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APPLIED LINGUISTICS SCHOOL

**THESIS:**

***TEACHING ENGLISH THROUGH MUSIC TO THE 8TH  
LEVEL OF BASIC EDUCATION STUDENTS WITH  
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AT MARGARITA CORTES  
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION IN ESMERALDAS, 2017***

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INSTITUCIÓN EDUCATIVA MARGARITA CORTES EN  
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Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is 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 that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

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## **STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR**

I, Ana Paula Girón Charcopa, affirm that the investigation in the present thesis report research is totally unique, authentic, and personal.

The content of this research is a limited legal and academic responsibility of the author and PUCE- Esmeraldas.

Ana Paula Girón Charcopa

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## ABSTRACT

In order to analyze how music can contribute to the improvement of the teaching-learning process of the English language on the eighth level of basic education students with learning difficulties at "Margarita Cortes" Educational Institution in Esmeraldas, a descriptive investigation was carried out using the methods of deduction and induction; in addition, techniques such as the interview, observation and survey were applied to a population of 40 students and one English teacher of the eighth level of basic education students with learning difficulties at "Margarita Cortes" Educational Institution. The results revealed that students enjoy listening, singing and performing activities with songs in the English classes; students feel motivated and willing to learn English after singing a song because they can memorize and understand the language better. The English teacher does not usually use music in her lessons because there is a lack of knowledge about how to apply music in the class and what are the activities and strategies that can be used. This research coincided with a series of investigations related to the use of music applying the ludic methodology and suggestopedia method, emphasizing the use of physical activities and a relaxed atmosphere within the classroom, but not with the use of music as a methodology to teach the content of the textbook. That is why some pedagogical activities, strategies, and songs for the use of music on the eighth level of basic education students with learning difficulties at "Margarita Cortes" Educational Institution in Esmeraldas, were presented as a proposal of this research.

**Keywords:** music; learning difficulties; the English teaching-learning process; strategies; techniques.

## RESUMEN

Para analizar cómo la música puede contribuir a la mejora del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés a estudiantes del octavo nivel de educación básica con dificultades de aprendizaje en la Institución Educativa "Margarita Cortés" de Esmeraldas, se realizó una investigación descriptiva utilizando los métodos de deducción e inducción; Además, técnicas como la entrevista, la observación y la encuesta se aplicaron a una población de 40 estudiantes y una profesora de inglés del octavo nivel de educación básica en la Institución Educativa "Margarita Cortés". Los resultados revelaron que los estudiantes disfrutaban escuchando, cantando y realizando actividades con canciones en las clases de inglés; los estudiantes se sienten motivados y dispuestos a aprender inglés después de cantar una canción porque pueden memorizar y entender mejor el idioma. La profesora de inglés no suele usar la música en sus clases porque existe una falta de conocimientos sobre cómo aplicar la música en el salón de clases, y cuáles son las actividades y estrategias que se pueden utilizar. Esta investigación coincidió con una serie de investigaciones relacionadas con el uso de la música aplicando la metodología lúdica y el método sugestopedia, enfatizando el uso de actividades físicas y un ambiente relajado dentro del aula, pero no con el uso de la música como metodología para enseñar el contenido del libro de texto. Es por eso que se presentaron como propuesta actividades, estrategias y canciones pedagógicas para el uso de la música con los estudiantes del octavo nivel de educación básica con dificultades de aprendizaje en la Institución Educativa "Margarita Cortés" en Esmeraldas.

**Palabras clave:** música; dificultades de aprendizaje; proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés; estrategias; técnicas.

# 1. INTRODUCTION

English is a language that is spoken throughout the world; it is used mainly for education, business and tourism. Because of its importance, the Ministry of Education of Ecuador has commanded that this language be taught nationwide in all educational institutions in the country.

According to the English Language Learning Standards, students have to achieve at the end of the 1st year of secondary an A2 level of English. Unfortunately, the reality of the classroom is different. In Esmeraldas, the educational system has certain flaws, which do not allow students to reach an A2 level in English. The environment within the classroom is not suitable for learning a second language, and the methodologies that teachers use sometimes are not the most appropriate for the students' cognitive development. The most common method of teaching at high schools is the traditional method, which is not the most appropriate when it comes to teaching a second language. For meaningful learning, it is necessary that teachers apply various teaching methods, which are adapted to the needs of the students.

Through the pre-professional practices carried out at Margarita Cortes Educational Institution, I could observe that on the 8th level of basic education, there are some students with learning difficulties and these students do not receive any type of reinforcement to improve their academic level.

To solve this problem and to help the academic performance of the students with learning difficulties, there are a number of teaching tools that teachers can apply in the classrooms. In this case, we will take music as a teaching-learning tool because of its great utility for activation of cognitive skills. It is also proven that students learn better if they do so in a funny way.

Music is one of the most important didactic tools used in the Teaching-Learning Process since teachers can use it in different ways with students so that students feel stimulated learning in a natural and funny way. Students with learning difficulties are the most benefited because they have the opportunity to have fun and learn at the same time, and they can improve their academic performance.

Seeing the theoretical value of music, and having detected the learning problems students have, I asked myself how can music improve the English Teaching-learning Process for students with learning difficulties from the 8th B of level basic education at Margarita Cortes Educational Institution in Esmeraldas, 2017?

## **1.2 OBJECTIVES**

### **1.2.1 General Objective**

To analyze the effectiveness of music in the classroom in order to improve the learning process of English of the 8th level students of basic education with learning difficulties At Margarita Cortés educational institution in Esmeraldas.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

- To search for theories that support the teaching of English through music to students with learning difficulties.
- To diagnose which are the contents that students with learning difficulties need to improve.
- To search pedagogical songs that could help students improve their academic performance, according to the learning needs of students.
- To introduce in the teaching learning process the songs especially chosen.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1. Pedagogical Foundation

#### 2.1.1. The Sociocultural approach

This investigation takes into consideration Vygotsky's theory. The Sociocultural Approach (quoted by Cherry, K 2017) has been defined as:

*"Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (into-psychological). This applies equally to voluntary attention, to logical memory, and to the formation of concepts. All the higher functions originate as actual relationships between individuals." (Vygotsky, 1978)*

This theory refers that the base of learning is the interaction with people. Through interaction, the person can build an individual knowledge. Also, it is referred to how the cultural environment, attitudes, and beliefs influence the development of the person's learning.

According to Vygotsky, children at birth have biological constraints in their minds. However, the culture where the child is developing provides certain tools that he called "tools of intellectual adaptation." These tools allow the child to adapt to the culture in which they live and develop their mental abilities.

An important concept in sociocultural theory is known as the zone of proximal development.

### **2.1.1.1. The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)**

According to Vygotsky (quoted by McLeod, S 2014), the ZPD has been defined as: "The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Basically, this theory refers to the child developing his knowledge and skills, which he has not yet discovered, with the guidance of other people because the child cannot understand his abilities by himself. The social interaction plays a very important role in the development of knowledge and learning since the person manages to expand his skills when he has the opportunity to learn from others, but if the person tries to learn alone, he may not be able to develop his potential to the maximum.

## **2.1. Music as an instrument of teaching**

Music is one of the most important teaching tools because it is an adequate cognitive development, facilitates the fluency of language, helps the development of the brain and, above all, it is fun. Using music in the classroom is not just hearing a song; through music, teachers can perform a number of activities that help the student's cognitive development. A different way to use music in the classroom is as an indicator of the beginning and end of the class, as an icebreaker and as a relaxation tool.

Throughout time, the powerful effect of music has been recognized and intentionally used. In the 20th century, the Western scientific community has conducted research to expand our analytical knowledge of Western music and have carried out research that allows us to expand our knowledge about the use of music. All this research states that music influences greatly our life and helps to improve our learning.

Music is a tool that can be applied to all ages and educational settings. It is very important in the teaching-learning process because it can establish a positive and meaningful learning; creates a relaxed class environment, allows students to focus on

the topic. In addition, music improves memory, stimulates the imagination and adds the element of fun. The book *Music and Learning* by Chris Brewer (1995) provides suggestions and strategies of how teachers may integrate music in the classroom.

Brewer states that musical rhythms are useful for different kinds of activities. For example, she suggests that for the motivation of learning, popular music is the most appropriate, because these songs have positive lyrics and allow the student to have a positive mental state. Songs and music almost always contain a lot of vocabularies, phrases, and useful expressions, plus pronunciation. Many of the words and patterns of sound in a song are repetitive and this facilitates recording in the mind.

Music increases the student's interest and allows him to become involved mentally, physically and emotionally on the topic. Through music, the student can have a better understanding of the learning material. The rhythm, the rhyme and the melody of the songs influence the memorization and allows it to be easier.

### **2.1.1. Teaching Through Music**

Significant learning requires "a relaxed state of alertness, immersion and active processing" (Caine & Caine, 1990).

Sometimes music creates an atmosphere of relaxation and tranquility, which allows many students to have a good assimilation of knowledge and thus obtain meaningful learning. Suggestopedia method developed by Dr. Lozanov in Bulgaria (1970) states that relaxing music produces hypermnesia - an excellent memory. With Suggestopedia method, music is used as background during the reading of dialogues. The type of music appropriate to apply this method is classical music. The dialogues are read at the rhythm of the music, which allows a better memorization and assimilation of the words because the Wernicke's area of the brain is in operation since this area of the brain is responsible for the understanding of sounds and words (C. Wernicke, 1874).

However the learning process needs to be carried out actively, since many students prefer to learn by doing physical activities. For this, music can also be applied through the ludic methodology, which refers that the child learns through games or activities of social interaction. According to Moreno (2003) the ludic methodology suggests a combination of activities to expand the students' thoughts and imagination. Students can

apply their creativeness in order to express their own thoughts, ideas, and feelings. Teachers can adapt the music with the different games that exist today for the development of the learning of students.

### **2.1.1. Music as a learning strategy**

Music is a complement of everyday use that is used as a strategy in learning. The teaching process can be done in a different way, which is less stressful and does not make teaching compulsory but rather a conscious, pleasant, motivating process for both students and teachers.

Reyes (2004) points out that although the learning process in students is conditioned by a series of factors of certain complexity related to their personality, environment, genetics, resources and methods, the difficulty to reach the cognitive domain is not in the ability to learn, but in the form of how learning is geared. The capacity of learning may be developed, but the strategy implemented for the student learns is a matter of psycho-pedagogical technicality. Learning can easily be accompanied by strategies that include music.

Mayer (1994) states that teaching strategies can be defined as the procedures or resources used by the teaching agent to promote meaningful learning. The author emphasizes that the teacher contains a set of strategies internalized in him; and he decides when and why to apply learning strategies.

According to Esteves (1991) music is an astonishingly useful element for the modification of human behavior. It can be used as an effective tool in the cognitive development of the child during his learning stage. The teacher needs to learn how to use breathing and relaxation techniques combined with music to eliminate the stress, anguish and hyperactivity of the students in the classroom and achieve a teaching-learning process without problems, as it has been proven that stress and anxiety are two major blockers of the teaching-learning process.

### **2.1.2. Types of music used in teaching**

In order to choose correctly the songs to use in the classroom, we must take into account that songs correspond to different textual typologies. It is not that each typology requires exploitation and a certain type of activities, but it does condition them in a certain way. Before selecting a song, it is necessary to reflect on what we want to do with it and what kind of activities we want to present to our students. Some authors classify the typology of the songs in the following way:

Griffiee (1992) provides a classification based on the duration of the melody and distinguishes the following typologies of songs:

- Short and slow songs. These are slow-paced songs that usually last 2 to 3 minutes.
- Songs that tell stories: tell a story with a beginning, a knot and an ending.
- Instrumental music: music without lyrics.
- Long songs. At least 4 minutes in length. They are not usually very easy to sing and usually present images instead of telling a story.
- Short and fast songs: They often have repetitive phrases and a very fast rhythm.

Santos (1996) introduces some criteria to follow for the selection of the material properly:

- Adequacy to the teaching situation: level of communicative, linguistic and cultural competence, and what are the interests of the students.
- Ease of didactic exploitation of song lyrics. In this sense, it resorts to the seven issues raised by Osman and Wellman.
- Do words, phrases, lines, choruses repeat themselves?
- Can you learn the melody easily? Is it catchy?
- Do you have a marked rhythmic pattern?
- Does it contain useful linguistic structures?
- Is the vocabulary useful?

- Does it reflect aspects of culture, customs, traditions, facts or historical times that would be useful to students?
- Has this song had any kind of international projection or has
- Cultural interest or has continued to listen and singing while staying current?
- Clarity of hearing and level of musical interference in their understanding.

### **2.1.2.1. Type of activities using music**

The role of the teacher implies that the teacher develops his own didactic material, his own activities, tasks, etc. In the case of using music as a teaching tool, the teacher should understand that the songs are not just to sing for singing, the songs must be related to the daily life of the student and thus, internalize the topics effectively to encourage the student's academic development.

Murphey (1992) suggests some activities that can be performed to develop students' cognitive abilities effectively using music.

- Listening.
- Sing, hum, keep up the pace by tapping the floor with your foot or a surface with your knuckles.
- Sing without music.
- Talk about music.
- Talk about the lyrics, content, and message of the song.
- Talk about the artist or author of the song.
- Talk about the music video clip.
- Music is used to create a concrete atmosphere (romantic, fun, relaxing, etc.)
- To create a social environment: dancing, meetings with friends, etc.
- Read about music.
- Listening to music in a dream.

- Develop internal associations between music and certain places, people, events.
- Create your own songs

Murphey (1992) also inherits the following activities:

- Study grammar.
- Auditive comprehension.
- Reading comprehension: reading songs, articles, books about music.
- Written expression: composing song, article, about music.
- Discussions, debates.
- Translations (direct or reverse).
- Write dialogue with words from the song.
- Use the video clip, simulation games.
- Musical dictation contest, tests.
- Resume.
- Review previous activities.
- Integrate the song into a work project.
- Mental relation.
- Pronunciation, intonation.
- Break the routine.
- Coral Repetition.
- Teach
- Lexicon and culture.
- Learn from the students.
- Have fun.

All these activities are useful in the teaching-learning process, as they contribute to the student's cognitive, cultural and social development, allowing him to have a meaningful and fun learning process.

## **2.2. Factors affecting the learning of English language**

According to the researcher Galiano (2007) all the characteristics mentioned above can be classified into 4 main categories:

- Intelligence and Aptitude
- Personality
- Motivation and Preferences
- Age and Hypothesis of the Critical Period

### **2.2.1. Intelligence and Aptitude**

Gardner (1983) defines the intelligence as the ability to solve problems or create products that are valued in one or more cultures.

Traditionally, the term intelligence has been used to refer to the performance of students in different types of tests. These tests were or are often associated with success in studies, and many times there has been talk about a relationship between intelligence and results in the acquisition of second languages. But over the years it has been proven that these tests were a good way to predict a student's success in some skills but not in all. These are summarized in the studies of Dr. Gardner, the author of the Theory of Multiple Intelligences (1983) who considers that the human being has different bits of intelligence that are developed in different ways.

### **2.2.2. Personality**

The characteristics of the personality of the students can influence the learning of foreign languages or second languages. In these studies, the measurement becomes sometimes difficult and also the continuity in the investigation that determines its reliability. It is believed that an extroverted student will be a good language student because of the characteristics associated with extroversion, such as the active attitude

and the ability to take risks, but this is not always the case, sometimes they are negative factors for the student.

However, the introverted students, even if they do not speak as much, listen well, think and learn as or more than others. Inhibition inhibits participation and may be due to several factors such as lack of knowledge of the group, disapproval of the means used, concern about not being accepted, fear of being inferior in some way, fear of failure.

Other important topics in this field are:

- Self-esteem, ability to be respected by peers. The teacher should try to encourage self-esteem, which gives students the confidence to adopt learning strategies that represent a risk but are beneficial.
- Empathy is the ability to perceive another person's subjective experience.
- Sociable, this ability can have a negative or positive impact on learning outcomes, such as extroversion.
- Responsiveness refers to response mechanisms that vary in each individual and are related to internal and external factors such as motivation.

The factors of personality are important mainly in the acquisition of abilities of conversation and exchange and not in other more individualistic as the grammar and metalinguistic knowledge.

### **2.2.3. Motivation and Preferences**

Research reveals that positive attitudes and motivation are related to success in learning languages. The question is whether the students are more motivated because they are successful, or if they succeed because they are more motivated. We can distinguish different types of motivation, according to their particular objective:

- Motivation to learn,
- Motivation to process what they are learning and

- Motivation to use the foreign language in all the opportunities that are possible to them.

There are also other general objectives of motivation:

The motivation is integrative, when the student identifies and admires the other language and culture or instrumental, when the student sees the foreign language as a means to obtain an end, study or get a job or both. Other motivational factors are traveling, making friends or simply acquiring knowledge.

Furthermore, to include cooperative learning activities allow that students work together to solve a task or problem. This type of learning encourages the confidence of students as they all have a role to play.

#### **2.2.4. Age, Critical Period Hypothesis**

It is often observed that children of immigrants speak the language of their new community very fluently as if they were natives, but their parents rarely achieve this level of communication.

The hypothesis of the Chronic Period developed by Lenneberg (1967) states that there is a moment in human development where the brain is predisposed for success in language learning. Changes in brain development seem to affect the nature of the acquisition of a language. According to this theory, learning that occurs after the end of the critical period will not be based on the expected innate biological structures but will depend on more general learning abilities.

Mark Patkowski (1994) found that the age of acquisition is an important factor in setting limits on developing a second language before and after puberty and that this limitation does not refer only to the accent. For older students, it is more difficult to acquire almost native skills in the second language. However, this fact also depends on the circumstances.

Students usually learn faster because they use more cognitive and metacognitive strategies. Young adults have good memory and use cognitive strategies. They benefit more than junior students from the formal teaching of grammar. With them, teachers use less active methods, which reflect their ability to transform, relate and create, based on interdisciplinary experiences. Adults, young people, and children benefit by using games and tasks of different types and adapted to their stadiums.

Exposure to language at the correct and obvious level of difficulty but sometimes is ignored by gestural currents that promote the understanding of texts that are not pedagogically pending and that result in the desperation and failure of their students.

### **2.3. Learning difficulties of students in the English language**

We often hear the term learning difficulties in educational institutions. A learning problem is a general term that describes some specific learning problem. It may be that a child has difficulty acquiring and/or developing some particular skill. We can say that the skills that are most affected are reading, speaking, listening, spelling, reasoning and math area.

It is difficult to learn the lesson when you are still trying to learn English. That's why most English learners have difficulty keeping up with peers. However, when students do not progress as expected or have trouble staying at the same academic level as their peers, they may not be getting the help they need.

According to Deanes & Gryta (2014) these are the most common reasons why students have problems in school:

- **Health Problems:** If a child has vision or hearing problems may be harder for him to understand what is happening at school. But other factors can also affect learning, such as lack of sleep, stress, cultural differences and poor diet.
- **Normal achievements and stumbling blocks when learning a new language:** Learning a new language requires effort. All students are going to have

difficulty with certain concepts at some point. If a child is in a well-managed program that supports it, these difficulties can usually be solved with a little extra help from teachers.

- **Lack of Native Language Support:** Some studies show that children who are taught in English and in their native language for an extended period of time do more in school. In fact, children who are bilingual have better organizational skills, better memory, and greater ability to concentrate than children who only speak one language.
- **Learning and attention difficulties:** Problems with language, reading and attention can be caused by different conditions, including dyslexia, auditory processing disorders, and ADHD. Other learnings and attention difficulties cause problems with math, movement and speech, and social skills. In order to obtain additional support in the school, the student would have to be evaluated for learning and attention difficulties.

The child may have a problem in a specific skill and another child may have difficulties in more than one; the difference will be in the professional intervention that is done. In addition, it should be taken into account that the techniques or methods to be applied will depend on each child because not all children respond in the same way in front of the same stimuli.

Throughout the years, parents, educators and other professionals have identified a wide variety of characteristics associated with learning difficulties, which have been studied in order to assist the academic development of these students (Galiano, 2007).

#### **2.4. Characteristics of students with English learning English difficulties**

Learning difficulties can be caused by factors such as demotivation, uninterested students or psychological and physical problems. Teachers need to identify students who have learning problems in the classroom so that they can look for strategies that allow those students to learn just like their peers. Students with learning difficulties often have common characteristics such as:

- Slow reading
- Problems understanding what is read
- Difficulty finding important points or main ideas
- Confusion of similar words
- Difficulty remembering what is read
- Frequent spelling errors
- Letter reversals
- Shortage of vocabulary
- Overly large handwriting
- Slow writing
- Difficulty with sentence structure
- Poor grammar
- Problems with reasoning and abstract concepts
- Difficulties beginning and sticking with study
- Poor note-taking and outlining skills
- Poor memory for recalling material
- Difficulty following directions
- Inability to complete assignments in time allowed

Students with learning difficulties often fail to develop their skills because within the classroom, teachers do not use the strategies, tools or methodologies needed to reach all students, especially those with learning difficulties.

## **2.1. Previous studies about the use of music in the English language teaching-learning process**

There are many investigations about the use of music in the classroom and they prove the effectiveness of music in order to improve the learning process to regular students and students with learning difficulties.

Ruscher (2003) explored the relationship between spatial-temporal skills and music with high-risk preschool children and realized the studies to examine the effects of

music on them. Rusher concluded that learning through music is a very important development activity for students, as it allows high-risk students to achieve the same academic level equally with their peers.

Andrade, C (2016) states that 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.

Budden, J (2009) states music can play a really important part in the language classroom. It can change the atmosphere in the room within seconds.

These authors point out the importance of music and the use of songs for the teaching-learning process in the classroom. The research carried out reflects how students can improve their academic performance and at the same time learn in a pleasant way.

## **2.1. Legal Foundation**

This research is based on the Ecuadorian Ministry of Education in the document: Ecuadorian in-service – English Teachers Standards. This investigation focuses on the third domain: Curriculum Development. Section c: Using Resources and Technology Effectively in English and Content Instruction. Taking into account three literals from this section:

Literal 3.c.2. States that teachers have to select additional materials and other resources appropriated to students development of language and content-area abilities, including appropriate use of English.

Literal 3.c.3. States that teachers may employ a variety of materials for language learning, including books, visual aids, and realia in addition to the textbook.

Literal 3.c.4. States that teachers may use technological resources (e.g., the Internet, software, computers, and related devices) to enhance language and content-area instruction for students.

All these articles endorse the use of didactic resources and materials that promote the improvement of the teaching-learning process so that teachers can use music as a tool in the classroom.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1. Method of Investigation**

The methods used in this investigation were the observation and the deductive and inductive methods. The author presented different activities using songs and then the result analyzed in order to get a clear idea about the benefits of using music to facilitate learning to the students with learning difficulties.

### **3.2. Techniques**

**Interview:** It was applied to the teacher. Through this interview, the teacher identified the students with learning difficulties and determined the contents that were to be dealt with.

**Survey:** It was applied to the teacher. The survey contained 5 questions, both closed and open questions, related to the use of music in the English teaching learning process.

**Observation and the observation sheet:** It was applied to the students. The observation sheet contained 5 parameters and 3 indicators, which determined whether the students with the activities performed using the music, were effective.

### **3.3. Type of investigation**

This research was quali- quantitative with a descriptive scope because it analyzed the influence of music on the improvement of the English language learning process in the 8th level of Basic Education Students at “Margarita Cortes” Educational Institution in Esmeraldas.

The kind of investigation was mixed: qualitative because it helped to know why students have difficulties learning English and why teachers do not use music as a

teaching tool in the classroom. It was quantitative since the data collected of the observation and were presented in tables and figures.

### **3.4. Variables**

This study used the following variables:

Dependent: Students with learning difficulties.

Independent: Teaching through Music

### **3.5. Population and Sample**

At Margarita Cortes Educational Institution, the 8<sup>th</sup> level of basic education is divided into three courses “A - B - C” to reduce the number of students in the classrooms. The participants of this research were the 8th grade B students, which were 40 students, including males and females, and 6 students with learning difficulties were identified.

### **3.6. Data Processing**

All information collected through the survey was processed by using the manual percentage method. To show the results obtained, the Microsoft Excel program was used to make the figures.

### **3.7. Human and material resources**

The human resources that were used:

- One investigator
- One teacher from the Margarita Cortes Educational Institution in Esmeraldas-Ecuador
- 40 students of 8<sup>th</sup> B level Basic Level Education from the referred institution.

- Thesis' advisor

The material resources that were used:

- Computer
- Office materials
- Internet
- Speakers
- Books

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. Results of the interview applied to the English teacher**

This interview was applied to the teacher of the 8th level of basic education at Margarita Cortes Educational Institution. I used an interview sheet (Appendix A) in order to get a clear idea of the students with learning difficulties and how many students they were.

The first question asked was if she had identified in the classroom some students with difficulty in learning the English language. The response of the teacher was that there are some students who have problems to internalize the contents in comparison with the rest of the students. Some students are backward than others and they have difficulty understanding the topics.

The next question was about the number of students with learning difficulty she had identified. The response was that 6 students had more difficulty learning English as compared to the rest of their peers.

Another of the questions asked to the teacher was about the possible causes for which the students have learning difficulties. The teacher's response was that she thought 2 of the 6 students were excessively active and did not pay the best attention in class. The other 4 students were quieter but apparently did not feel comfortable with the classroom environment and did not like to participate in activities, so these students may not feel motivated to learn.

The next question was about the contents that students with learning difficulties needed to improve. The teacher responded that the contents to be treated were Basic English as

personal pronouns, family members, simple present, some key vocabulary, and pronunciation.

To conclude with the interview, I asked her if she would be willing to use music as a teaching-learning tool in the classroom. The response of the teacher was that it seemed interesting to implement music as a work tool, even more, if the students could improve their academic performance through music.

As we can see, the information received from the teacher was very useful to know the number of students with learning difficulties and what the possible causes of this learning difficulty were, and finally what the contents to be treated for the creation of the songs were.

#### **4.2. Result of the survey applied to the English teacher**

The survey was applied to the English teacher of the 8th grade level of the Educational Institution Margarita Cortes. I used the survey (Appendix B) with the aim of knowing the use of music as a teaching tool inside the classroom in the mentioned institution.

The first question of the survey was about the frequency of use of music in English classes, to which the teacher replied that she never uses music in English classes because she does not know how to use music as a teaching tool.

The second question from the survey was that if she thinks it is important to use music in the lessons. The teacher answered “yes” because using music as a teaching tool, students could feel more interest in learning English.

The third question from the survey was whether the teacher thinks that using music can help improve the level of English students. The teacher answered “yes” because through music students learn vocabulary that they can use daily.

The fourth survey question was about how much fun the students have with music. The teacher answer was that she thinks that students have fun using music in the classroom, and although she does not apply music to teach, she believes that the students would feel happy and comfortable learning with music since we all love music.

The last question of the survey was about the available equipment that she has for working with music. The teacher responded that she just has a computer and the material implies limitations to use the music with the whole class.

Through the survey, we can see that the lack of knowledge of methodologies and strategies about the use of music as a teaching tool, make it difficult to use music within the classroom. Also, the lack of adequate equipment such as computers, speakers, internet, and projector, make the use of music for the teacher is more complicated.

#### 4.3. Observation Guide result of the English classes

<b>Observation Guide Class One</b>			
<b>Institution:</b> Margarita Cortes Educational Institution <b>Date:</b> June 20 <sup>th</sup> , 2017			
<b>Level:</b> 8 <sup>th</sup> level of Basic Education		<b>Teacher:</b> Ana Paula Girón	
<b>Number of Students:</b> 40			
<b>Objective:</b> Evaluate the progress of students with learning difficulties.			
<b>Parameter</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
	<b>Low</b> 1 to 2 students participated	<b>Medium</b> 3 to 4 students participated	<b>High</b> 5 to 6 students participated
<b>Motivation and social interaction</b> Students interacted with their peers doing the activities in an enthusiastic way.	X		
<b>Active participation and interest</b> All the students raised their hands to participate and sing the song.		X	
<b>Song memorization</b> All the students learned the rhythm and the lyrics of the song.		X	
<b>Vocabulary learning</b> Students associated the new vocabulary with their daily life activities.	X		
<b>Pronunciation improvement</b> Students pronounce correctly all the words of the song.	X		

## Observation Guide Class Two

**Institution:** Margarita Cortes Educational Institution      **Date:** June 21<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> level of Basic Education

**Teacher:** Ana Paula Girón

**Number of Students:** 40

**Objective:**

Evaluate the progress of students with learning difficulties.

Parameters	Indicators		
	Low 1 to 2 students participated	Medium 3 to 4 students participated	High 5 to 6 students participated
<b>Motivation and social interaction</b> Students interacted with their peers doing the activities in an enthusiastic way.		X	
<b>Active participation and interest</b> All the students raised their hands to participate and sing the song.		X	
<b>Song memorization</b> All the students learned the rhythm and the lyrics of the song.			X
<b>Vocabulary learning</b> Students associated the new vocabulary with their daily life activities.			X
<b>Pronunciation improvement</b> Students pronounce correctly all the words of the song.		X	

### Observation Guide Class Three

**Institution:** Margarita Cortes Educational Institution      **Date:** June 22<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> level of Basic Education      **Teacher:** Ana Paula Girón

**Number of Students:** 40

**Objective:**

Evaluate the progress of students with learning difficulties.

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
	<b>Low</b> 1 to 2 students participated	<b>Medium</b> 3 to 4 students participated	<b>High</b> 5 to 6 students participated
<b>Motivation and social interaction</b> Students interacted with their peers doing the activities in an enthusiastic way.			X
<b>Active participation and interest</b> All the students raised their hands to participate and sing the song.			X
<b>Song memorization</b> All the students learned the rhythm and the lyrics of the song.			X
<b>Vocabulary learning</b> Students associated the new vocabulary with their daily life activities.			X
<b>Pronunciation improvement</b> Students pronounce correctly all the words of the song.		X	

#### **4.3.1. Results of the observation to students with learning difficulties of English**

The following analysis was carried out by the compilation of observation data, which was carried out for three days in a period of two hours of classes each day.

On the first day, the song “Bingo” (Appendix D1) was used as a warm up. It had a duration of 15 minutes, with the purpose of motivating students to work in class. The activity performed was listening and repeating. Because most of the students had already heard the song before, it was played twice and was given to each student a sheet with the lyric of the song. After to play the song, the students repeated the song 5 times changing the names of the animals.

On the second day, the song used was “Days of the week” (Appendix D2) with the objective that the students have an active participation during the class and so they learn the days of the week and family members.

The song was played 4 times so that the students could become familiar with the rhythm of the song and memorize it better. As in the first day, were given to the students sheets with the lyric of the song.

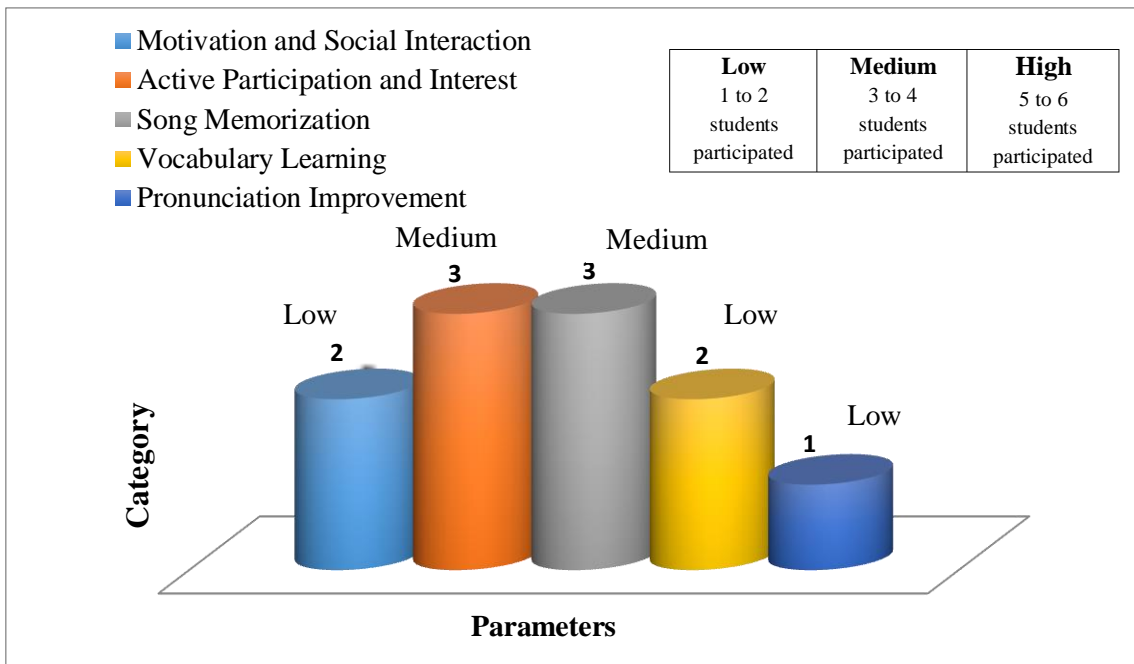
After to introduce the topic “Family routine” the activity performed was a role play, it was carried out during 30 minutes in which students worked in groups of 5 to 6 people. Each group performed one day of the week by doing mimics and gestures as the song indicated. Through this activity the students were able to interact with their peers and have fun; also, it was possible to reinforce the vocabulary previously learned.

On the third day, in the first period of class was used “Classical music” (Appendix D3). The two songs were played as a background during the reading time and book activities, which allowed students to be calm and relaxed creating a good environment in the classroom.

In addition, after having finished the reading and book activity time, the song “The zoo” (Appendix D4) was used as an icebreaker. It was played 5 times for greater retention from the students; also, additional material was used as animals flashcards, which were stuck on the board. In this activity the students, while singing, had to go to the board and point out animals that were indicated in the song. This activity lasted 20 minutes and the results were very positive as most of the students, specially those who

were identified with learning difficulties, participated and learned a lot of the vocabulary taught through the songs.

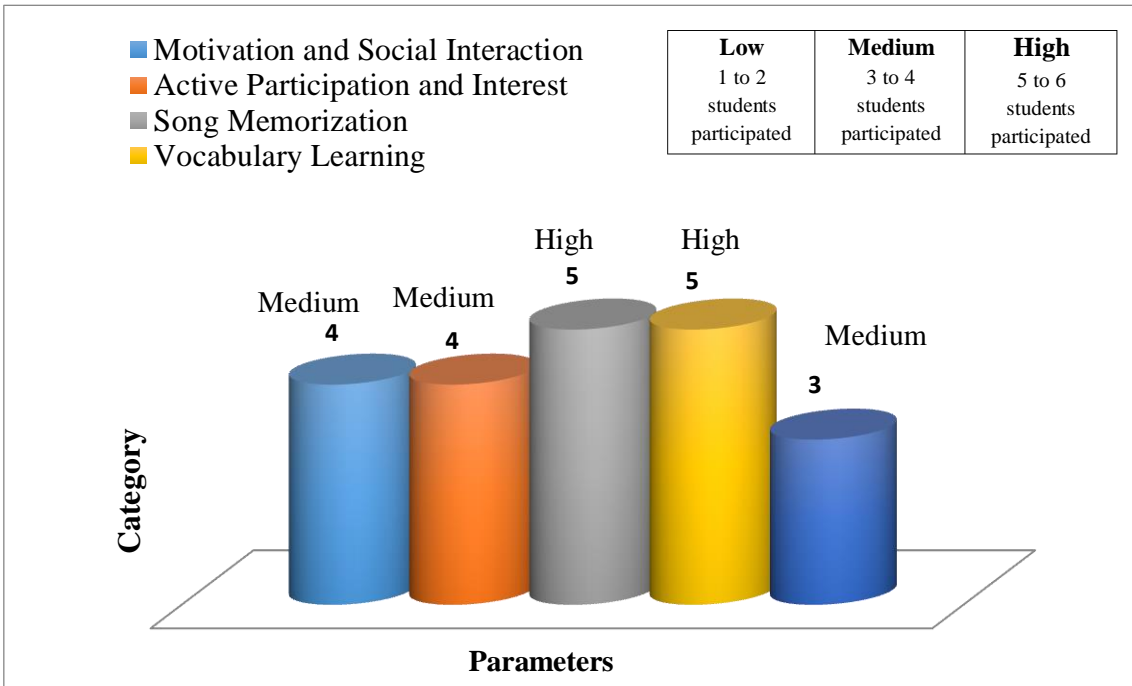
Below, we present the graphs of the data collected through the observation that was made during the three days.



**Figure 1.** Indicators of the first class.

**Source:** 8<sup>th</sup> level students with learning difficulties

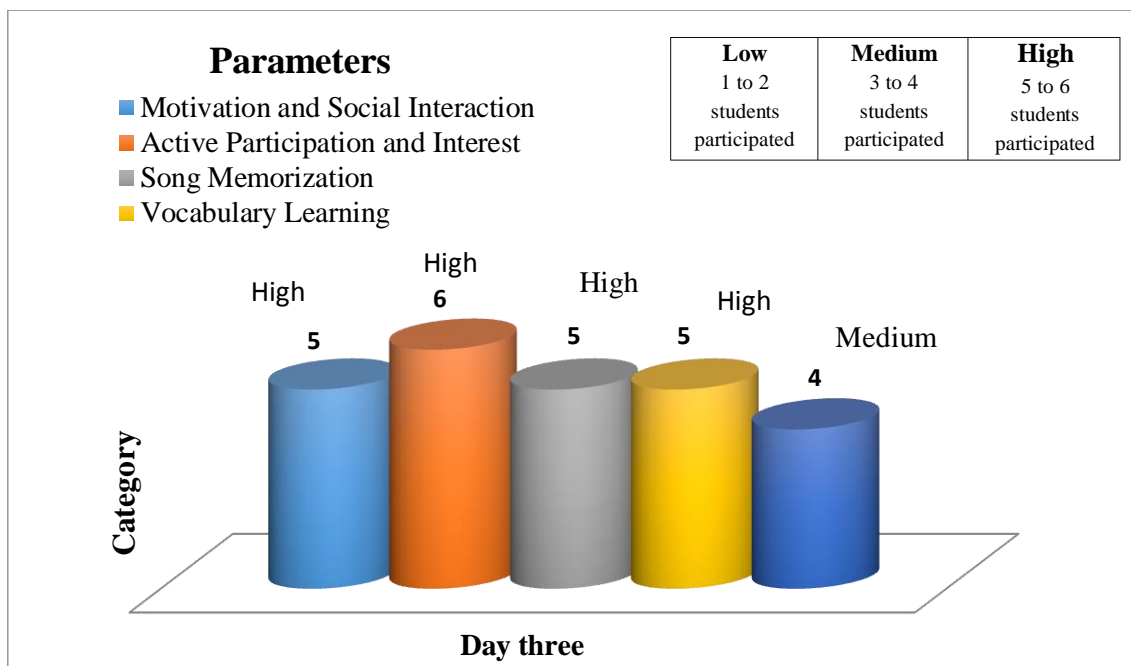
**Interpretation.-** In the application of the first song found in Appendix D1, students showed low motivation and interaction with their peers. They also showed low participation and interest in the activities carried out. But they also showed an improvement in memorization of the song, they learned some new words and their pronunciation improved moderately.



**Figure 2.** Indicators of the second class.

**Source:** 8<sup>th</sup> level students with learning difficulties.

**Interpretation.-** In the second class, the song of Appendix D2 was implemented. The students showed greater motivation and interest in interacting with their peers. They also showed an interest in participating in the activities carried out. Also, the students memorized the song a little faster, they learned most of the words of the song and the pronunciation was better.



**Figure 3.** Indicators of the third class.

**Source:** 8<sup>th</sup> level students with learning difficulties

Interpretation.- In the third class, the songs found in Appendix D3 and D4 was implemented. The students showed a high percentage of motivation and interaction with their peers. Also, their participation in class was very active and with high interest. Also, the students memorized the song, they learned the vocabulary very well and their pronunciation improved much more.

## 5. Discussion

In order to analyze the effectiveness of the music within the classroom and with the purpose of improving the teaching process of English, a research about theories that support the use of music as a teaching tool in the classroom was carried out and how it helps teaching-learning in the process of English to students with learning difficulties, but also by a diagnosis made to the 8th B level of basic education at Margarita Cortés High School and the implementation of music as a teaching tool. As a result, I propose some activities that can be implemented in the classroom using music as the main tool.

Through the ludic methodology, the teacher can include, in the lesson, different activities and games using one of the best learning tools which is music and the teacher may also use the Suggestopedia method to create a relaxed learning environment during the reading and written activities.

The results of this research on the implementation of music as a teaching tool showed that students with learning difficulties can learn at the same pace as their peers, since the activities that can be done through music allow the teacher to reach all students in the classroom, so that everyone can learn effectively and have fun at the same time. In addition, students were able to learn basic English content, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

This coincides with the result of Rusher (2003) who explored the relationship between space-time skills and music with high-risk students. Children receiving classes where the teacher used music as a teaching tool were able to obtain higher scores on reading, reading comprehension, spelling, and listening tasks on the Wechsler Individual Achievement Test. The researcher concluded that through music, high-risk students improved academically and were able to learn in the same way as their peers. Also, music allowed them to learn in an active and fun way.

Another author who recognizes the effectiveness of music in the classroom is Andrade (2016) who combines songs with activities like jigsaw lyrics activity, lyrics gap filling, matching lyrics activity, and more. She noticed the interest and the motivation of the students to performing activities and singing songs. The conclusion of her research was that through songs the students feel engaged with the lesson. In addition, music creates a comfortable environment that allows students to feel motivated to learn and participate in class. This result coincides with the research of Budden (2009) who implemented different activities like classic gap-fill, spot the mistake, order the verses, and others, combining them with music. The author concluded that music can change the atmosphere of the classroom in seconds, allowing students to feel comfortable while learning.

As we can see, music is an effective tool for academic improvement both for students with learning difficulties and for regular students. For that reason, this research proposes some easy activities using songs that teachers can implement in the classroom for the academic development of the students. (Appendix E)

## **6. Conclusions**

- Music and activities performed with the students of the 8th level of basic education with learning difficulties allowed them to improve their academic performance.
- The implementation of music in the lesson makes students with learning difficulties understand and memorize better the topics to be learnt.
- Music helps students actively participate in the classroom, creating an atmosphere of relaxation.
- Music contributes to the management of discipline within the classroom and facilitates the teaching-learning process.

## **7. Recommendations**

- Teachers should often implement music as a teaching tool so that all students can feel motivated to learn a new language.
- Teachers should use the songs and activities proposed in this research to improve the academic performance of students, especially students with learning difficulties.
- Teachers should investigate the different methods, strategies and teaching tools that help to improve the learning process of the students.

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# Appendices



**Appendix A**  
**Interview Applied to the Teacher**

**Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador**  
**In Esmeraldas**

**Objective:** To obtain information about the learning difficulties on the 8th level of basic education at Margarita Cortes Educational Institution in Esmeraldas.

1. Have you identified in the classroom some students with difficulty in learning the English language?

.....  
.....  
.....

2. How many students with learning difficulties have you identified in the classroom?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What do you think that are possible causes for which the students have learning difficulties?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. What are the contents that students with learning difficulties need to improve?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Would like to use music as a teaching-learning tool in the classroom?

.....  
.....  
.....



**Appendix B**  
**Survey Applied to the English Teacher**

**Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador**  
**In Esmeraldas**

To assess the use of music to improve the English Teaching to the 8th level of basic education students with learning difficulties at Margarita Cortes Educational Institution in Esmeraldas.

**PLEASE READ THE QUESTIONS CAREFULLY BEFORE ANSWERING**

**1.** How do you use music in your classes?

- a) Always
- b) Often
- c) Usually
- d) Rarely
- e) Never

**2.** Do you think using music in your lessons is important?

- a) Yes
- b) No

Why?.....  
.....

**3.** Do you think using music helps students to improve their English level? Why?

.....  
.....

**4.** How much do you think your students enjoy working with music?

- a) A lot
- b) Not so much
- c) They don't like it
- d) Others

**5.** Mark the equipment available for you to work with music in the lessons.

- a) Computer
- b) Speakers
- c) Internet connection
- d) Projector

## Appendix C

### Observation Guide

#### Observation Guide Class Three

**Institution:** Margarita Cortes Educational Institution

**Date:** June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Level:** 8<sup>th</sup> level of Basic Education

**Teacher:** Ana Paula Girón

**Number of Students:** 40

**Objective:**

Evaluate the progress of students with learning difficulties.

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Indicators</b>		
	<b>Low</b> 1 to 2 students participated	<b>Medium</b> 3 to 4 students participated	<b>High</b> 5 to 6 students participated
<b>Motivation and social interaction</b> Students interacted with their peers doing the activities in an enthusiastic way.			
<b>Active participation and interest</b> All the students raised their hands to participate and sing the song.			
<b>Song memorization</b> All the students learned the rhythm and the lyrics of the song.			
<b>Vocabulary learning</b> Students associated the new vocabulary with their daily life activities.			
<b>Pronunciation improvement</b> Students pronounce correctly all the words of the song.			

## Appendix D1

### Pedagogical Song: 'BINGO'

There was a farmer had a dog,	(Clap)-I-N-G-O!
And Bingo was his name-o.	(Clap)-I-N-G-O!
B-I-N-G-O!	And Bingo was his name-o!
B-I-N-G-O!	
B-I-N-G-O!	There was a farmer had a dog,
And Bingo was his name-o!	And Bingo was his name-o.
	(Clap, clap)-N-G-O!
There was a farmer had a dog,	(Clap, clap)-N-G-O!
And Bingo was his name-o.	(Clap, clap)-N-G-O!
(Clap)-I-N-G-O!	And Bingo was his name-o!

## **Appendix D2**

### **Pedagogical Song: 'DAYS OF THE WEEK'**

On Monday I wake up early, I get so  
happy and go to school.

On Tuesday my mom bakes cookies;  
she buys some candies and cleans the  
house.

On Wednesday my dad plays  
football, he washes the red car and  
helps to mom.

On Thursday my sister practices her  
singing lessons and dancing too.

On Friday my brother study, he likes  
to read books, he's very smart.

On Saturday I and my family go to  
watch movies and we love a lot.

On Sunday we take some ice cream,  
buy fruits and veggies and back to  
home.

## **Appendix D3**

### **Pedagogical Song: 'CLASSICAL MUSIC'**

- FUR ELISE (LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN)
- VIOLIN CONCERTO #3 (MOZART)

**Appendix D4**  
**Pedagogical Song: 'THE ZOO'**

One, one,  
The zoo is lots of fun

Two, two,  
See a kangaroo

Three, three,  
See a chimpanzee

Four, four,  
Hear the lions roar

Five, five,  
Watch the seals dive

Six, six,  
There's a monkey doing tricks

Seven, seven,  
Elephants eleven

Eight, eight,  
A tiger and his mate

Nine, nine,  
Penguins in a line

Ten, ten,  
I want to come again!

## **Appendix E**

### **Proposal**

#### **Different Activities to Use Music Inside the Classroom and Improve the English Language Teaching Process**

##### **Objectives:**

- To search songs that could help students improve their academic performance, according to the learning needs of students.
- To propose activities in which teacher could use music as a teaching tool in order to facilitate the English teaching-learning process.

Simpson (2015) said that one of the big problems we all face inside the classroom while teaching English to children, is maintaining learners' interest throughout of lessons. Also, we often have to be very creative using different techniques. What makes music such a great teaching tool is its universal appeal, connecting all cultures and languages. This makes it one of the best and most motivating resources in the classroom, regardless of the age or background of the learner.

##### **Activity 1 Student motivation**

##### **Objectives:**

- Students feel motivated to participate in the class.
- Students will learn and memorize farm animals.

##### **Example of Procedure:**

**Topic:** Farm animals

**Song:** "BINGO"

Warm up

- 1) At the beginning of the class, the teacher plays the song to attract.
- 2) After listening to the song twice, give to students sheets of paper with the song so that the students memorize it better.

- 3) Students read the song trying to sing to memorize the lyrics and rhythm.
- 4) Sing all together loudly, clapping to the rhythm of the song.
- 5) While the song is being sung the teacher can change farm. For example duck, hen, horse, pig, turkey, and cow. etc.

## **Activity 2** Student participation and social interaction

### **Objectives:**

- Students will have an active participation by doing mimics, gestures and body movements.
- Students through this song will learn family members, days of the week, some common verbs, and simple present tense.

### **Example of Procedure:**

**Topic:** Family routine

**Song:** “DAYS OF THE WEEK”

Role play

- 1) Create groups of 7 people, to give each group the lyrics of the song.
- 2) Play the song so that all students learn the rhythm and lyrics of the song.
- 3) Each student will represent one day of the week.
- 4) Each student will represent a family member.
- 5) Each group should present the song by performing mimics, gestures and body movements.

## **Activity 4.** Leisure and learning

### **Objective:**

- Through the environment of relaxation and tranquility, students will focus on reading and writing activities.

**Example of Procedure:**

**Topic:** Healthy habits

**Songs:** “FUR ELISE (LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN)” & “VIOLIN CONCERTO #3 (MOZART)”

Classical background

- 1) Play the classical music during the time of reading of the lecture: Grandma's healthy life.
- 2) Play the classical music during the time of completing the books' tasks.

**Activity 5.** Memorization of vocabulary

**Objective:**

- The students will learn the animals that are inside a zoo and remember the numbers of one to ten.
- Students will play the role of teacher teaching their peers the animals of the zoo

**Example of Procedure:**

**Topic:** Zoo animals

**Song:** “THE ZOO”

Ice breaker

- 1) Play the song 5 times so that the students can memorize the rhythm of the song.
- 2) Give a sheet of a stanza of the lyrics of the song to each student to memorize it.
- 3) Paste on the board the animals' flash cards of the zoo for the students to identify them.
- 4) Each student singing in front of the class, the stanza of the song should take the animal and show it.

## Appendix F Pictures

### Appendix F1



### Appendix F2



**Appendix F3**



**Appendix F4**

