students can improve their speech production and listening comprehension. Silly answers, confessions, and crazy stories fall on this category (Silvers 32). In silly answers, students are told to write a question on a piece of paper, and an answer to their questions in another piece of paper. After that, the teacher collects the questions and the answers in separate bags. Then one student is asked to come to the front and choose a question while another student is asked to come to the front and choose an answer. The result of this game is that students have fun since answers will not correspond to the questions; however, they learn at the same time. In order to play confessions, students are divided into three groups. The first group has to write the name of famous people on pieces of paper, the second group is asked to write places or situations, and the last group has to write some actions. Then the teacher gives the slips to each student who has to make a confession. Finally, teachers can play crazy stories. In this case, the teacher reads a well-known story to students. Then he/she transcribes the same story on a sheet of paper. After that, he/she cuts the story into strips, and distributes them to the students who have to read their sentences. It will end up with funny results because the sequence of the story will not be the same.

The fourth category includes oral guessing games which give students the chance for practicing how to make questions. The teacher can play three kinds of games such as, "Where is it? What is it? and Predicaments" (Silvers

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32). "Where is it?" is a game in which some objects are hidden while the students are outside the classroom. When students come back, they have to ask questions using the prepositions of place in order to find the hidden object. For example, where is the pen? Is it in front of me? The game What is it?, on the other hand, students have to discover the name of the object that they have pinned on their backs by asking questions to their classmates around the classroom. The last game found in this category is Predicaments. Here one student leaves the class while the others choose a predicament. When the student returns, he/she asks questions to other students in order to find out which his/her predicament is.

The fifth category includes games of observation and memory which are used to practice vocabulary. The games which help students to practice vocabulary are Kim's game and Picture observation (Silvers 33). In Kim's game the teacher places different objects on the desk and covers them with a cloth. Then he/she removes the cloth and students have to look at the object. After that, they have to write on a sheet as many objects as they remember. This kind of game can be played in groups or individually. The second type of game is picture observation which is similar to the first one. However, the teacher uses a picture containing different vocabulary items. He/she pastes it on the wall, students have to look at them and write what they have seen.

The last category includes writing games which can be played individually or in teams. Jumble words and word endings are found in this category (Silvers 33). In jumble words each student or teams are given some words whose letters are mixed-up and they have to order the letters in order to write the correct word. In word endings the teacher writes on the board some word endings which students have to form into words.

In conclusion, these are some examples of games which a teacher can use for getting to know other members in a classroom, for participating and interacting with others, for practicing vocabulary, for improving speech

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production and listening comprehension, and for practicing how to make questions.

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CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In order to carry out this action research, the following methods were applied. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Descriptive Methods.

According to Dr. Karim Abawi, qualitative method, on one hand, investigates the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, when. By using this kind of method, the researcher looks for themes and describes the information in themes and patterns exclusive to that set of participants. So we applied it for two reasons. One reason is in order to collect, describe, and analyze the results obtained from the surveys administered to Elementary School students and the other reason is to explain what the expert talked about related to the use of songs and games as a tool to foster English learning to children at the fifth level.

Quantitative method, on the other hand, means that the quantitative researcher asks a specific, narrow question and collects a sample of numerical data from participants to answer the question (Abawi 2008). We applied the quantitative method, in order to tabulate the results obtained from the surveys administered to 50 Elementary School students at the fifth level divided in two groups 5th “A” and 5th “B”.

Finally, the descriptive method precedes explanatory research, and it describes data and characteristics about the study being searched. Therefore, we applied this kind of method in order to describe the results obtained from the class validation administered to children at the fifth level of Basic Education when we taught them English by using songs and games.

3.1 Setting and Participants

This research was done in a public school named “Jose Rafael Arizaga” Elementary School located in Turi- Cuenca. The participants of this research were 50 students ranging from eight to ten years old at the fifth level of Basic Education. Students answered questions about the way they would like to learn English and if they would like to learn English through songs and games. Also,

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we interviewed an expert about his opinion about teaching English through songs and games.

3.2 Data Gathering Techniques

The next step was to create two surveys: one for the fifth level students, and one for an expert. The questions included in the students' surveys contained open-ended and closed-ended, and they were related to the way students would like to learn English. The questions were written in Spanish since students had a low English language level.

Also, for the interview to an expert we used open-ended and closed-ended questions in order to know his opinion about songs and games for fostering English learning. The questions were related to how teachers could apply songs and games in an EFL Classroom.

The next stage was to apply the class validation which deals with the application of songs and games as a tool to foster English learning in students at the fifth level of school. For this class validation, we spent fifteen hours of classes during three weeks. At first, we asked for permission to the principal and teachers in order to have access to the children in the classroom. Then, in order to know which methods children like better, we taught using the text called "Enterprise 3" during the first week. We used this book because of the fairly low language level of the students, and because this book is easy to work with. Also, we prepared extra material to fulfill their language needs.

After that, we applied our research to children during the last two weeks in order to know the results of using songs and games to foster English learning in the classroom. Since games and songs catch students' attention and interest in learning English, we used short songs and games related to their ages. Using these songs and games children learned vocabulary quicker than using the text. Finally, we took a quiz to find out whether students learned better by using songs and games or the regular activities of the textbook.

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The last step was to tabulate the information, analyze and interpret the results obtained after using surveys, interviews, and the application of the class validation. The following chapter talks about the analysis of the results of the survey, the interview, and the class validation.

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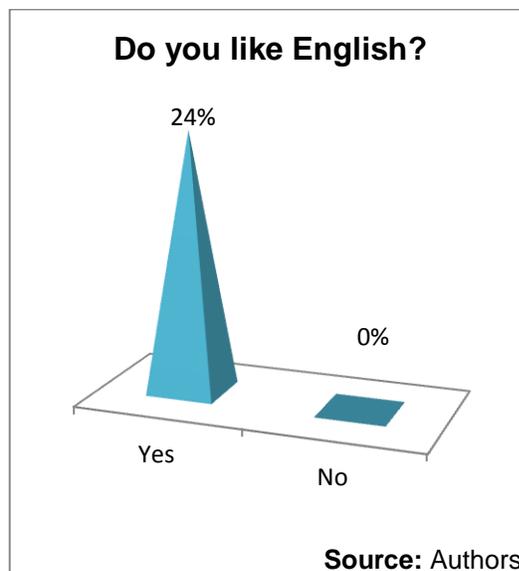
CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The section, Data Analysis and Interpretations, is divided in three parts. The first one presents the information and analysis of the surveys administered to twenty-four Elementary School students. The questions in the survey were related to the way children like to learn English. The second part deals with the analysis and interpretation of the expert's interview answers related to his opinion about teaching English through songs and games. Finally, the last part describes the results obtained from the class validation which dealt with the application of songs and games as a tool to foster English learning in students at the fifth level of Basic Education.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Survey

The following graphs show the results obtained from each one of the questions asked to twenty-four students in "Jose Rafael Arizaga" Elementary School.

Graphic1: Children's Preference



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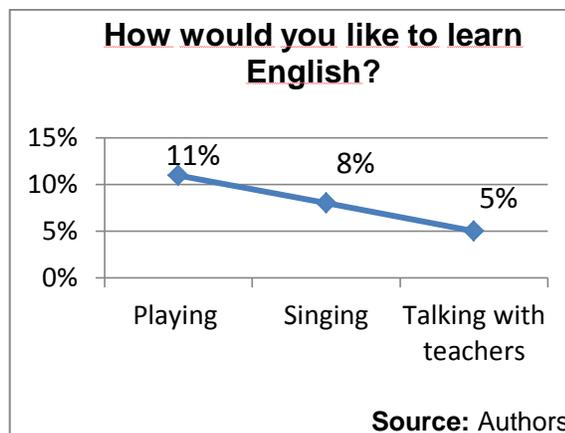


Graphic 2: Reasons for Learning English



Graphic one shows that all students, participants of this research, like English subject. Graphic two, on the other hand, explains why students like English. The second graphic shows that six students like English because it is nice, nine said that they like English because it helps to communicate and to understand this language, and the last nine said that they like English because they would like to speak English. Although students do not have this subject in their curriculum, graphic number two shows that students are interested in learning English.

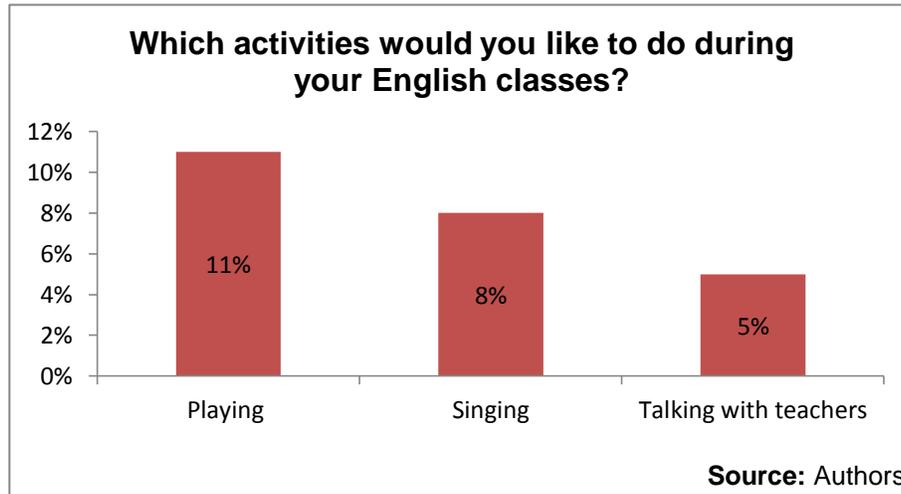
Graphic 3: Techniques for Learning English



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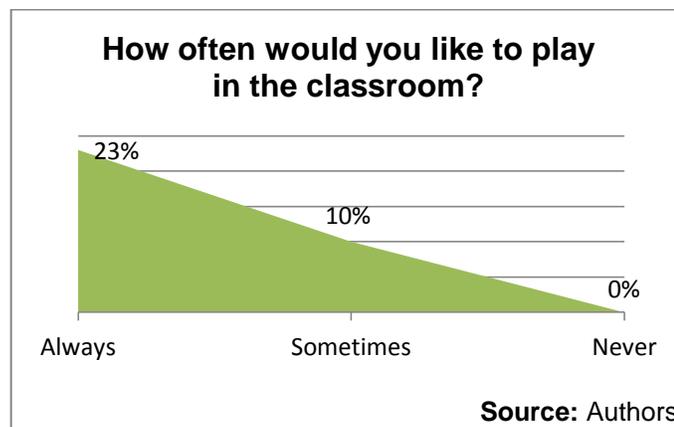
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Graphic 4: Activities Preferences



Graphic three indicates that eleven students would like to learn English by playing, eight students by singing, and five students by talking with teachers. Therefore, it can be noticed that most of the students would like to learn English better through playing games and singing. This factor makes our research valid and effective. Likewise, graphic four shows that most of the students like activities related with singing and playing. It means that games and songs are the most interesting activities for students especially for children who are interested in playing and learning at the same time.

Graphic 5: Children´s Need for Playing

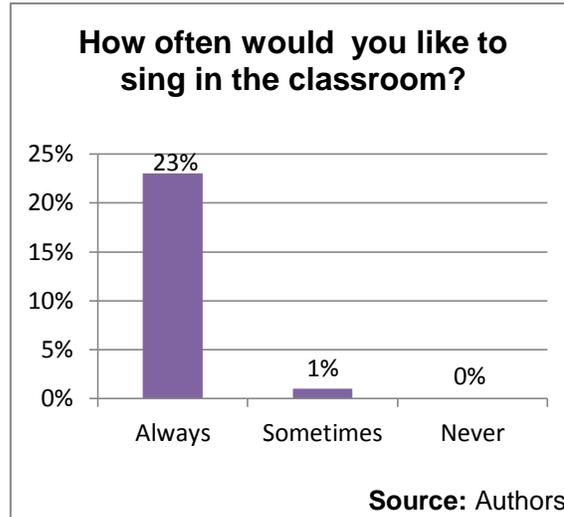


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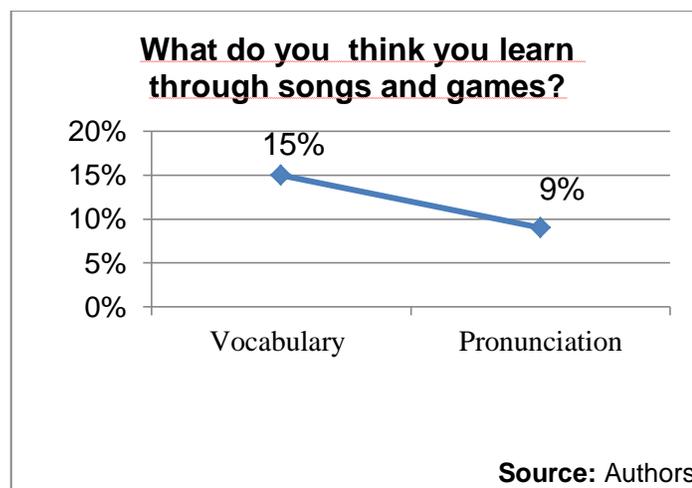


Graphic 6: Frequency for Singing



Graphics five and six show that the majority of children always want to play and sing in the classroom. Although they do not have English as a subject, they like to sing and play with other teachers and if they are playing or singing at the same time, they have fun and learn better. There are two advantages of using games. They help to active students mentally and physically in the classroom and help to engage students in the meaningful learning.

Graphic7: Learning through Songs



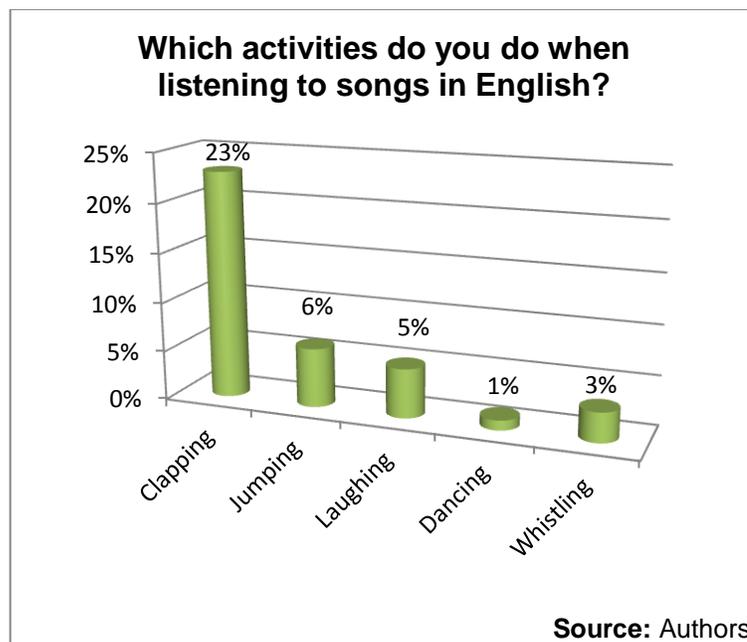
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Graphic seven describes what the students learn through songs. In the graphic, we can see that fifteen students said that they learn vocabulary through songs; nine of them said that they learn to pronounce new words through songs. As a result students are aware of what they are doing and what they are learning while they are having fun. This graphic shows that students have a positive attitude to learning English through songs.

Graphic 8: Children´s Actions during Listening to Songs



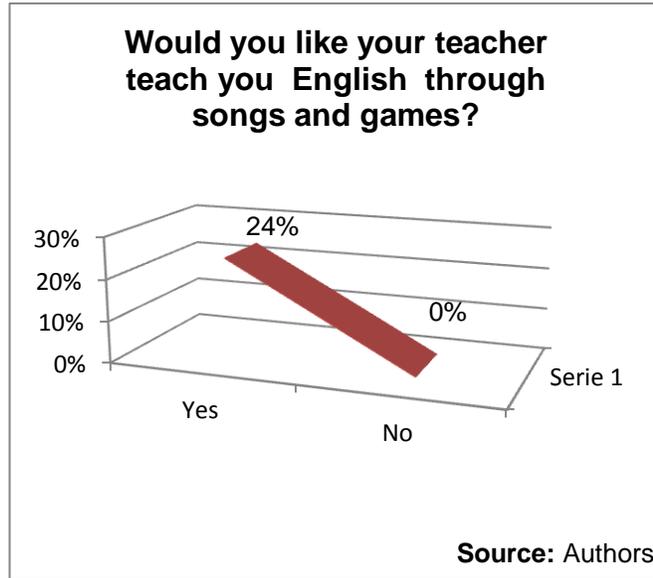
Graphic eight shows that while students are listening to a song; they are clapping, jumping, laughing, dancing, and whistling. It means that songs promote body movement in the students, and this movement helps to activate their memory skill. According to the article “Using their heads, hands, and feet”, Asher talks about total physical response as a crucial method for teaching young children. TPR makes them to enjoy their learning process and ensure their learning.

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Graphic 9: Children´s Opinions



Graphic nine shows that all students want to learn English through songs and games since these learning activities are more significant for them. In spite of the results obtained from traditional methods, students show a greater result when they are involved in their learning process and that is what songs and games do. These learning activities make students participate in their learning process since songs and games are within children´s interest and require an active participation on the part of children.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Personal Interview

In order to carry out this research we interviewed to teacher Carlos Llanes. He teaches in Borja School and in Miguel Moreno High School. He has taught English for 32 years. The first ten years he worked with children and the last 22 years he has worked with teenagers. In this interview he gives his opinion about teaching English to children through songs and games.

During the interview the first question asked to the expert was if he enjoys teaching English and he affirmed that he enjoys teaching English. He said that

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being a teacher is a big challenge since a teacher should have vocation in order to be a teacher. Also, he claimed that a teacher does not be just a teacher, but he should be a friend and sometimes a mother or a father. The second question was related to his opinion about teaching English to children and he said that teaching to children is different and interesting; however, he said that teachers should have lots of tools to teach children in order to get their attention and concentration. These two questions mean that an English teacher not only should have knowledge but he also should know how to fulfill students' needs using different tools, methods, or techniques which the teachers have access to nowadays.

The next question was related with the resources he uses in the classroom to ensure children's learning and he said that he uses drawings, songs, games, power-point presentations, graphics, worksheets and TPR methodology. This means that, the teacher should not just follow the book he has chosen for his students, he should look for extra-materials in order to carry out a successful teaching and learning process. In relation to the frequency of use games and songs in the classroom he said that he often uses games and songs in his classroom because the children are motivated and participate during these activities often. Moreover, he affirmed that teaching English by using songs and games, children's pronunciation and fluency improve a lot and these tools help children to learn common phrases, and to increase their vocabulary. Finally, he claimed that songs and games keep students wake up, alert and concentrated.

The last question was related with the skills that songs and games could develop in the classroom and his answer was that by using songs and games the teacher could develop the four principal skills which are listening, writing, reading and speaking. Also, he claimed that these tools help to recognize and comprehend some grammar rules and vocabulary use.

In short, the use of songs and games is not a waste of time since these tools have great benefits if the teachers know how to manage them in an EFL classroom.

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4.3 Descriptive Analysis of the Class Validation

In order to carry out this research and to prove if it is going to be transferable and confirmable, we have to apply our investigation at “Jose Rafael Arízaga” Elementary School. In this school, we worked with a group of 50 children at the fifth level of Basic Education. These 50 children were divided in 5th A and 5th B. For the application, we had to talk to the principal in order to ask him for permission to work with children mentioned above using songs and games for fostering English learning in the institution he manages. Also, we talked to the teachers of the fifth levels in order to inform them what we are going to do, and if they could give us an hour of classes per day for the application of our research. Finally, we had to talk to children in order to let them know what we were going to do with them, and how we were going to teach them English.

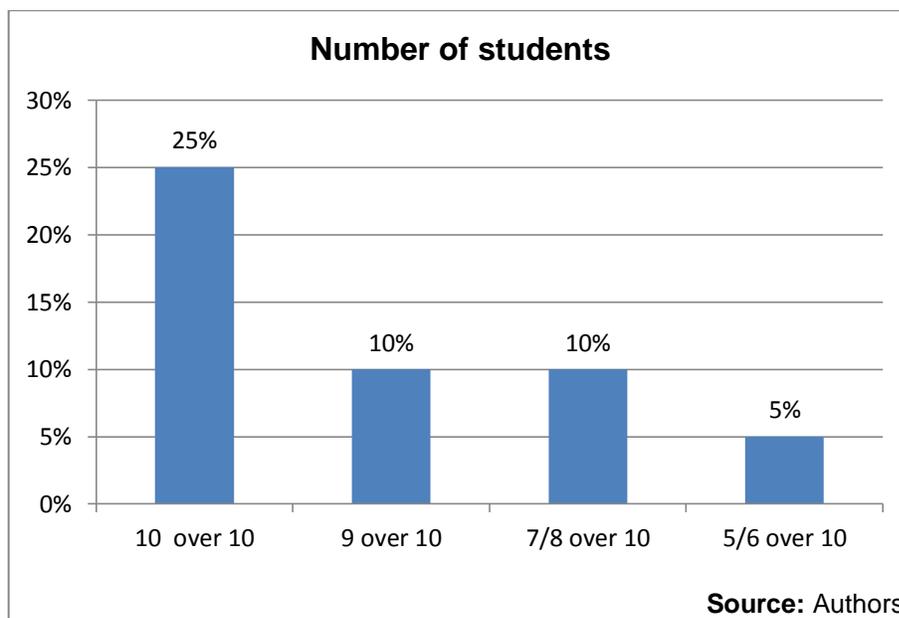
We started the class validation by taking a diagnostic test (see Appendix 3) in order to know the children’s English level. The results of the diagnostic test showed a low children’s English level on the learning. As a result, we had to teach them basic vocabulary. After the diagnostic test, we started classes by teaching them English through a text (Enterprise 3). All this procedure lasted one week and at the end of the week we applied another test (see Appendix 4) in order to know children’s progress. This test did not show excellent results. Because students showed that they do not learn better when they are taught by using a text, thirty children out of fifty got good grades “ranging from seven to ten”, the rest got low grades “ranging from five to six. These results showed that teaching English through a textbook only could not be a good methodology since children get bored and lose concentration and attention.

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Graphic 10: Fifty Children´s Grades



During the second week, we taught them English but this time we used songs. At the end of the week we took a test in order to know if children learned something by listening to some songs. The results were good, children showed interest in learning and the most important factor was that children were motivated and alert all the time making their learning process enjoyable. Also, they learned English and showed interest in each hour of class not just when applying the test. During the last week, we taught English to children through games. Since children like playing, they were highly motivated. As a result, the outcomes of applying games when teaching English were good because students showed interest and motivation in learning.

All these results make our research confirmable and transferable since they showed that the use of songs and games do contribute to teach English to children of the fifth level of an Elementary School. Moreover, our class validation verified how useful the use of games and songs in the English learning process is.

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CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The development of this research has proven to be helpful since it was possible to identify how useful songs and games can be in an EFL classroom. The activities that children enjoy the most involve playing games, singing songs, and others activities that are related with movement and entertainment. Such activities can be applied in the classroom since they catch children's attention and interest. As a result, children participate actively and reinforce their pronunciation and vocabulary by listening to songs and by playing games. Children can be motivated in the classroom if they are taught through activities which catch their attention.

In addition, this project has examined and discussed various ways of applying songs and games as well as some reasons for which songs and games can be included in the classroom to make the learning experience more effective and enjoyable.

5.2 Recommendations

Teachers should be aware of when to use games for teaching English to children. According to Agnieszka Uberman, "games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value" (20). For this reason, a teacher should take into account the advantages that a game has such as motivating and entertaining students, giving opportunities for expressing opinions, lowering anxiety, acquiring new experiences within a foreign language, introducing new ideas, breaking the ice in a classroom, and remembering things better and faster (Uberman 21). Thus, after knowing the advantages of games, the success of any classroom game depends on the teacher's preparation and enthusiasm. When using games in the classroom, the teacher should never allow children to get out of control.

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When teaching English to children through songs, on the other hand, the teacher has to keep in mind when and how to use songs. For this reason, he should be careful in choosing appropriate songs if he wants to make them fit in the learning process. Peter Gravier and Peter Harrington state that teachers should prepare, train, and help students when using songs in a classroom (23). So teachers should use songs in the classroom to make learning a joy since songs help to improve teachers' teaching and students' learning activities. Finally, since songs motivate and inspire children, the teacher should integrate songs in the classroom in order to enhance the learning environment.

In addition, songs are one kind of resources which a teacher can use in order to help students in their learning process. Songs are not only meant to be sung by students, but songs help students to learn vocabulary, practice grammar, develop their skills, etc. If a teacher wants to be a good English teacher, he/she should make use of this enjoyable tool in order to best facilitate students' language acquisition.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey

Nombre: _____ Edad: _____

La siguiente encuesta tiene por objetivo recolectar información relacionado con el uso de las canciones y los juegos en las clases de Inglés, cuyos resultados nos servirán de base para nuestra investigación.

1) Te gusta el Inglés.

Si _____ No _____ ¿Por qué? _____

2) ¿Cómo te gustaría aprender Inglés?

_____.

3) ¿Qué actividades en grupo te gusta hacer en las clases de Inglés?

Bailar _____

Jugar _____

Cantar _____

Actuar _____

4) ¿Cuán a menudo te gustaría jugaren el aula de clases?

Siempre _____

A veces _____

Nunca _____

5) ¿Cuán a menudo te gustaría cantar en el aula de clases?

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Siempre _____

A veces _____

Nunca _____

**6) ¿Qué piensas que puedes aprender a través de juegos y canciones?
Vocabulario o Pronunciación?**

_____.

7) ¿Qué actividades haces mientras escuchas canciones en inglés?

_____.

8) ¿Te gustaría que tu profesora te enseñe Inglés a través de canciones y juegos?

Si _____ No _____ ¿Por qué? _____

Gracias por tu colaboración.

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Appendix 2: Personal Interview

Games and songs as a tool to foster English Language to children at the fifth level.

Name: Carlos LLanez Workplace: Miguel Moreno High School/ Borja School

Q: Do you enjoy Teaching English?

A: Yes, I enjoy teaching. It is interesting and challengeable at the same time. I think that a teacher should have vocation for teaching. Also, a teacher is not just a teacher, but he becomes a father, a friend.

Q: How long have you been teaching English?

A: I have been teaching English for 32 years. During ten years I taught English to children, and during 22 years I taught English to teenagers.

Q: What is your opinion about teaching English to children?

A: Teaching English to children is not so difficult but different and interesting. Since they are children, they like to learn English interestingly. As a result, a teacher should use different tools that catch students' attention and concentration.

Q: What resources would you use to ensure children's learning?

A: Well, I use different tools such as Drawings, Power point presentations, Graphics, Worksheets. Also, I use some techniques which involve the TPR Method.

Q: What is your opinion about using games in the classroom? How often do you apply them?

A: I think that using games in the classroom make the class successful because children like them. Also, in order to catch students' attention during the

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beginning of each class, I use a warm-up. Moreover, children are motivated and participate in classes when I use games. Actually, I often use games because I use other tools for teaching.

Q: What is your opinion about using songs in the classroom? How often do you apply them?

A: I think that songs as well as games make the class successful and important. When I use songs in the classroom I can realize what students learn. They learn common phrases, increase vocabulary, and practice grammar. Also, songs help students to pronounce words correctly and fluently. Moreover, songs catch students' attention and wake up students. Students are alert each time I use songs.

Q: Which are the skills that may be developed by using games and songs?

A: I think that by using songs and games the four principal skills can be developed. Also, students can recognize and understand words.

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Appendix 3: Diagnostic Test

Escuela Fiscal Mixta “Jose Rafael Arízaga”

Name: _____ Class: _____

1) Escriba cuatro saludos en inglés

2) Escriba cinco colores en inglés

3) Escriba los números del uno al veinte en inglés

1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20

4) Una las frutas con su respectivo nombre.

	grapes
	pineapple
	pear
	apple
	strawberries

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5) Escriba tres nombres de animales en inglés.

6) Una con una línea el significado de las siguientes palabras.

Hand	Orejas
Mouth	Nariz
Nose	Ojos
Eyes	Mano
Ears	Boca

7) Escriba los días de la semana en inglés.

<hr/>	<hr/>

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Appendix 4: Post Test 1

Name: _____ Class: _____

1) Write four Greetings. (Escriba cuatro saludos)

2) Write in English the name of the fruits and the name of the animals.
(Escriba en ingles las frutas y animales)













3) Match the picture with the correct word (Una la imagen con la palabra que le corresponde)

Hands



Foot



Eyes



Head



Ear



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4) Underline the correct number (Subraye el número correcto)

28	Eighteen	30	Three
	Ninety two		Thirteen
	Twenty-eight		Thirty
11	Seventeen	13	Fifty three
	Eleven		Thirteen
	Twelve		Ten

5) Write 5 colors in English. (Escriba cinco colores en inglés)

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Appendix 5: Post Test 2

Name: _____ Class: _____

1) Listen to the song and complete it. (Escuche la canción y complete en Inglés)

Good morning

Good morning

Good evening

Good night

Nice to meet you

Nice to meet you, too

See you!

2) Write the parts of the human body. (Escriba ocho partes del cuerpo humano en Inglés)



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3) Write the number that follows. (Escriba en inglés el número que sigue)

3	_____	10	_____
Three	_____	Ten	_____
7	_____	16	_____
Seven	_____	Sixteen	_____

4) Write the number that precedes.(Escriba en inglés el número que precede)

_____	2	_____	20
_____	Two	_____	Twenty
_____	5	_____	9
_____	Five	_____	Nine

5) Translate into Spanish. (Traduzca al Español los siguientes colores.)

Black	_____	Red	_____
Green	_____	Yellow	_____
White	_____	Purple	_____
Pink	_____	Blue	_____

6) What fruits do you need to make a fruit salad? (¿Qué frutas necesita para hacer una ensalada de frutas?)

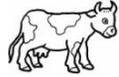
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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7) Match the drawings with their names. (Una los dibujos con los nombres.)



Duck



Dog



Chicken



Monkey



Lion



Cow

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