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**THESIS REPORT:**

DIDACTIC STRATEGIES TO ACTIVATE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN CHILDREN OF 4TH LEVEL OF GENERAL BASIC EDUCATION AT “SAGRADO CORAZÓN” SCHOOL IN ESMERALDAS 2018

**INFORME DE TESIS:**

ESTRATEGIAS DIDÁCTICAS PARA ACTIVAR EL APRENDIZAJE DE LA LENGUA INGLESA EN NIÑOS DE 4to NIVEL DE EDUCACIÓN GENERAL BÁSICA EN LA ESCUELA “SAGRADO CORAZÓN” EN ESMERALDAS 2018.

**PRIOR TO THE ACADEMIC DEGREE IN:**

**APPLIED LINGUISTICS IN ENGLISH TEACHING**

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As members of the Dissertation Committee at PUCE Esmeraldas, we certify that we have read the dissertation prepared by MARIA ANTONELLA HIDALGO MINA entitled Didactic Strategies to Activate English Language Learning in English by Children of the fourth Level of EGB at “Sagrado Corazon School” In Esmeraldas 2018, and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement for the Degree of Bachelor of Applied Linguistics in Teaching English.

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Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation are contingent upon the candidate's Submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College. I hereby Certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend Accept that it as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

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## **STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR**

I, Maria Antonella Hidalgo Mina, affirm that the investigation in the present project of investigation is unique, authentic, and personal. The content of this research is legally and academically the responsibility of the author and PUCE Esmeraldas.

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## ABSTRACT

To determine how the use of didactic strategies facilitate the learning of a foreign language in fourth level students of basic general education of “Sagrado Corazon” school in Esmeraldas, a descriptive-qualitative investigation was carried out by using the analysis and synthesis methods and the hermeneutic and statistical methods; besides some techniques such as observation and survey that were applied to a group of 35 students who were chosen randomly and eight English teachers. Having analyzed the results that were given at the time of applying the different surveys and observation sheets, it was observed that teachers have more attention from the students when they apply didactic strategies. In the same way, it was revealed that students have greater participation and assimilation of topics when teachers use a variety of teaching strategies, being the most preferred by students those in which they can participate in groups. It was also possible to conclude that students of this level develop their learning through learning by doing and learning by reading, in a greater proportion than the other teaching-learning didactic strategies, since they were more adapted at the time when their teachers presented them the different activities in class and how to solve them was more effective. This research also coincided with other studies done previously which are related to the use of teaching strategies in teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

**Keywords:** *strategies, didactics, meaningful learning, teaching-learning*

## RESUMEN

Para determinar cómo el uso de estrategias didácticas ayudan a facilitar el aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero en los estudiantes de cuarto año de educación general básica de la escuela “Sagrado Corazón” en Esmeraldas, se llevó a cabo una investigación cualitativa-descriptiva usando los métodos de análisis y síntesis, hermenéutico y estadístico; además de técnicas como la observación y la encuesta que fueron aplicadas a un grupo de 35 estudiantes que fueron elegidos al azar y ocho maestros de inglés. Habiendo analizado, los resultados que se dieron al momento de aplicar las diferentes encuestas y hojas de observación mostraron que los maestros tienen mayor atención de los estudiantes cuando aplican estrategias didácticas, al mismo tiempo se reveló que los estudiantes tienen una mayor participación y asimilación de los temas cuando los maestros hacen uso de estrategias didácticas variadas. Siendo las más preferidas por las estudiantes aquellas en las que pueden participar en grupos. También fue posible concluir que los estudiantes de este nivel desarrollan su aprendizaje a través de Aprender haciendo y Aprender leyendo, en una mayor proporción que las otras estrategias didácticas de enseñanza-aprendizaje, ya que estaban más adaptadas en el momento en que sus profesores les presentaron las diferentes actividades en clase y la forma de resolverlas fue más efectiva. Esta investigación además coincidió con otros estudios hechos previamente y que están relacionadas con el uso de estrategias didácticas en la enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés como un idioma extranjero.

***Palabras clave:*** estrategias, didáctica, aprendizaje significativo, enseñanza-aprendizaje

## INTRODUCTION

It is easy to understand that learning a new language is not easy, especially if this language has not been part of our learning process from the beginning. This is the case of the English language; although it is true that today is part of the curriculum in schools, it is not usual to learn it at home and in many institutions, it is not an obligation to learn it in a conscious way.

Over the last two decades, the teaching-learning process of this language occupies a very important place in the Ecuadorian educational curriculum. Currently, it is considered a mandatory subject from the second level of Basic General Education to the third level of Baccalaureate in all public and private institutions of the country and optional for elementary education and the first-grade preparatory level.

Besides, it is important to mention that the implementation of this subject in the first levels of schooling is very significant since it is in the early stages of childhood the most propitious time for learning English, because of the high capacity to imitate the sounds of a language. Another factor that influences highly in this process is a good memory that children have which makes them able to easily assimilate the different oral linguistic structures. These stages relate children learning to interact with their environment since they use mental games and images that allow them the development of their linguistic skills.

It is necessary to keep in mind that teachers need to make children part of their own learning in order to encourage them in the acquisition of this new language. So, educators need to look for the appropriate choice to catch the learner's attention doing the didactic activities funniest.

The teaching-learning process has tools that are a valuable help to motivate students learning. These educational tools are the strategies and there is a great amount of them that can help to activate the learning process, in other words, the teacher has to use the strategies properly to activate learning effectively. It is important to search for new didactic strategies for English teaching is important to determine how they influence the academic development of children.

The general objective of this research is: To analyze the Didactic Strategies that Activate the Learning of English as Foreign Language in Children of the fourth level of EGB at "Sagrado Corazon" School. For that reason, this research made it possible to identify if

teachers use a variety of strategies to catch attention and encourage students to learn a new language. Another objective was to determine what didactic strategies teachers consider the best to apply in their English classes. Finally, an important objective was to find what strategies are the best for students to obtain meaningful learning.

## **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Learning a new language is complicated, but acquiring a foreign language without using the right strategies is difficult. The place where learning takes place, the tools used by teachers, the environment that surrounds them, help to activate learning. That is why in order to facilitate this process for students, teachers must teach their classes in a better way using new methodological strategies that provide students with meaningful learning.

Ludic activities such as playing, reading a book or listening to songs in English help to reinforce what has been previously learned in the grammar and vocabulary classes of a specific topic. It is also important to consider not limit the classroom learning to practice these types of activities, because it allows students to put the language into practice in the outside world.

There is plenty of educational institutions where the results are not those expected by teachers, authorities, even more by students and their parents. It is important that educators properly select strategies that help students to acquire knowledge. This research is focused on the strategies that teachers use in their daily classes and explains some of the theories that are fundamental to the use of strategies that help in the activation of learning in children.

The way teachers use the different strategies to activate learning is a problem to solve with this research, because the low grades that students have in their assessments are proof that something needs to be done to encourage students to learn English in the school but in a nice way.

That is why this research presents the following problem to be solved:

How can different Didactic Strategies activate the process of learning English in children of the fourth level at Sagrado Corazon elementary school in Esmeraldas 2018?

## **JUSTIFICATION**

The use of recreative activities in the stage of primary education is very beneficial for children, through the observations and the documents consulted for this investigation was confirm that learning is more effective if the environment created in class is good. For this reason, some of the observed teachers consider that a factor that notoriously helps is the use of the mentioned activities and the design of teaching strategies in order to get the student to acquire the knowledge in a meaningful way.

It is known that, normally, this subject is difficult to learn since the methodology used in past years and in some cases currently, did not attribute any activity contextualizing possible real situations. That is why this investigation is centered on the use of teaching strategies that encourage the students to learn this necessary subject which in the current education is a mandatory subject. Although the way of teaching has changed in recent times and there are numerous investigations about the use of methodologies and strategies in teaching that shows success in acquiring a foreign language and that even suggest alternative strategies to apply in different situations, some teachers do not dare to implement these strategies because of the physical space and the large classes.

Despite the amount of information available, currently, obsolete techniques are still used that do not help to the fulfillment of the objectives set out in official documents, as far as the foreign language is concerned. For teachers, it is important to know the different ways of teaching methodology, teaching strategies, the exemplification of lucid activities, classroom management, according to the established criteria. This is why the chosen theme for this paper has such an impact and attempts are made to advance more and more to adapt to the new needs of students and society in general.

The importance of this theme of investigation lies to suggest to the educators select appropriately the strategies that they use in their diary classes and if it is necessary to look for some theories that fundamental the use of strategies to activate the learning in children and so to help students to acquire the knowledge in an easy way.

Games in children are something instinctive, innate. So, how can teachers take advantage of this quality to obtain good results? Perhaps, making use of a series of educational strategies that link the pleasure of the game, representation, music, and interaction with

language content and a series of ludic activities that could be used as teaching strategies to enrich the learning process.

Additionally, it is well known that the best way to learn a language is through practice and for this to happen it is necessary to help students develop their skills to be able to express and communicate easily. That is why it is essential for teachers to provide the necessary tools and even more an adequate environment to help their students to feel confident when they participate in the different activities especially oral activities.

## **OBJECTIVES**

### **General Objective**

- To analyze the Didactic Strategies to Activate the Learning of English as a Foreign Language in Children of the fourth level at “Sagrado Corazon” school, Esmeraldas in the school year 2018.

### **Specific Objectives**

- To identify the strategies used by teachers in the English language teaching process to activate learning in Children of the fourth Level at “Sagrado Corazon” School.
- To determine which strategies are better to achieve meaningful learning in children of the fourth level at "Sagrado Corazon" school.
- To identify which didactic materials used by teachers in the teaching-learning process are preferred by children of the fourth level at “Sagrado Corazon” school.

## CHAPTER I

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 1. Theoretical and Scientific Foundation

People have different reasons for getting up every morning and doing what they do every day. But what moves them to behave the way they do it? why is that, on some days, it can feel harder than others to doing activities as simple as; to get up, do school assignments, read a book or do any physical activity? it is because all people need a reason to do something every day and motivation, it could be the factor why people do or leave to do the things that they do every day.

All the students in a certain moment of their educational life require not only a breath in the academic scope but also need a motivation to study in a meaningful way; because if a student does not feel the motivation to learn, it could become of a barrier that teachers have to overcome in the achievement of knowledge acquisition in their students. Although, it is true that students must have in their knowledge all the information required for their cognitive learning and teachers need to start to motivate them for learning, because children who are motivated tend to be engaged, persist longer, have better learning outcomes.

Taking into account the aforementioned Warmuth (2014) mentioned two distinct forms of motivation in the process of teaching students: Intrinsic Motivation and Extrinsic Motivation.

#### 1.1. Intrinsic Motivation to Activate Learning

Intrinsic motivation refers to the spontaneous interest that appears in the person and it is related to pursuing a topic, which means learn for the simple fact of learning. These people find a subject enjoyable and they naturally want to achieve greater language comprehension. It involves doing something, because it is personally rewarding.

When students are involved in their learning, they are intrinsically motivated, if teachers encourage them to participate and give their opinions where it is possible they are collaborating to awake children's curiosity, which is an important factor in intrinsic motivation, because it pushes them to explore and learn for the sole pleasure of learning.

Warmuth (2014) says there are multiple ways to foster intrinsic motivation in students. Some of these include:

- Create a student-centered classroom
- Promote a mastery goal, rather than a performance goal
- Encourage students' actions, not their character or person
- Provide learning goals
- Have high, but realistic expectations for students

It is important to say that students can apply intrinsic motivation in all aspects of their life, even if it is not an academic activity. Furthermore, it is an effective way to improve their behavior by changing the focus of the internal rewards of a task, by satisfaction and enjoyment; in this way they can better motivate themselves and others.

### **1.2. Extrinsic Motivation to Activate Learning**

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to making a topic for reasons which do not do with the taste of the individual, but rather for a subject of influence from external agents that press to choose a topic to do it, because they want to please others. According to Pink (2011), extrinsic motivation is the use of external rewards (outside ourselves) to encourage certain behavior. It can be punishments or rewards. It means that students are more motivated to work together if they are held accountable for doing so.

Mattaltdt (2018) mentioned some features of people with this type of motivation

- They are motivated by external rewards
- They turn games into work
- The reward comes from outside oneself, physical rewards
- Autonomy suffers
- Not much creativity or problem-solving
- Used on problems that have only one correct answer or a few specific ones

Extrinsic motivation in the classroom can include things such as small prizes, tokens, extra grades, stickers, etc. Children feel entitled to do something and soon they will learn to do the task, not for internal reasons, but waiting for a type of recognition.

### **1.3. Teaching Strategies**

Whether teachers are acquiring experience in a classroom, or have already acquired it over the years, there is something they have in common, they are always looking for new ways to improve the learning experience for students. From dealing with behavioral problems to improve the way they give their lessons, here are some recommended strategies to teach

English that could help to develop the teaching-learning process more comfortable, especially for students.

According to some studies carried out by Torino (2011) in order to avoid the confusion between “strategy” and “methodology”, there are different didactic strategies such as; learning by reading, learning by doing, learning by working and learning by searching. Additionally, they indicate one possible sequence of Didactic Method for each one.

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>POSSIBLE COMPONENTS OF THE DIDACTIC METHODS</b>
<b>Learning by Reading</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Face-to Face Lecture</i></li> <li>- <i>Autonomous Learning</i></li> <li>- <i>Exercising</i></li> <li>- <i>Check</i></li> </ul>
<b>Learning by Doing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Problem Solving / Problem Posing</i></li> <li>- <i>Cooperative Learning</i></li> <li>- <i>Frontal Lecture</i></li> <li>- <i>Autonomous learning</i></li> <li>- <i>Exercising</i></li> <li>- <i>Check</i></li> </ul>
<b>Learning by Working</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Face-to Face Lecture</i></li> <li>- <i>Autonomous Learning</i></li> <li>- <i>Applicative Exercising</i></li> <li>- <i>Case Study</i></li> <li>- <i>Training on the Job</i></li> <li>- <i>Frontal Lecture</i></li> <li>- <i>Check</i></li> </ul>
<b>Learning by Searching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Face-to Face Lecture</i></li> <li>- <i>Case Study</i></li> <li>- <i>Guided Discovery / Simulation / Informal Learning</i></li> <li>- <i>Cooperative Learning</i></li> <li>- <i>Frontal Lecture</i></li> <li>- <i>Check</i></li> </ul>
<b>Informal Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>Visit on site</i></li> <li>- <i>Reading of Daily Newspapers and Reviews</i></li> <li>- <i>Navigation in Internet</i></li> </ul>

**Table 1:** Components of the didactic methods according to the didactic strategies

**Source:** Politecnico di Torino Institute

### **1.3.1. Learning by Reading**

Through reading, students have the opportunity to develop their minds, increase their vocabulary, even develop writing skills.

Reading is the key to learning and an important stage for a child's success. Often children faced with reading difficulties that outweigh their desire to read and without proper guidance, they never overcome them. That is why teachers and all people around children must encourage them in this learning process, because through reading, they will acquire a most diverse vocabulary.

It is not difficult for adults to read or it is at least what people think, but what happens if it is applied as a method to learn better English as a foreign language and above all if it is used to achieve a good level of English language. Really, it is not simplest as have been always thought. However, learning to read is one of the methods that require a lot of knowledge of meanings and interpretations, both phrases and paragraphs, according to what is studying or referring to.

### **1.3.2. Learning by Doing**

It is a strategy in which the students have the opportunity to be the builder of their own knowledge based on their own understanding of life. In other words, knowledge is developed through problem solving and collaboration.

Dewey (1859-1952) argued that the curriculum should be relevant to students' lives. Besides, it puts a premium on meaningful activity in learning and participation in classroom democracy. He mentioned that learning by doing and developing practical life skills is crucial to children's education. The aim of applying this method is to teach the student to be the protagonist of their own learning and that the teacher's role is to be a facilitator of learning for the development of skills and abilities; as with decision making, creative thinking or leadership potential.

It is not difficult to do in order to learn, that is what some teachers believed and still believe today. This is because if learners cannot “get down to work”, with respect to their learning, even if teachers or guides want to teach them; they are not going to get anywhere.

Nowadays, it is what people must take into account and look for the best ways to learn, it is not just saying I am going to do something simple and I have already learned, it is rather to look for something that represents a personal challenge which leads the individual to truly meaningful learning.

### **1.3.3. Learning by Working**

The knowledge is not always acquired in an Educational Institution and not all those who come from schools, colleges or universities are the more highly qualified people, many people who have been forced to leave their studies, realize that they can also learn by working. They achieve this, because of the pressure to work on what they can find, they have to learn to do this work. It is very linked to learning by doing, since when working

and developing daily activities that the job forces them to do at the same time they are learning. It means they are learning through practice.

Helyer, (2015) affirmed that work-based learning is what is "learned" by working, not by reading or observing an activity, but actually undertaken work activities. In other words, learn through practice. Interactions with others are often crucial ... this is learning from real work and real-life and accepting how inextricably linked those activities.

With this strategy, teachers can give students the chance to explore what they have learned in the classroom within a real-world context. It says the strategy gives students the opportunity to put theory into practice with real-life work experiences.

#### **1.3.4. Learning by Searching**

Searching is a natural learning behavior such as listening, speaking, reading or writing and there are many reasons why people seek information. People seek information because of curiosity or sometimes simply because of their need to solve problems or complete tasks, but whatever the reason is a process in which the individual has the opportunity to acquire knowledge in an active way.

Hwang, Tsai, Tsai, & Tseng, (2008) state that among the types of learning strategies, learning by searching can foster students' ability to take the initiative to acquire knowledge. Likewise, researching and becoming the researcher leads them to learn. Many times during the learning process, students are forced to look for information to better understand what they are studying and at that moment they are investigating, many times, learners do not realize it, but this research leads them to having significant learning and with scientific bases that corroborate that what they are learning is true.

#### **1.3.5. Informal Learning**

This method has a lot to do with the learning students have during the classes since they not only investigate and seek information by scientists and experts on the topics. During the study day, classmates are often responsible for explaining certain topics that they find stimulating and easy to understand and that not everyone can understand them.

The various methodological strategies presented help the teacher significantly, while teaching, since the simple development of an activity or a skill is not enough. It is necessary to investigate and understand whether it is useful to read some researches.

Likewise, it is found that ELD is an acronym for English Language Development. ELD is the systematic use of instructional strategies designed to promote the acquisition of English by students whose primary language is not English (Maurer 2019). This system allows teachers to focus better on the teaching of students since they have to do with the development of their learning skills.

It is not easy to talk about the different didactic strategies that exist since they can be found many and it is difficult to discern and determine which is the best and which is mostly applied with students, that is why the following points should be analyzed:

**1.3.5.1. Case Method.** - “Providing an opportunity for students to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-life experiences has proven to be an effective way of both disseminating and integrating knowledge” (Cashin, 1990, p.60-61). It is not easy to determine the best way for students to learn, but taking the real world to the environment in which others find themselves and adapting them to everyday reality is a very good way to get students to learn and internalize the knowledge.

**1.3.5.2. Discussion.** - “There is a variety of ways to stimulate discussion. For example, some faculties begin a lesson with a whole group discussion to refresh students’ memories about the assigned reading(s). Other faculties find it helpful to have students’ list critical points or emerging issues or generate a set of questions stemming from the assigned reading(s). These strategies can also be used to focus large and small group discussions” (Cashin, 1990, p.60-61). Conducting a discussion in a classroom is not easy, because it is often difficult to control the class and this leads to internal fights, but using this strategy properly, it is possible to acquire adequate and productive knowledge.

**1.3.5.3. Active Learning.** - It can be defined as anything that involves students in doing and thinking about things and what they are doing. Similarly, Meyers & Jones (1993) define active learning as learning environments in which students can develop skills such as speaking, listening, reading and writing. Also, they reflect on the content of the lessons through problem-solving exercises, informal small groups, simulations, case studies, role-playing, and other activities; all of which require students to apply what they are learning. It is not easy to find a place where students can develop the 4 skills in the learning process and this is because they used to learn without any sense and without any value. However, using active learning as a strategy to be able to learn, we will be focusing and directing learning towards meaningful learning.

**1.3.5.4. Cooperative Learning.** - “Cooperative Learning is a systematic pedagogical strategy that encourages small groups of students to work together for the achievement of a common goal. The term 'Collaborative Learning' is often used as a synonym for cooperative learning when, in fact, it is a separate strategy that encompasses a broader range of group interactions such as developing learning communities, stimulating student/faculty discussions, and encouraging electronic exchanges (Bruffee, 1993, p.39). This approach stresses the importance of faculty and student involvement in the learning process. As the name implies, this type of strategy is based on collaborative learning, between students and the teacher, since both are in the faculty of providing the necessary knowledge for learning, it does not matter if this knowledge is empirical, what is important in this case, they can contribute significantly to daily learning.

**1.3.5.5. Integrating Technology.** “Today, educators realize that computer literacy is an important part of a student’s education. Integrating technology into a course curriculum when appropriate is proving to be valuable for enhancing and extending the learning experience for faculty and students” (Mishra, 2007, p.40).

Technology is currently one of the primary tools for learning, and if we focus on using it as a material that gives the appropriate benefits in the acquisition of knowledge, it could provide meaningful learning experiences because technology has a positive impact on student learning. Besides, technology provides hands-on learning opportunities that can be integrated into all school curricular areas and depending on the student’s way of learning

#### **1.4. Make it fun & Make it active**

Children’s learning depends a lot on their predisposition to carry out the activities during the classes if they feel motivated to learn. In addition, if the class is fun, they learned fun and often not even notice that they are learning.

Verner (2018) affirms that fun is a factor that matters to kids. Moreover, that goes for kids on the playground as well as in the classroom, which means that learning can be acquired in the school environments. For children, it is necessary to understand that if the class is not fun, lively, active or interesting; they do not pay attention and are easily distracted. This is why the class needs to present the appropriate characteristics for children.

## **1.5. Build Teaching around Activities and Physical Movement**

It is not so difficult to deduce this point, since if we take into consideration both activities that take place during the class in written form and those that involve the movement of the body which are essential part of an integral learning; likewise, we realize many of the activities developed during classes which involve corporal movements are those that help to understand what is being learned.

### **1.5.1. Build lessons around themes**

No class lesson should be separated from the topic to be discussed, it is essential that everything in class has to be linked to what is being learned and if it is a new topic, in the warm-up it can be done the introduction of the topic to be treated.

### **1.5.2. Choose content children are familiar with**

Children learn in a better way if what they are learning has to do with their environment and what they usually live with, such as their family members, their school, etc.

Due to, it is necessary for the topics of work and the topics that are developed during the classes which are common in the daily life of the children.

### **1.5.3. Provide rich language support**

One of the fundamental bases of learning a new topic and everything related to that topic is vocabulary. It is necessary for the words children learn are simply essential in their cognitive development, it makes meaningful learning.

## **1.6. Learning English as a Foreign Language**

Today, a large majority of the schools in countries of Spanish speaking have included the English subject among their curriculum. Although, it is still usually asked for this subject to taught from the first year of classes to facilitate students learning and be able to integrate it from an early age.

Nowadays, the teaching of English is classified into different levels from level B2 which would be of an intermediate level or advanced as well other levels either; A1, A2, B1 or C1 that are accompanied by textbooks and appropriate exercises for level difficulty.

Holešinská, (2006) “before analyzing teaching methods that can help and support young learners with difficulties in the English language learning as a foreign language, the main attention should be drawn to the process of learning a language in general” (p.8).

Talking about teaching another language as a foreign language is not easy; this is because talk about learning a second language leads to learning from the basics something that in the mother tongue sometimes people do not pay attention to since there is a connection between learning one's mother tongue and learning a foreign language. When young learners are acquiring the new foreign language their reaction to the experience is mainly, because it is more or less like their native language. Although, the foreign language has often different structures, rules, and systems, some children easily cope with the language while others need time to do so and struggle with it from the beginning. According to Holešinská, (2006) The fact of that young children learn their first language with such speed and competence must mean that if the process can be better understood it should be possible to design experiences through which children learn a second language in much the same way as they learn their first language (p.8).

It is a tangible reality that a child learns by repeating and imitating his parents or adult staff, as his first contact with language learning.

That is why if parents or the people in charge of education in the first periods of learning do not know how to teach a foreign language, the moment that they start learning, it will be much more complicated to do so. Moreover, at certain moments of their education, the student may feel frustrated and may not want to learn anything about learning and using a foreign language, no matter how useful it may be and how much it will benefit them in the future.

Horwitz, Tallon & Luo (2009) indicate three foreign language learners' characteristics have: motivation, anxiety, and beliefs about language learning.

**Motivation:** It will depend on the learner's reasons for learning. Some learners just study because of school requirements, while others expect to use the language in their future.

**Anxiety:** most of the learners experience this feeling when learning or using the new language either when speaking or listening, even when writing or reading.

**Learner beliefs** about language learning are important, because they influence how students approach language learning and the language learning strategies that they choose to use.

## 1.2. Previous Studies

Coyle, & Valcarcel (2002) carried out a study in the University of Murcia, Spain in which they wrote a paper in which they did a revision of the learning strategies literature and highlights the overlapping which occurs between terms such as process, strategy, tactics, and technique, which currently characterizes the field as regards issues considered criterial for their definition. Also, the role of consciousness in learning strategy use is discussed and the terms process, strategy, and technique are defined in the light of a classroom-based empirical study carried out with children aged between eight and ten. The results of this research revealed the types of thoughts and behaviors used by children, in addition to a variety of techniques and strategies that young EFL learners put into practice. The typology presented here includes the metacognitive and social/affective meta strategies, on the one hand, and the cognitive strategies, on the other, classified according to the higher-level processes of comprehension, retention, and use of language that work to improve and develop. Additionally, a classification plan is presented of children's metacognitive, socio-affective and cognitive strategies and techniques.

Sanz (2017) conducted an analysis of studies with fourth graders of the Spanish system primary education he focuses on the low communicative competence in English of Spanish students with respect to other European countries. This investigation showed that students are able to develop their communicative skills, but they need to be motivated with activities that involve the use of language in an oral way. After the implementation of several types of activities, the researchers concluded that role-play activities have greater acceptance in students. In addition, these types of dynamics are very useful for practicing and assimilating concrete language structures as long as they have guidelines so that students do not deviate from the contents they want to practice. In addition, a didactic proposal was developed with activities that are represented through everyday situations in the classroom and the use of real materials to develop more meaningful learning of English and thus students' communicative abilities.

Castellano, Ninapaytan & Segura (2014) established the relationship between motivation and learning the English language, the investigation was carried out with students from the third level of high school in the Educational Institution 1283 Okinawa, Ate-Vitarte in Lima-Peru. During the investigation, they found that students show a lack of motivation to learn the English language because they do not have adequate infrastructure and teaching

materials. Furthermore, they do not have previous knowledge. For that reason, the researchers recommended the use of songs and videos in English with which they can develop oral expression and comprehension abilities, as well as the production of texts. Finally, they suggest that teachers should consider the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that their students receive regarding English language learning to take advantage of them in improving their learning.

Araujo & Peralta (2016) carried out a study about the Creation and Compilation of Didactic Materials for EFL students from 5th to 7th grade in Eduardo Crespo Malo, an elementary school in Cuenca. In this study, they elaborated on some didactic materials according to the students' needs and levels. The project consisted of two phases: Phase I dealt with students from 2th to 4th grade and emphasized in listening and speaking skills. Phase II dealt with students from 5th to 7th grade and emphasized reading and writing skills. During the investigation they found that the school does not have this subject in its academic curriculum and this school is located in a rural area, so they do not have the necessary financial resources to afford English materials. In order to supply teachers with English teaching materials, the researchers elaborated an action plan with the most relevant topics that children should learn according to their level and the skills they need to develop, because it is necessary for English teachers to create and compile materials themselves, in order to assist with the educational process.

Estupiñan (2015) carried out a study with second graders at Velasco Ibarra School, in Esmeraldas-Ecuador. The researcher stated the use of the ludic methodology to improve the English teaching-learning process in children. It means that this investigation took into consideration the use of games in order to improve students' learning. Moreover, a handbook with games supporting the students' textbook was proposed. Besides serving as a guide for teachers and allow an increase in interaction, motivation, stimulation, and activation of students' learning it helps students to develop the four principal skills by means of fun situations that are adequate for children.

### **1.3. Legal Foundation**

The legal bases of this research are based on The Organic Law of Intercultural Education (2011) in the document Ecuadorian in-service-English Teachers Standards. This investigation focuses on the third domain about Curriculum Development particularly

aspects related to planning for standards-based English, implementing and managing standards, and using resources and technology effectively.

The law guarantees the right of children, young people and adults to an education, regardless of their culture, religion or political purposes. It states that teachers must incorporate a variety of activities and tasks that develop authentic uses of language as students learn academic vocabulary and content-area material. With reference to the activities in the educational field, this article is focused on:

Freedom. - The State will guarantee plurality in the educational offer and not only in what has to do with the Spanish language.

The community of learning. – This item recognizes society as an entity that learns and teaches.

Development of processes. - The educational levels must adapt to the life cycles of the people, to their cognitive, affective and psychomotor development, their abilities, their cultural and linguistic reach...

Lifelong learning. - Not only learning while students learning but the acquisition of knowledge and its permanent evolution throughout their life.

Multilingualism. - The right of all persons, communities, communities, people, and nationalities to recognize their own language and the official languages of intercultural relationships, as well as in others related to the international community, which is recognized.

## CHAPTER II

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

#### 2.1.Type of Investigation

The investigation was carried out by a descriptive-qualitative one. It was developed with children from “Sagrado Corazón” Elementary School in Esmeraldas in the academic year 2018.

#### 2.2. Population and Sample

The population and sample of this research were taken from a number of sixty-eight students of which thirty-four students were selected randomly, all of them belonging to the fourth level of basic general education at “Sagrado Corazon” Elementary School in Esmeraldas. In addition, eight English teachers from the same institution.

#### 2.3.Methods

The methods used were:

Analysis and synthesis: These were used to analyze the literature and the results. Also, to synthesize the most important theories and information to support this research.

Hermeneutics: It was used to interpret the most relevant information analyzed in the theoretical framework and the results obtained with the application of the techniques.

#### 2.4.Techniques

The techniques used were a survey which was applied to thirty- four students from fourth level of basic general education at “Sagrado Corazon” Elementary School. The teacher who was responsible for this group of students was asked to provide one period of his class for students to complete the survey. In the same way another survey was applied to eight English teachers from the different levels of this mentioned institution. On the other hand, the observation was done three times during different periods of classes in order to contrast the information obtained with the applied survey.

#### 2.5.Instruments

To collect the data, the instruments were designed according to the different techniques. A guide for the technique of observation was applied, which contains six items to be observed.

A survey and a questionnaire were developed, those contained close in relation to the indicators to be evaluated.

## **2.6. Data Analysis**

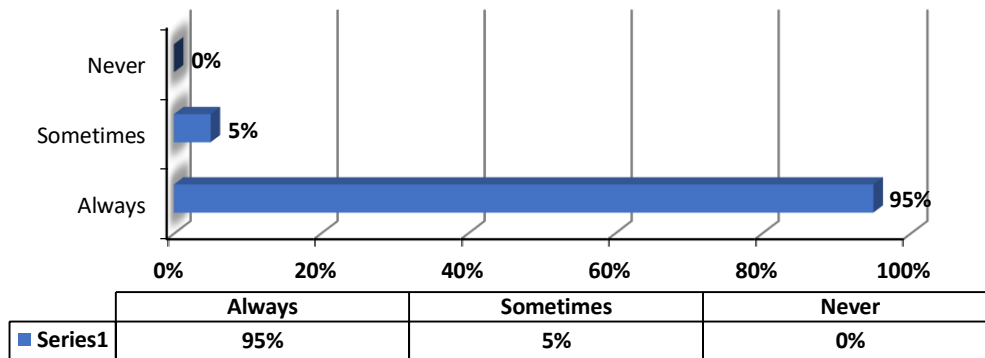
The information that was obtained from the application of the different techniques was tabulated manually. The data were taken from figures using the Microsoft Excel program.

## CHAPTER III

### RESULTS

#### 3.1. Observation

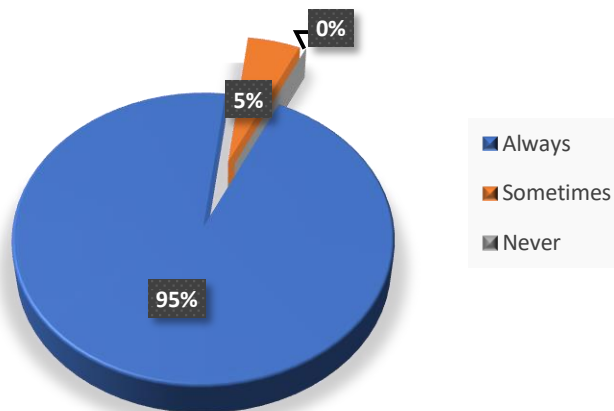
The purpose of the observation was to identify the use of strategies and materials that teachers use to activate the English language and to know if these strategies help in the children's learning- process. Regarding the Students' participation in-class activities the results obtained in figure 1, revealed that 95% of students who were observed felt motivated to give their contributions to the development of the class through the application of the different Didactic Strategies used by the English teacher, while a 5% of children just manifested interest in some specific activities and did not pay attention to the teacher's explanation.



**Figure 1:** Students' participation during class activities.

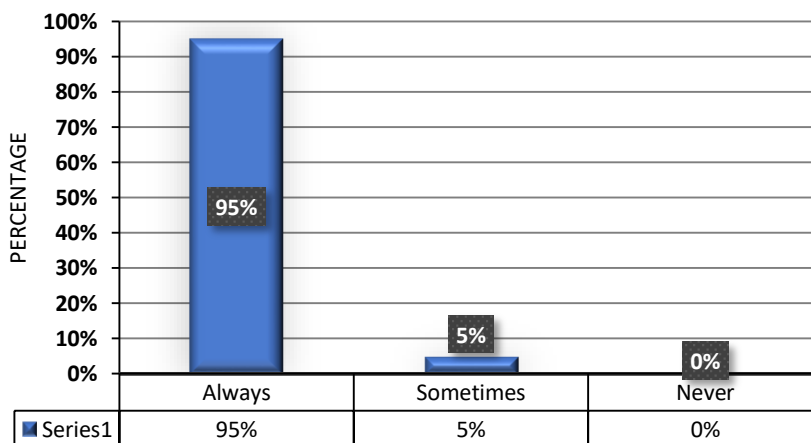
**Source:** Observation Sheet Applied

The diverse resources that the teacher possesses intervene in the daily teaching and the students not only acquire the information; they also understand it and come to interpret it so, they can make known their points of view and their own ideas on the specific topic that they are dealing with. As is shown in Figure 2 about the frequency in which teachers implement a variety of resources according to the children's necessities, being that 95% of teachers implement material aids to make their English classes more attractive.



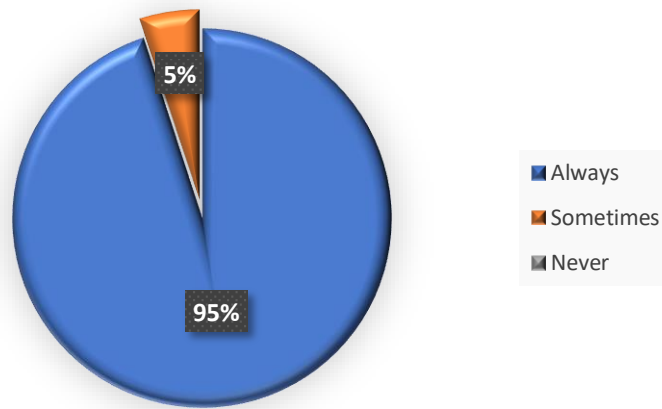
**Figure 2:** Resources Implementation in English classes  
**Source:** Observation Sheet Applied

Although it is true that in many occasions the teacher has to improvise in the class, the use of the didactic materials in little children represents a great incentive, since most of the time the children develop in a visual and corporal way, these materials help them in their acquisition of knowledge. The results in Figure 3 show that 95% of teachers design didactic materials according to the contents.



**Figure 3:** The correct use of didactic material  
**Source:** Observation Sheet Applied

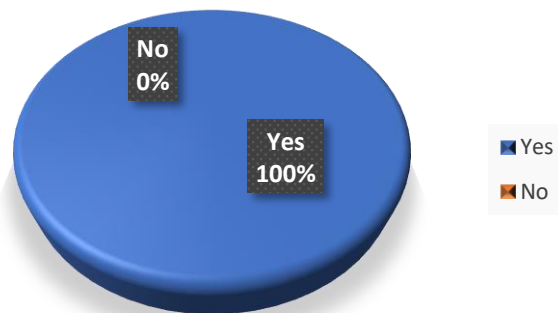
When analyzing the results concerning the use of different strategies to facilitate the learning process. In figure 4, it is showing that 95% of teachers carry out activities applying different didactic strategies. Not only for children to be in class and keep them busy, but it is for them to develop both cognitively and in their way of interpreting the information that is given to them during the classes



**Figure 4:** Use of different strategies to facilitate the learning process  
**Source:** Observation Sheet Applied

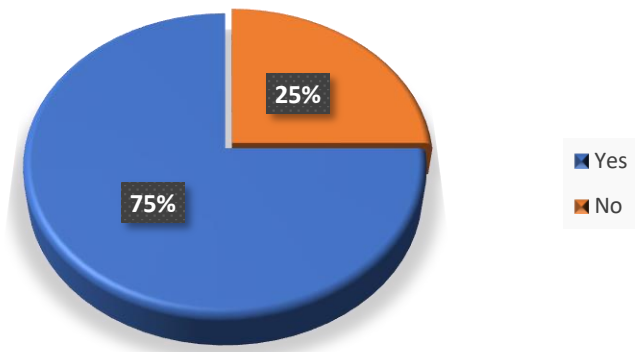
### 3.2.Survey applied to the English Teachers

The result obtained in Figure 5 shows that 100 % of the surveyed teachers agree that using different strategies students will have meaningful learning.



**Figure 5:** Use of didactic strategies during English classes  
**Source:** Survey Applied to English teachers

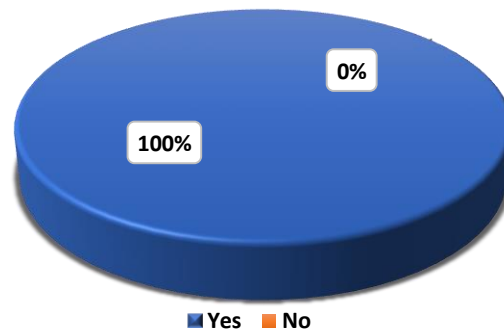
Regarding the use of the resources to reinforce the explanation of different topics Figure 6 shows that 75% of the teachers agree to use different recourses and they have to be designed according to the students' learning needs while the other 25% have difficulties in applying different resources.



**Figure 6:** Use of resources according to Student's learning needs

**Source:** Survey Applied to English teachers

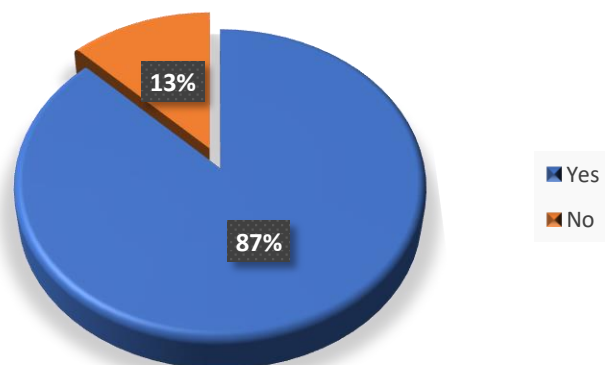
In Figure 7 it is exposed that 100% of teachers agree that it is necessary to present a variety of activities in order to reinforce the teaching-learning process.



**Figure 7:** Activities to reinforce the teaching-learning process

**Source:** Survey Applied to English teachers

Finally, the results obtained in figure 8 shows that 87% of the teachers agree with the fact that the use of different strategies in English classes facilitate the learning of students and 13% think that learning basically depends on the student's desire to learn.

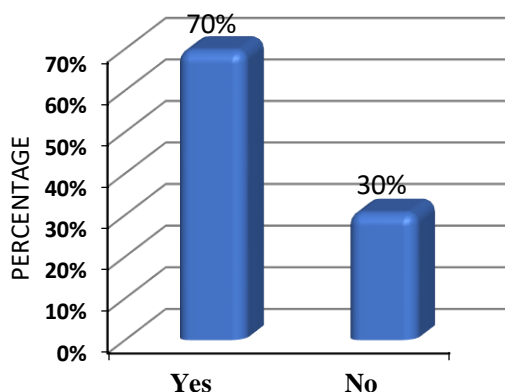


**Figure 8:** Strategies to facilitate the students' learning process

**Source:** Survey Applied to English teachers

### 3.3. Survey applied to the Students

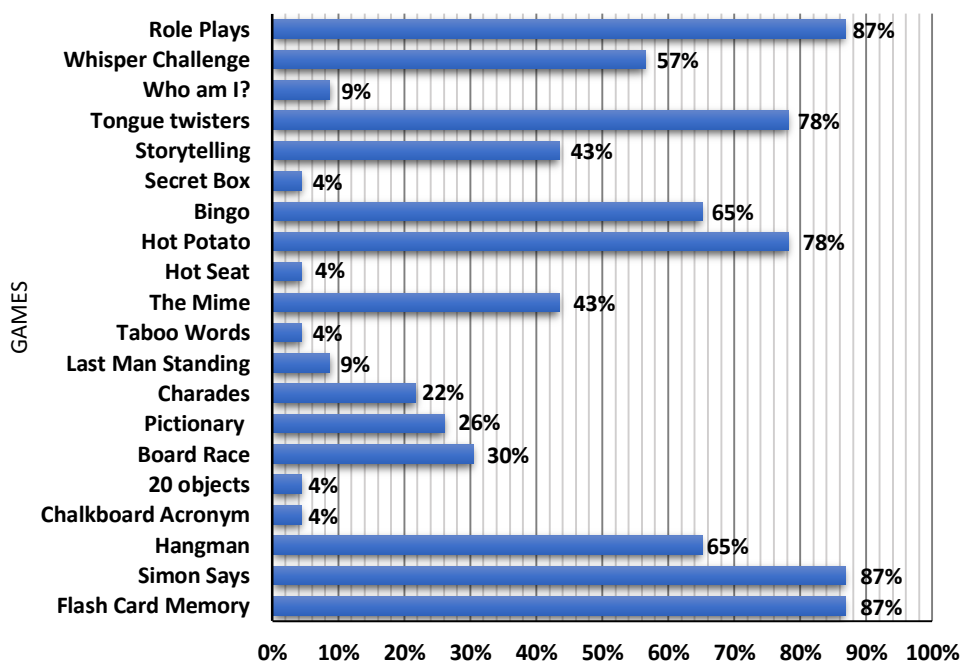
In relation to the use of songs as a way to learn English, the results in figure 9 show that 70% of children agree that they learn English better with songs and 30% disagree with this learning strategy.



**Figure 9:** Approval of students in using songs as a way to learn English

**Source:** Survey Applied to Students

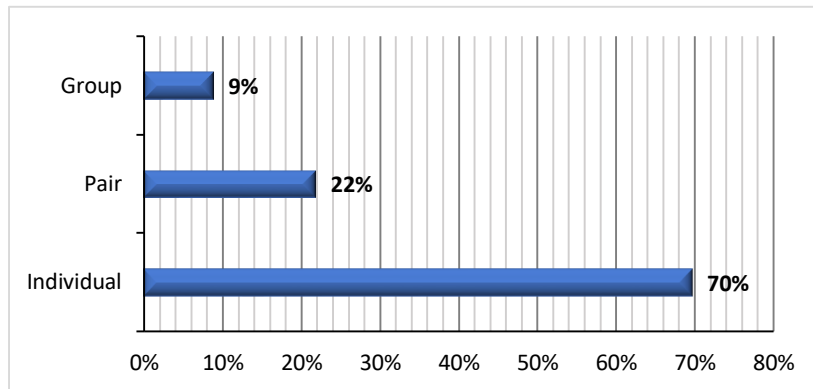
In Figure 10 the most popular games among the students are revealed: 87% of children agree that they learn English with role plays, Simon says and flashcards memory, 78% like to learn English using tongue twisters and playing hot potato, 65% of children chose hangman and bingo, 57% of children like to participate in the whisper challenge and 43% prefer storytelling and the mime.



**Figure 10:** Games that students prefer for English classes

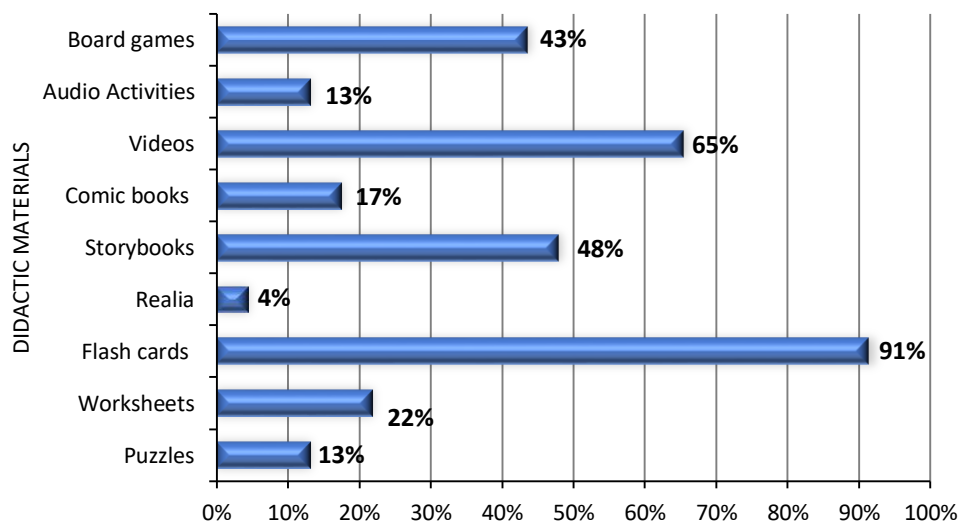
**Source:** Survey Applied to Students

In figure 11 it is demonstrating the classwork formation and the results show that most of the time (70%) the class activities are performed individually, sometimes (22%) they work in pairs and rarely (9%) they work in groups.



**Figure 11:** Classwork formation  
**Source:** Survey Applied to Students

About the didactic materials that students prefer to use for English classes figure 12 shows that most of the children, 91% prefer to use flashcards because they find it enjoyable and they can memorize vocabularies and learn phrases or sentences easily, 65% like to watch videos, 48% of children like the reading activities also 48% like to read storybooks, while 43% of children like to use board games.



**Figure 12:** Didactic materials that students prefer to use for English classes  
**Source:** Survey Applied to Students

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DISCUSSION**

An important factor to be considered by teachers in order to activate the English language learning in children in a better way is the use of adequate didactic strategies. That is an action plan that contains methods, techniques or instructions to achieve self-directed learning in any given teaching-learning environment.

The results of this research determined that when referring to learning in children that the best way to encourage them to learn was through games that caught their attention. If we refer to the different strategies that are used during the learning process, it is possible to identify which children learn best by developing the different activities of the classroom through educational techniques such as making it fun and educational at the same time. It can be evidenced through the results of the observations done during this investigation in which most of the teachers agree that the use of didactic strategies increases the students' attention and allows them to do the English classes more attractive. In addition, they coincide that the different resources and didactic materials must be used or design according to the topic's needs in order to facilitate the teaching process and achieve more meaningful learning in the students.

Concerning the design of adequate strategies for children Coyle, & Valcarcel (2002) did a literature review about the learning strategies, they also explain differences between the terms process, strategy, tactics, and technique. Moreover, in their article, they present a plan for the classification of children's metacognitive, socio-affective and cognitive strategies and techniques. Which could help as a guide in the design and application of strategies according to age and children's learning needs.

Contrasting the observation results in this investigation in which was demonstrated that most of the surveyed teachers use a variety of strategies in order to achieve better learning results in their students. Estupiñan (2015) says that the majority of teachers do not use ludic activities in their classes, because they do not have appropriate methodological orientations to work with them, but it could be solved with the adequate teachers training and even with the reading of the different contents about learning strategies literature and other online resources which help in the design of the different activities.

In a study carried out by Araujo & Peralta (2016), it is possible to find information about the creation and compilation of didactic materials for EFL students. Moreover, they elaborated some didactic materials according to the students' needs and level, emphasizing for 2th to 4th-grade students the listening and speaking skills and in 5th to 7th-grade students, the reading and writing skills were emphasized. It coincides with the results of the survey applied to the students from the fourth level who also agree with the use of activities that implies the development of listening skills and speaking skills because they expressed, they learn better by using songs and games in which they can use the language orally. Moreover, it is shown the students' preferences about the use of the learning resources, activities and workgroup formation they like for learning English in a better way.

In addition, Sanz (2017) developed a proposal with activities represented through everyday situations in the classroom and the use of real materials to achieve more meaningful learning, influencing a greater communicative ability of the students.

Certainly, one of the best ways to motivate students is to use didactic strategies in a dynamic class in order to catch their attention. Moreover, it is important to mention that should not be set aside the development of a very fundamental skill for a meaningful acquisition of knowledge such is the reading skill. While it is true that students have more ways to learn using the internet, many of them do not even pay attention to what they have in their research, they even only copy it but do not read it. Introduce the student in this habit through activities that involve the practice of reading helps them to understand, interpret and share knowledge. Even more, they could make a relation between pronunciation and writing, since as is well known in the English language the same way in which we write is not the same way in which we pronounce.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

- Teachers have better results when they include didactic strategies and materials to reinforce their English lessons to help fourth level students learn in a meaningful way.
- A boring classroom is very harmful to fourth level students, so they need permanent active participation. For this reason, it was concluded that learning by doing is one of the best didactic strategies because through this strategy student can participate actively in ludic activities which imply the use of the target language and in this way the students could have a better comprehension of knowledge.
- Fourth level students prefer to support their learning by using didactic materials that include visual support such as flashcards, videos, illustrated storybooks and games in which they have the opportunity to practice the English language orally as in role-play or singing songs because learning is more significant when the information is acquired through teaching strategies related to developing the listening and speaking skills of the students.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Teachers must use more resources to reinforce the didactic strategies for the teaching-learning process and students' learning; which will motivate students to internalize the new language better.
- Teachers should use graphics and visual resources according to the different topics they are developing in the class.
- Prior to beginning classes, teachers must perform previous activities such as warm-ups in which the psychomotor system of the students can be developed progressively.
- Teachers should look for and apply the didactic strategies thinking about their students' needs and the way in which they learn.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: OPERATIONALIZATION OF VARIABLES

VARIABLES	CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS
IV- STRATEGIES	They constitute a teaching method that helps students be more engaged in the English classroom	They are ludic activities used in the English language teaching-learning process that may be cooperative or competitive	Cooperative  Competitive	Working with others  Winning or losing
DV- Learning Activation	It involves teaching students to access the information they have stored in their permanent memory.	When students can use vocabulary and structures, they have learned in class easily.	Lexical use  Structural use	Vocabulary  Grammatical forms

## APPENDIX 2: OBSERVATION SHEET



### PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF ECUADOR IN ESMERALDAS

The purpose of this observation sheet is to identify the use of strategies material to activate the English language learning process.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Institution: \_\_\_\_\_

INDICATORS	Always	Sometimes	Never
Students participate when the teacher uses different strategies during classes.			
The teacher implements different resources correctly.			
The teacher uses correctly didactic material according to the topic.			
The teacher presents different activities for the teaching-learning process.			
The use of different strategies facilitates the learning of students.			
Students increase their knowledge when the teacher uses different strategies			

**APPENDIX 3: TEACHERS' SURVEY**



**PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF ECUADOR IN  
ESMERALDAS**

**Objective:**

- To determine the incidence of the use of strategies in teaching English and if this is a good way to facilitate students learning.

**1. Do you agree that using different strategies during classes is a good way to learn English in a meaningful way?**

Yes

No

**2. Do you think that it is important the teacher implements different resources according to the student's learning needs?**

Yes

No

**3. Do you think that it is necessary for the teacher presents different activities for the teaching-learning process?**

Yes

No

**4. Do you think the use of different strategies facilitates the learning of students?**

Yes

No

**APPENDIX 4: STUDENTS' SURVEY**



**PONTIFICAL CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF ECUADOR IN  
ESMERALDAS**

**Objective:**     ▪ To determine if these activities to use in classes are appropriate for students and which are the best for teachers to apply during their classes to obtain meaningful learning.

**1. Do you agree that the use of songs is a good way to learn English?**

Yes

No

**2. Which games do you think are the best to understand the English classes better?**

Flash Card Memory		The Mime	
Simon Says		Hot Seat	
Hangman		Hot Potato	
Chalkboard Acronym		Bingo	
20 objects		Secret Box	
Board Race		Storytelling	
Pictionary		Tongue twisters	
Charades		Who am I?	
Last Man Standing		Whisper Challenge	
Taboo Words		Role Plays	

**3. Choose the frequency that you work individual, pair or group in the English classes?**

	<b>Always</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Never</b>
Individual			
Pair			
Group			

**4. Which didactic materials do you prefer to use for English classes to motivate you to acquire the new information?**

Puzzles		Storybooks	
Worksheets		Comic books	
Rosettes		Videos	
Flashcards		Audio Activities	
Realia		Board games	