

The use of songs in the English Language Teaching-Learning Process of the 6th Level Basic Education  
Students at “Francés” Private Educational Institution in Esmeraldas

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## Abstract

In order to analyze how songs may contribute to the improvement of the English language teaching-learning process in the sixth level Basic Education Students at “Francés” Private Educational Institution in Esmeraldas, a descriptive investigation was carried out by using the deduction and induction methods, the analysis and synthesis and the hermeneutic method; besides, some techniques such as observation and surveys were applied to a population of 30 students of the sixth level of Basic Education at “Francés” Private Educational Institution, whose ages varied from nine to ten years old; also, the participation of the English teacher of these students was required. The results revealed that the students enjoy listening to songs during their English lessons; they feel relaxed and motivated to learn English after singing and listening to a song. The English teacher uses songs in her lessons, however, there is a lack of knowledge about how to apply the songs in the class. Therefore, the teacher did not use neither a methodology for using the song in the class nor a song related to the vocabulary of the unit. This research coincided with a number of investigations done in relation with the use of the Ludic Methodology, making emphasis on the use of games, drama, and songs, but not with the use of songs as a methodology to teach the contents of the textbook.

**Key words:** songs; Ludic Methodology; English language teaching-learning process; children

## Introduction

Nowadays, English is considered one of the most spoken languages around the world. In some countries, it is the first language or it is adopted as the official spoken language by the country, in some others, it is used as a medium of communication. It means, people use English as a second language, or they learn it as a foreign language.

That is why, many educational institutions around the world teach English as a subject. It is applied in many fields; like: medicine, politics, communication, media, technology, etc. Moreover, there are a lot of printed materials such as: dictionaries, encyclopedias, and books written in English. Hence, students have to learn English as a foreign language in order to understand the language and be able to communicate with native English speakers.

Many years ago, learning English as a foreign language was established in the curriculum of Ecuadorian educational institutes by the government. Thus, learning English as a foreign language is an obligation; students must finish Senior High School with a B1 level.

To achieve this goal, students have to develop the four main skills: listening, reading, writing, and speaking, in order to have a good level in English and be able to communicate adequately. However, teaching to children is more challenging for teachers because they need to be actively involved in the learning process. This is why English teachers should innovate in the classroom.

Consequently, many different methodologies and techniques are being used. Among them, the Ludic Methodology, with more emphasis in games for teaching. Even though songs are part of this methodology, they are not frequently used in order to teach English. They are mainly used as distractors instead of as a methodology.

It has been noticed in the pre-professional teaching practice, that sixth level students at “Francés” Educational Institution are not accustomed to listen to songs in their lessons. Besides, teachers do not seem to be aware of the fact that songs may contribute to the English Language teaching-learning process.

As a consequence, the main problem of this investigation is: How may songs contribute to the improvement of the Sixth-Level English Language teaching-learning process at “Francés” Private Educational Institution?

The general objective was to analyze how songs may contribute to the improvement of the English language teaching-learning process in the sixth-level Basic Education Students at “Francés” Private Educational Institution in Esmeraldas, and the specific were: To review present theories about the use of songs as a methodology to improve the English language teaching-learning process and to make a diagnosis of the use of songs as a methodology to teach and learn English in the sixth-level Basic Education Students at “Francés” Educational Institution in Esmeraldas.

### **Methodologies for English language teaching**

Language teaching methods give different ideas about how to teach foreign languages. They provide procedures, strategies and different techniques focused on the learner’s specific objectives, learning style and

context in order to develop students' skills. Historically, those methods have been changing, adapting, and extending according to the students' needs. That is why, throughout history, the changes made on methodologies for the English language teaching-learning process can be noticeable. Richards & Rogers (1986) suggest a summary about the different approaches and methods in language teaching, from which the following may outstand:

### **The Grammar-Translation Method**

The grammar-translation method was one of the first methods. It was used to teach German and Latin. According to W. Rouse (quoted by Richards and Rodgers, 1986), one of the criticisms about this method was "to know everything about something rather than the thing itself" because this method consisted of translating each word from a text (for example: English into the native language) and learning all the grammatical rules deductively instead of getting the general idea of the text. Therefore, this method only focused on grammatical rules and translation of texts.

### **The Direct Method**

In the mid and late nineteen centuries, a need was felt to develop oral proficiency in foreign language because of industrialization. In addition, the grammar translation method was inadequate to develop communicative abilities. For that reason, a radical change was made. Hence, the direct method was introduced. This method refers to learn a language naturally and spontaneously. It means, students discover the importance of speaking. Besides, grammar is taught inductively, and the mother tongue is avoided. That is why students learn by associating meaning directly in English.

### **The Audiolingual Method**

This method is also called the Army Method. It is the first modern methodology, which consists of teaching by repetition of drills. It involves extensive oral instructions in which students have to repeat dialogues and drills. Richards and Rogers stated that this method contains some learning principles, as follows:

Teaching a foreign language is basically a process in which students form a mechanical habit. For that reason, the repetition of drills is an important aspect in this methodology.

Students develop the language skills more effectively if the items are presented in spoken form before they are seen in written form. That is why this method uses listening drills.

Analogy provides a stronger base for language learning than analysis. It means, students learn the

grammatical rules deductively. Therefore, explanations are given after students have practiced a pattern in a variety of contexts.

Students have to learn the meaning of words in a linguistic and cultural context and not in isolation. Thus, teaching a language involves teaching aspects of the cultural system of the people who speak that language.

### **The Total Physical Response**

The Total Physical Response (TPR) is a method that involves speech and action. It means, the language is taught by physical (motor) activities. Furthermore, the main objective of this method is to develop the students' oral abilities at a beginning level. Besides, this method is based on the way that children learn their mother tongue, because parents have "language body conversations" with their children. In other words, parents give orders using their bodies; the child understands and responds. This conversation goes on for months as far as the child can use his/her mother tongue. That is why, this method attempts that students recall the information taught strongly if the memory connection is tracked and associated with body movements.

### **Communicative Language Teaching**

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is a method in which students have to develop the four skills in order to communicate. In the mid- 1960's, the Audiolingual method was rejected because of some criticisms by Noam Chomsky in his popular book *Syntactic Structures* (1957). According to this author, cited by Richards & Rogers (1985), each sentence has uniqueness and creativity. Therefore, the CLT was introduced as a new method, which consists of active learners' interaction (role play, games, information gaps, etc.), authentic communication, and negotiation of meaning. On account of this, the CLT helps students develop their communication as the ability to use the linguistic system effectively and appropriately.

### **Desuggestopedia**

Desuggestopedia is a method focused on the creation of a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom. That is why, this method uses music, musical rhythms, decoration (furniture, arrangement of the classroom), and an authoritative behavior of the teacher in order to create and maintain a relaxed atmosphere. Besides, it refers to the use of music in order to relax students as a kind of therapy and students get the precise ways of using voice quality, intonation, and stress patterns of the foreign language. Therefore, using music, students feel encouraged. It makes students feel confident, increase their motivation and self-esteem, so, students develop their language skills.

### **Task-Based Language Learning (TBLL)**

This method involves the use of tasks in the learning of the target language. A typical TBL methodology includes: pre-task, task-cycle, and post-task. The pre-task refers to the introduction of the topic and what the task will be. The task-cycle is the stage where students are going to do activities using the language and produce the writing or oral performance that the task is demanding, they in fact practice the language. Finally, the post-task refers to what the students do with the language learned, free activities for them to communicate. For that reason, teachers use different kinds of activities where students have to use the language in order to develop it. Besides, using tasks in the lessons will motivate and engage students with the topic. In conclusion, this method will engage students to use the language communicatively.

### **The Ludic Methodology in the English Language Teaching-Learning Process**

According to Moreno, G. (2003) the Ludic Methodology refers to a combination of activities to expand the students' thoughts and imagination. It takes into account games, poems, songs, and other techniques for the students' language learning development. That is why, students will apply their creativeness in order to express their own thoughts, ideas, and feelings about their surroundings. Consequently, using the Ludic Methodology, students feel satisfaction, relaxation, and engagement because the activities they carry out in the classroom resemble the ones they develop in their free time.

Garcia & Llull (2009) state that the Ludic Methodology contributes to the psychomotor maturation, cognitive activation, and it is the fundamental way for children's socialization. For that reason, by means of its use, students will learn, activate, and develop abilities in the four skills: reading, speaking, listening, and writing, applying their own experiences.

### **Songs for the English Language Teaching-Learning Process**

Songs and language share various characteristics. Both come from the processing of sounds. Authors or speakers use them in order to communicate a message, and they have intrinsic characteristics in common such as: pitch, volume, stress, tone, rhythm, and pauses. Besides, songs and language can be acquired by exposure. (Lake quoted by Grau, 2013)

Songs have been part of the human life for a long time. Nowadays, they are used in the human daily life, in different situations; for example: people listen to music and sing songs in bars, in the car radio, in the

shower, etc. That is why, the use of songs is an essential part in the language experience. Consequently, using songs for the English language teaching learning process can be of great value.

According to Harmer (2007), students have to enjoy the listening material because if they can understand more or less the listening, without the intervention of a teacher, it will help them improve this skill. Scoth and Ytreberg (1995) stated that listening is the skill that children acquire first. That is why teachers have to provide enjoyable, easy, and relaxing material in order to improve the students' listening skill, such as songs.

Teachers should use songs as pedagogical tools. Teaching English, especially to young learners, has to be done in an enjoyable way, because most of the children like to listen to songs and sing. Murphey (quoted by Millington, 1992) states that songs can help young learners to improve their listening skills and pronunciation, therefore potentially helping them to improve their speaking skills.

Şevik, Ersoy Üni, Eğitim Fakültesi, Bölümü, and Burdur (2012) agree that the listening skill is the most important outcome of early language teaching and songs are regarded as one of the best ways to practice and develop the listening skills. It means, songs are considered one of the best techniques to develop the listening skill, especially to teach young learners.

### **Types of Songs**

The most important aspect for choosing a song is that teachers should like and feel willingly for sharing the song in front of the class. However, teachers have to choose the type of songs that will be presented in the class correctly. Hence, teachers have to know the different possible types of songs for an English class.

There are many kinds of songs that can be used in the classroom. Those are: nursely rhymes, jingles, folk songs, holiday songs, pop songs, and tongue twisters. Besides, there are a lot of songs written specially for the English language teaching learning process. But, in order to avoid students' boredom, teachers should choose original, modern, and stimulating songs. In that way, students can sing in and outside the classroom.

In addition, there are different types of music that can be used in order to teach from the easy to complex; such as: rhythms and chants. One powerful and useful way to use chants and rhythms, according to Graham, C. (2010), is to use jazz rhythms or jazz chants in order to illustrate the natural stress and intonation patterns of conversational American English. It means, students can develop their listening skill by means of songs.

### **Previous Studies**

Smith, C. (2002) researched the effect of using songs in texts. It means, the students were involved

hearing the text as songs. First, there were two groups: one that heard the text as a song and the other group heard the same text as speech. The group that heard the text as a song, at the moment to be tested, the students listened to the melody of the song. The results in this investigation were notable, the musical group showed higher scores than the normal group. Concluding that the use of songs in the foreign language may aid memory of text.

Arroyo, S. (2015) investigated the English language teaching methodologies in Senior High School students in Esmeraldas-Ecuador. The investigator found difficulties in the methodologies in order to improve the listening skill. As a result, she proposed a ludic methodology, mainly with songs for improving the student's listening skills.

Estupiñán, E. (2015) stated the use of the ludic methodology to improve the English teaching-learning process in second graders at Velasco Ibarra School, in Esmeraldas - Ecuador. This investigation took into consideration games in order to improve students' learning. The researcher proposed a handbook with games supporting the students' textbook.

Caicedo, (2016) researched about the use of dramatization of realistic situations to improve the spoken English in Alfonso Quiñónez George Educational Institution in Esmeraldas – Ecuador. His investigation establishes the importance of using drama in the classroom, such as the motivation created by students' interest. The investigator proposed a booklet with six different activities for third level senior high school students.

## Method

### Type of investigation

This research was descriptive because it analyzed the influence of songs in the improvement of the English language teaching-learning process in the sixth level of Basic Education Students at “Francés” Educational Institution in Esmeraldas.

### Methods

The methods used in this investigation were: the deductive and the inductive methods of investigation, also the analytic-synthetic method, and the hermeneutic method. It was inductive because before identifying



the lack of knowledge for the correct use of songs, an observation was done; deductive because of the several studies and theories which provide reliability to the research. In addition, it was an analytic-synthetic method, because the results were analyzed in order to propose a didactic resource for the correct use of songs and hermeneutic because the theory and the results were interpreted and this interpretation contributed to the development of the investigation. Finally, it was also

### **Population and sample**

At “Francés” Private Educational Institution, some levels of basic education are divided into two courses “A” – “B” in order to give a more personalized class.

The participants of this research were 30 male and female, they were divided into two class groups, 15 students in the course “A” and the others in the course “B” of the sixth level of basic education students at “Francés” Private Educational Institution, whose ages vary from 9 to 10 years old. Besides, the participation of the English teacher of these students was required.

### **Data processing**

All the information gathered throughout the survey was processed by using the percentage manual method. The information from the classroom observation was collected and processed manually. To show the results obtained, the Microsoft Excel program was used for making figures.

### **Techniques**

The following techniques were used:

**Bibliographic technique:** It was used for getting scientific information in order to elaborate the theoretical framework of this investigation.

**Observation:** It was aimed at analyzing the influence of songs in the English teaching-learning process. This observation was done for one week - four periods in the teaching-learning process of sixth level students at “Francés” Educational Institution in Esmeraldas in their English lessons.

**Survey:** two surveys were applied. The first one was applied to 30 students to know if they liked learning with songs, and the kind of methodology the teacher used in the English lessons. The second survey was applied to the English teacher to find out the methodology used for language teaching.

Statistic Technique: this technique permitted the tabulation of the data collected from the surveys applied to basic education students and their teacher at “Frances” Private Educational Institution.

### **Instruments**

The instruments used for each technique were:

- Bibliographic records
- Questionnaires
- Observation Sheet

### **Results**

The observation, which was applied to the sixth-level Basic Education students at the “Frances” Private Educational Institution during their English class on Wednesday, July 20<sup>th</sup>, revealed that 90% of the students had an excellent English level, a good amount of vocabulary, phrases, and grammar. They knew their teacher’s procedure, activities, and teaching style. In addition, students presented intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Hence, they were attentive, participative, and behaved well.

The teacher used two songs as warm-ups: “head shoulders knees and toes”, and “it’s getting late”. Students sang, danced, clapped their hands, and did some mimes. They were motivated, relaxed, and activated by the song. However, the teacher did not use songs correctly. First, the vocabulary from the songs was not the same from the unit 2 “Ancient Rome”. Then, she did not create more activities after listening to the song. Finally, she did not use methodological stages in order to use the song.

After listening to the song, the teacher introduced the lesson vocabulary, the students practiced by listening and repeating. Next, she evaluated them by asking the vocabulary with their closed course book. At the end of the lesson, students worked in their draft book, they had to draw a picture for each sentence that the teacher wrote on the board.

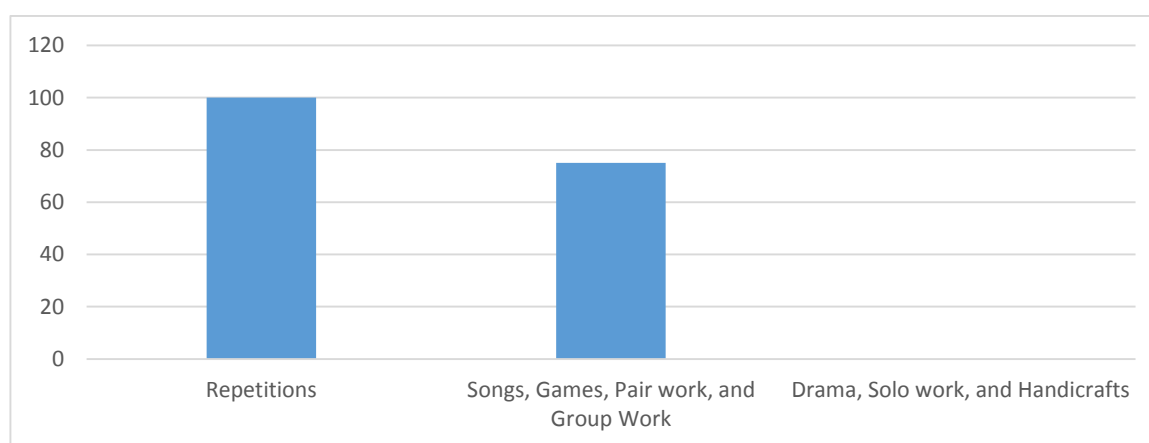
As the teacher used the Ludic Methodology by means of songs just like warm-ups and not throughout the lesson, introducing new content, so some students lost their concentration, their participation decreased and they started to talk.

The survey applied to the English teacher showed, as can be appreciated in Figure 1, that the teacher always used one technique during the English class, it was repetition. This concurred with the results of the

observation. Besides, the teacher usually uses four of the techniques given in the survey (songs, games, pair work, and group work) in her English lesson. Finally, the English teacher never uses drama, solo work, and handicrafts. We can say that the teacher usually tries to use different techniques during the lesson, in that way

students feel engaged and the teacher avoids boredom. However, the commonest technique during the lesson is repetition.

When analyzing the teacher's criteria about if songs contribute to students' development in the English language learning process, there was a positive result. Hence, the use of songs provides the teacher a good way to motivate students during the English lesson.



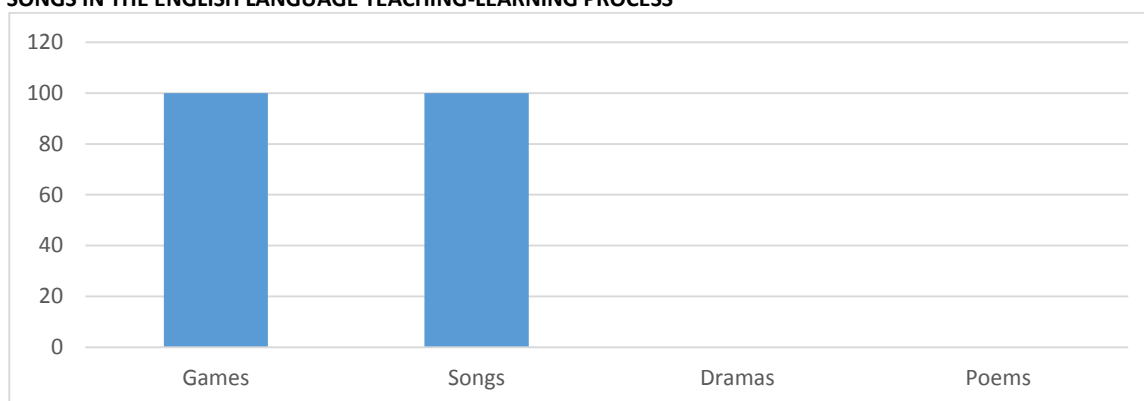
**Figure 1:** The commonest techniques or procedures the teacher uses for the English language teaching-learning process

**Source:** Survey applied to the English teacher

Concerning the fact that the teacher uses the Ludic Methodology in her lesson, (figure2), she also answered positively and stated that with this methodology the class turns funnier, students feel relaxed, motivated and they pay more attention to the class. Besides, the techniques used by the teacher in the class are songs and games.

Despite the fact that the teacher referred that she used songs, there are probably some methodological insufficiencies to work with them, because during the observation, it was noticed that the teacher used songs and games just as warm-ups at the beginning of the class.

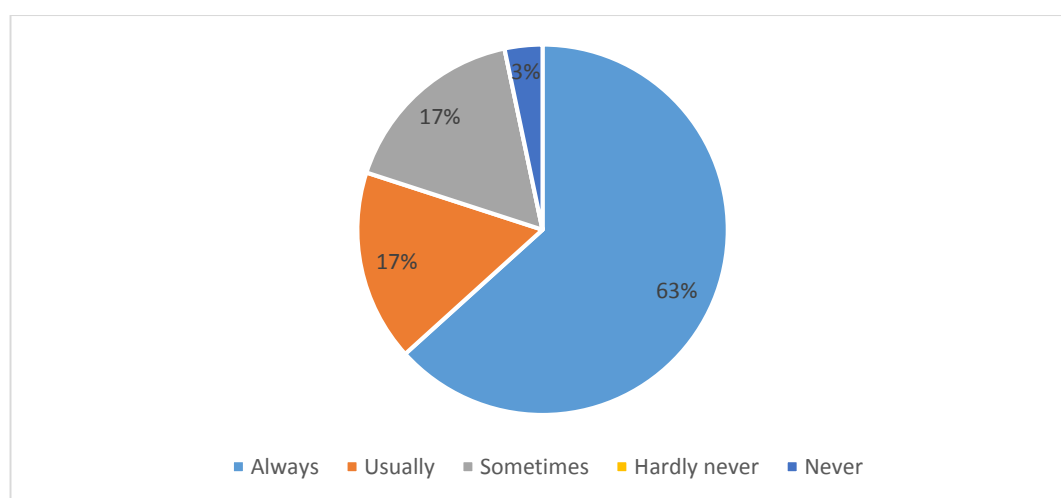
THE USE OF SONGS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS



**Figure 2:** The techniques the teacher uses with the Ludic Methodology

**Source:** Survey applied to the English teacher

Regarding the survey applied to students, as it is revealed in figure 3, the majority of students always enjoy listening to music (63%). On the other hand, only the 3% of the sample never enjoy listening to music in English. It could be possible because that minority are shy, don't like to sing or dance, and they don't have developed the musical intelligence. However, the majority of students enjoy listening to music. It means, it will be easier for the teacher to use songs during the English lesson.



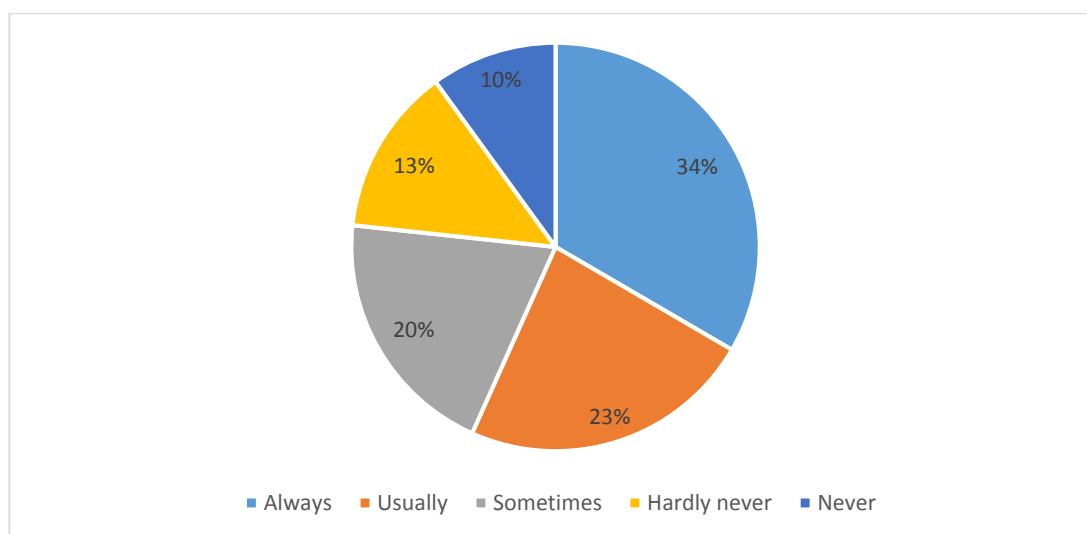
**Figure 3:** If students enjoy listening to music in English

**Source:** Survey applied to students

Figure 4 shows that the majority of students always like to carry out activities in pairs, which it is represented by 34%. This percentage is followed by the 23% who usually like it and the 20% sometimes. On the other hand, the minority does not like this procedure, it is represented by the 10% of students. However,

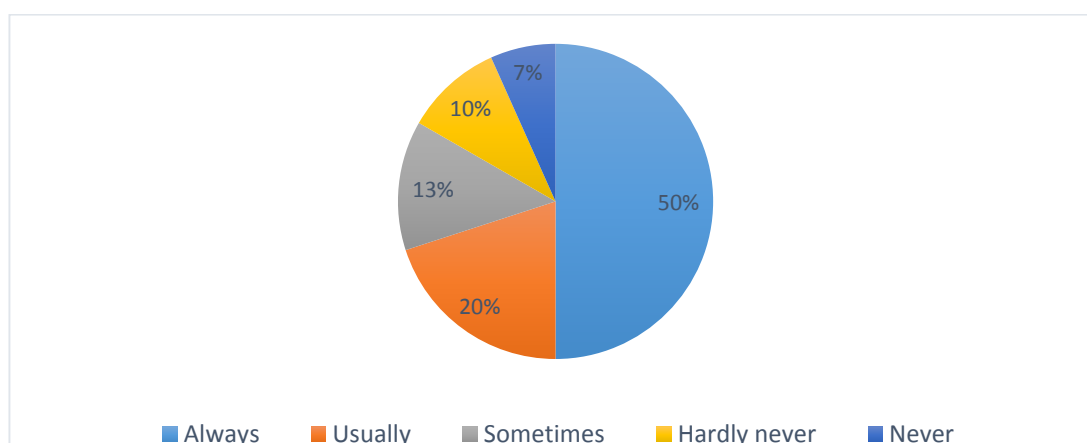
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the majority of students like to work in pairs. It means, the teacher should exploit this procedure in class, which benefits the use of songs in order to carry out activities in pairs.



**Figure 4:** If students like to carry out activities in pairs  
**Source:** Survey applied to students

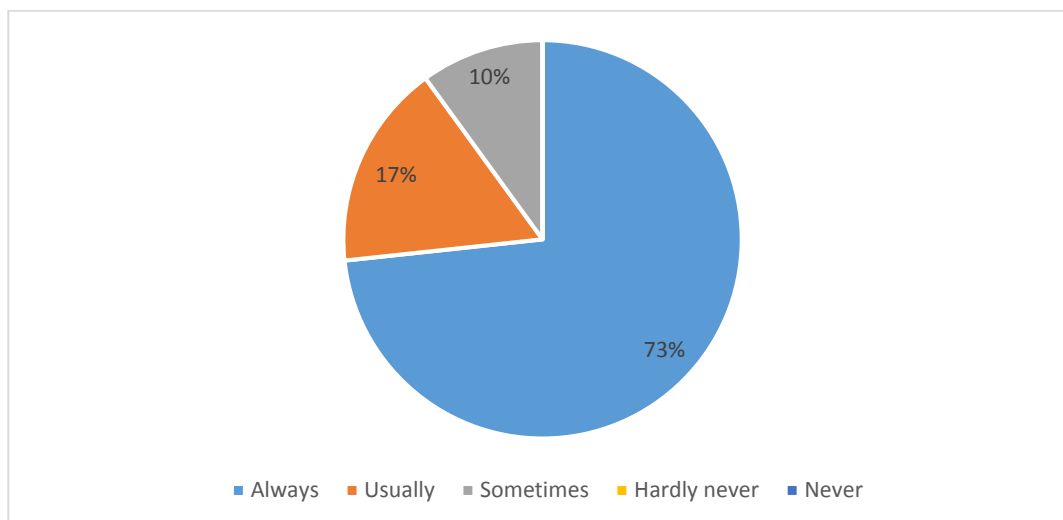
Figure 5 shows that the majority of survey respondents always like to carry out activities in groups, it is represented by the 50%. It is followed by: 20% usually, 13% sometimes. On the other hand, the minority does not show interest in this procedure, it is represented by the 7% of survey respondents. That is why, the teacher should take advantage of the majority who like to carry out activities in groups, which benefits learning and the use of songs.



**Figure 5:** If students like to carry out activities in groups  
**Source:** Survey applied to students

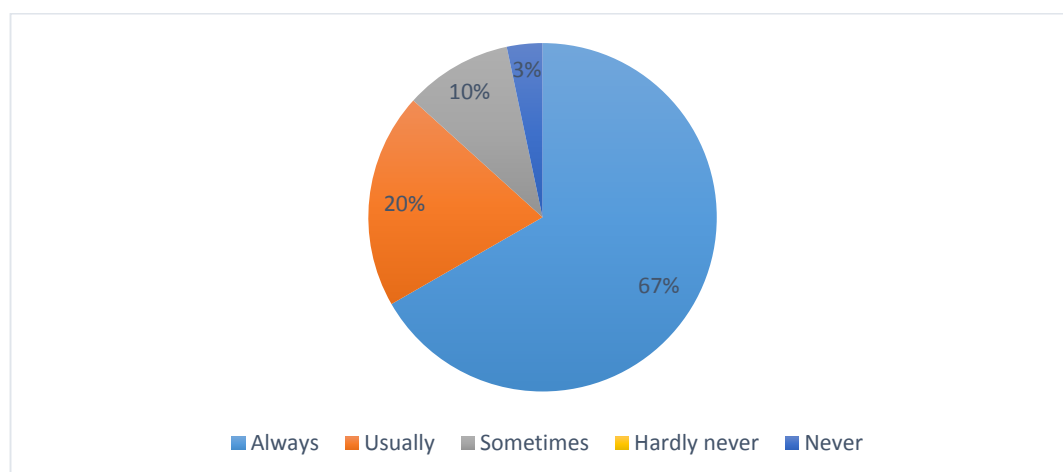
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As it is shown by figure 6, the major part of the students answered that the teacher always uses songs in the English lesson (73%). It is followed by the 17%, they say that the teacher usually uses songs in the English lessons. Finally, the 10%, who answered sometimes. It indicates that the major part of the time the teacher does make use of songs in her lessons.



**Figure 6:** If the teacher uses songs in the English lesson  
Source: survey applied to students

It is revealed by figure 7 that the majority of the survey respondents agreed that they always like to learn English by means of songs (67%). The 20% usually and the 10% sometimes. It means that students like to learn English using songs because they can participate actively in class. On the other hand, only the 3% say that they never like to learn English by means of songs. It is probable that the minority are shy students, they do not like working in group or as a whole class.



**Figure7:** If students like to learn English by means of songs  
Source: Survey applied to students

## Discussion

The results concerning the importance of the Ludic Methodology to teach English which were got, coincided with Estupiñán (2015) and Caicedo (2016), who dealt with it, though the first one with the use of games and the second one with the drama.

Moreover, the results of the surveys and the observation applied to the students about how they feel after using songs during the English lesson coincided with the advantages given by Murphey (quoted by Grau, 2013), who stated that by means of songs in the English lessons, students feel relaxed, in harmony with their classmates, and have fun. That is why, after listening to songs, students are participative and focus with the class.

However, the results of the survey did not match with the results of the observation concerning the teacher's behavior in the classroom. In the survey, she answered that she makes use of the Ludic Methodology in class and revealed that it was important to use songs, what coincided with Smith (2002), who considered songs very effective for language teaching. Nevertheless, during the observation, it was proved that the teacher did use songs but just as warm-ups, never to introduce new contents. It means that she did not take advantage of songs as powerful tools to make students understand and practice the contents introduced in each didactic unit.

Concerning the methodological needs of the English teacher in order to use songs for the English teaching-learning process, the results obtained coincided with the ones found by Arroyo (2015), who considered the necessity to use songs in order to improve the students' listening skills. However, this investigation proved that the use of songs not only benefits the development of the listening skill, but also the other skills: speaking, reading and writing. It also helps memory development, what coincides with Smith (2002).

One of the best ways to motivate students is to use didactic resources in a dynamic class. In that way, students will be motivated to pay attention and participate in the English lesson. According to Murphey (quoted by Grau, 2013), songs motivate students more than the use of repetition in the course book.

### Conclusions

Songs are used in the English language teaching-learning process with students from the sixth-level Basic Education at “Francés” Private Educational Institution, what makes students feel relaxed, motivated and engaged.

The majority of the students from the sixth-level of Basic Education at “Francés” Private Educational Institution feel motivated to learn English by using songs in their lessons.

The main difficulty of the use of songs in the English language teaching-learning process from the sixth-level Basic Education students at “Francés” Private Educational Institution is that they are not used as a technique for teaching contents, just as warm-ups.

Teachers from the referred level and institution need some methodological orientations to use songs as a technique for teaching the contents of the students’ course books.

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