

# **THE PEDAGOGICAL VALUE OF GAMES AND SONGS**

## **The perceptions of teachers**

### **Final Degree Project**

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**Title**

**The Pedagogical Value of Games  
and Songs**

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## **Abstract**

The present study is an attempt to explore and discover the attitudes and beliefs of some Catalan Primary English foreign language teachers about the nature of games and songs as well as the role that they play in their EFL classrooms to teach young learners. English language teachers' opinions were collected through a questionnaire which contained statements about both topics, games and songs and the results were analyzed and exposed in the present study.

**Keywords:** English foreign language teachers, games, songs, young learners.

## **Resum**

Aquest estudi intenta explorar i descobrir les actituds i creences d'alguns mestres de llengua anglesa de Catalunya sobre la naturalesa dels jocs i les cançons, així com el paper que juguen en les seves aules per ensenyar l'anglès als infants. Les opinions dels mestres de llengua anglesa van ser recollides mitjançant un qüestionari que contenia preguntes sobre els jocs i les cançons i els resultats s'analitzen i s'exposen en aquest estudi.

**Paraules clau:** mestres de llengua anglesa, jocs, cançons, infants.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

English has become a global language of communication and this is why our society is more concerned about teaching and learning English at early ages. Hence, an increasing number of schools are introducing English from the first level of Infant Education, when pupils are two and three years old, in order to provide them with large amounts of input and exposure to the language in the belief that they will achieve a *better* as well as a *faster* level of language. However, learning a second language it is not an easy task and dealing with young learners requires methodological and didactic adaptations on the part of the teachers. It is widely known that learning a foreign language is a long process that takes constant effort and practice from the learners, especially from young ones. The term young learners is used to define those children in their first year of formal schooling, that is from 6 to 12 years old. YL are at a stage of cognitive and also emotional development and their concentration span is limited. According to Nedomová (2007:17) “young learners are not able to pay their attention for more than 10-20 minutes and after that they start to be bored and tired”. Keeping this in mind, the teachers should come up with alternative methods in their classes to grasp the children’s attention, increase their motivation and ensure a significant progress in their learning process.

Wang (2010) suggested that learners can learn a language quite successfully without too many rules explained or patterns practiced. Therefore, teachers should look for a broader range of methods and strategies based on the use of the language in a communicative way to ensure meaningful learning, to help pupils to become communicatively competent and to enable them to communicate effectively in a second language. As Littlewood (1981) and Richards and Rodgers (2001) believed the aim of communicative language teaching (CLT) is to involve learners in using the target language by doing creative exercises with a communicative objective in order to qualify them as communicatively-competent people who are able to use appropriate linguistic forms in real situations to communicate meanings spontaneously and flexibly.

In the next section, I will briefly refer to some basic principles of CLT, as a theoretical framework for this project.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Background of Communicative Language Teaching**

The origins of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) are to be found in the 1960s, in both America and Britain. Before that period, the main approach used to teach English as a foreign language was Situational Language Teaching. This approach consisted of teaching the language by practicing basic structures in meaningful situation-based activities. The development of CLT derives from the dissatisfaction with the British Situational Approach and the American Audio-lingual Approach, which were more concerned about the mechanistic aspects of language learning and language use through pattern drills, memorization and repetition. As Howatt (1984: 280) held, “by the end of the sixties it was clear that the situational approach... had run its course. There was no future in continuing to pursue the chimera of predicting language on the basis of situational events. What was required was a closer study of the language itself and a return to the traditional concept that utterances carried meaning in themselves and expressed the meanings and intentions of the speakers and writers who created them”

The communicative approach in language teaching starts from a theory of language as communication. The goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as “communicative competence”. Hymes coined this term to contrast a communicative view of language and Chomsky’s theory of competence. (Richards and Rodgers, 1986). Chomsky (1965:3) believed that “Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener in a completely homogenous speech community, who knows its language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitation, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and error (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of the language in actual performance”. For Hymes, communicative competence refers to the ability to use grammatical competence in a variety of communicative situations.

Piepho (1981) suggested the following levels as basic principles of the communicative approach:

First of all, an integrative and content level, language in CLT is considered a mean of expression. Secondly a linguistic and instrumental level, that is language as a semiotic system and at the same time as an object of learning. The third level consists of an effective level of interpersonal relationships and conduct, language is the mean of expressing values and judgments about oneself and others. The next level focuses on the individual learning needs, remedial learning based on error analysis. The last level that Piepho suggested is consists of a general education level of extra-linguistic goals, which is language learning within the school curriculum.

Taking all these levels into account, games and songs can be very useful strategies to develop young learners' communicative competence as they provide a natural context to use the language in a motivating way.

## **2.2 Games and songs in the EFL classroom**

Games and songs are believed effective and motivating techniques to teach and learn English in the young learners' classroom. Martin (2000) argued that songs, rhymes, storytelling, role-plays and game-like activities with high language content are potent characteristics of multiple Primary modern foreign language programs which allow children to be able to memorize and reproduce chunks of language in games, texts in songs and stories and they should be encouraged to do so. Besides, Edelenbos, Johnstone and Kubanek (2006) claimed that games and songs have played a central part in a number of approaches to teach English to young learners in various countries.

As the main objective of my project refers to games and songs I will first refer to the games and then to the songs.



### **2.3 Using games for teaching and learning English**

Educators stand up for the use of communicative language games to teach and learn English as a foreign language in schools, since they provide the pupils with a large amount of benefits to acquire English and to reach a meaningful learning.

Researchers have come up with different descriptions about the nature of games. According to Rixon, Flavell and Vincent (1991) games are a way to play governed by rules. Similarly, Hadfield (1990) describes games as an activity with rules, an aim and an element of fun. Haycraft (1978:94) stated that “games are an agreeable way of getting a class to use its initiative in English”.

The Primary Education curriculum (2006) claims that games should be a fundamental part of primary school education because they are motivating and they provide a context for language learning and they are a source of natural activities that make learning meaningful. As Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (2006:65) stated “games encourage learners to direct their energy towards language learning by providing them with a meaningful context.”

Communicative language games provide the pupils with significant advantages in the foreign language classroom. First of all, the language games motivate the pupils and offer fun and enjoyment. As Wright, et al (2006) stated language games are highly motivating. Enjoyment, excitement and passion are naturally produced by games. Games ease second language acquisition and motivate pupils to learn, especially the young ones, whose concentration span is lower than adult learners and they need constant encouragement and motivation. In addition, games provide enjoyment and relaxation, but also they encourage students to use their language in a creative and communicative manner. (Yolageldili and Arikan, 2011). Secondly, games allow children to experience language use by performing activities in the form of games. Hence, language games provide learners with opportunities and authentic contexts which may make them aware of the need to use real language to communicate. (Littlewood, 1981).

Along the same lines Wright, et al (2006) state that games are designed to provide pupils with a large amount of communicative language practice as conventional drill activities, but in a rather meaningful way by working language as real communication. Games also create an agreeable and supportive learning environment, which avoid frustration experiences of language learning and create relaxing and enjoyable situations. Activities and exercises requiring communicative interaction also present chances for cooperative relationships. Hence, language games also promote interpersonal relations.

However, even though some teachers underestimate games and see them as time consuming or classroom techniques for fun, others are in favor of the effectiveness of using games in the classroom. For these teachers, it is important to integrate the games into the foreign language teaching programs to benefit from all the advantages that they can offer to both pupils and teachers. McCallum (1980) suggested the following advantages for games:

- Games focus students' attention on specific structures.
- They can function as reinforcement, review and enrichment.
- They involve the same participation from both slow and fast learners.
- Contribute to an atmosphere of healthy competition.
- Can be used in any language teaching situation and with all skill areas.
- Provide immediate feedback for the teacher.
- Ensure the maximum student participation for a minimum of teacher preparation.

### **When to use games**

At school level, games have traditionally been used by EFL teachers when there are some minutes left at the end of the lesson. However some authors, including Lee, have proposed different situations to use the games and benefit from their nature and their pedagogical value.

According to Lee (1979:3) “games should not be regarded as a marginal activity, filling in odd moments when the teacher and the class have nothing better to do”. Hence, games should be integrated in the teaching syllabus as an essential and useful strategy to acquire the foreign language. As far as grammar is concerned, Rinvolucrí (1990) suggested the following stages to use games as a part of grammar instruction:

1. Before presenting a given structure, it can help the teacher to discover the pupils’ previous knowledge.
2. After a grammar presentation to discover if the pupils have achieved the content.
3. As a revision of a grammar area.

Before choosing a game, teachers should decide the purpose of the game in order to make them advantageous. Nedeomová (2007:19) stated that as English teachers we “should consider whether the game-like activity is for children only to make the lesson more attractive and protect them from being bored or whether we tend to revise and practice some particular part of grammar, vocabulary, etc.”

When the game is chosen, a fundamental aspect that teachers should bear in mind before explaining it is that the pupils should understand exactly how to play the game, because they might probably need to adjust them to the level and age of the pupils and that would be more difficult if the rules are not clear. Besides, as McCallum (1980:10) stated “the teacher should organize the games before the instruction”, because to play certain games and use them as a resource to learn English, different materials and equipment may be required, and most of them might not be available in the classroom.

Moreover, the teacher should explain the rules of the game in a direct and non-complicated way to ease their comprehension. Yolageldili and Arikan (2011) suggested that if the pupils do not understand how to play the game there is no educational purpose in playing it. In addition, demonstration will be useful, especially when playing with the younger children since that will clarify the explanation and help them to

understand the rules of the game through the observation of a proof. Related to the development of the game, Celce-Murcia and McIntosh (1979: 54) claimed that “interruptions should be as infrequent as possible so as not to detract from the students’ interest in the game”.

The next section in this project will deal with songs and their use in the EFL classroom.

## **2.4 Using songs in teaching and learning English**

Over the last decade researchers have examined the content of the English language syllabuses designed for the young learners and they have noticed that the vast majority of the syllabuses are concerned with the communicative use of the English language. They have also noticed that songs are included as essential resources to teach English to young learners.

According to Ersöz (2007), in designing teaching programs for the young learners the focus should be on the communicative value of the language and games and songs should be included. Rumley (1999) believed that songs help children to learn since they provide a safe and non-threatening context which enables the pupils to play with the language. According to Schoepp (2001) three patterns come out of the literature as to why teachers and researchers stand up for the use of songs in the EFL classroom. There are affective, cognitive and linguistic reasons.

As for the affective reason, Schoepp stated that the practical application of Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis is that teachers should provide a positive atmosphere conducive to language learning. Krashen (1982) suggested that to achieve learning the affective filter should be weak, since a weak affective filter means that a positive attitude towards learning is present. Otherwise, with a strong affective filter the learner will not seek language input and will not be open for language acquisition. Using songs with YL may contribute to create a positive atmosphere which may lower the affective filter and thus contribute to language acquisition.

Related to the cognitive reasons, songs present opportunities for developing automatity, which is the main cognitive reason for using songs in the English programs. Segalowitz and Gatbonton (1988:473) defined automaticity as “a component of

language fluency which involves both knowing what to say and producing language rapidly without pauses”.

There is also a linguistic reason for using songs in the classroom, which stands up for the idea that songs offer a good variety of language samples as well as prepare pupils for the genuine language they will face.

### **Advantages of using songs in the English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom**

The exposition of the language learners to sufficient and necessary input is one of the main principles in the language learning process (Krashen 1981). Hence, the rhythmic and repetitive nature of songs can contribute to those ease the association between the language and the content, which helps pupils to acquire and internalize the language. Related to this aspect, Rumley (1999) stated that songs offer outstanding opportunities of repetition and practice, which would be tedious if worked through traditional resources. Likewise, Kirsch (2006) pointed out that singing is undoubtedly one of the most effective language learning strategies reported by the children.

Lo and Li (1998) also suggested that songs offer a break from the classroom routine and that the use of songs to learn English develops a non-threatening atmosphere in which the four skills can be improved. Songs are more frequently used with the young learners since as Krashen (1981) claimed children are enthusiastic about rhythm and they have not built personal barriers. Besides, Sharpe (2001) also stated that singing is an essential part of the life of young children, inside and outside the school. In addition, Saricoban and Metin (2000) stated that songs are one of the most enhancing and culturally rich resources than can easily be used in the EFL classrooms.

### **How to teach songs**

Songs can be used in the EFL classroom for the presentation or practice phase of the grammar and vocabulary content. Eken (1996:46) suggested that songs can be useful in the following situations:

- To present a topic, a language point or lexis.
- To practice a language point or lexis.
- To focus on common learner errors in a more direct way.

- To encourage extensive and intensive listening.
- To stimulate discussion of attitudes and feelings.
- To provide a relaxed classroom atmosphere
- To bring variety and fun to learning.

Songs should encourage extensive and intensive listening and inspire the creativity and imagination of the pupils in a relaxed atmosphere. However, before choosing a song the teacher should take into account the age and interests of the pupils in the classroom as well as the content and language used in the song. According to Sevic (2011) to enhance learner commitment it would be advantageous to allow the children to take part in the selection of the songs. Martin (2000) stated that related to the grammatical development of the pupils, from the beginning, children can absorb and reproduce “Chunks” of language in the form of songs and other routines, despite the fact that they cannot analyze and manipulate them. Those “Chunks” are groups of words that can appear together in the language. They can appear as fixed collocations or grammatical structures that follow rules. Learners use their knowledge of chunks to try to guess the meaning of the messages and process the language in real time.

For language teachers it is important to take into account that the primary goal and responsibility is to teach the target language. Hence, the main concern should not be if songs are fun for the young learners, since the objective is make the pupils learn and acquire the target language. According to Sevic (2011) if songs are used in the EFL language ineffectively and in meaningless ways, they will be simple entertainment interruptions in the classroom which can make feel pupils bored and not interested in them. Therefore, if songs do not have a learning purpose and they are used only as activities for pleasure and enjoyment, children will not benefit from the learning opportunities that songs can offer. Teachers should have a clear reason as to why and how to use the songs and they should integrate them into a scheme of work, bearing in mind the cognitive and linguistic needs of the learners.

A good way to integrate the songs and achieve meaningful learning could be designing a lesson plan with pre-teaching, while-teaching and pos-teaching activities. Pre-

teaching activities can be useful to learn or revise the vocabulary of the song as well as the content or the grammar structures that the children will find in the song. If we focus on the while-teaching activities, as Harmer (1991) suggested, listening to songs only once will not be enough, since the first time will serve the pupils to have an idea of the sound of the song. Moreover, it would be benefit to let the pupils listen to the song with no interruptions, because that will help them to hear the music and its lyrics. Finally, the teacher can use post-teaching activities to practice certain structures learnt in the song as well as the vocabulary.

## **2.5 Songs and the development of listening and speaking skills**

Songs and games play an essential role in developing YL listening and speaking skills. As they not only provide input and opportunities to process it but they also allow learners plenty of opportunities for producing input.

### **The listening skill**

Songs play an important role in developing young learners listening skills. As claimed by Philips (1993) listening skills are notably important in the Primary foreign language classroom, since they provide the pupils with a rich source of language data which enables them to build up their own idea of the use of the English language. This knowledge of the language helps the children to begin to produce language themselves. English teachers should actively engage the pupils in listening tasks and activities to improve them. As Sevik (2001) suggested, it is generally agreed that effective listening requires as much attention and mental activity as the speaking and writing skills and listening can be understood as an active use of the language to access other people's meanings. Cameron (2001) argued that listening is the receptive use of language and, since the aim of the active listening is to make sense of the speech, it is naturally focused on the meaning rather than on the language.

Listening is the ability to identify and understand what others are saying. This involves understanding a speaker's accent or pronunciation, his/her grammar and his/her vocabulary, and grasping his/her meaning, (Howatt and Dakin, 1974). In addition, Willis (1981:134) lists the following micro-skills of listening, called enabling skills:

- Predicting what people are going to talk about.
- Guessing unknown words or phrases without panic.
- Using one's own knowledge of the subject to help one understand.
- Identifying relevant points; rejecting irrelevant information.
- Retaining relevant points.
- Recognizing discourse markers.
- Recognizing cohesive devices.
- Understanding different intonation patterns and uses of stress.
- Understanding inferred information.

Bearing in mind that the listening skill lays at the initial stage of the language acquisition and the language learning, as teachers, we should provide pupils with the necessary strategies and techniques for effective learning and songs can contribute to the development of the listening skill in the YL class.

### **The speaking skill**

Songs as well as games also play a strong role in developing the pupils' speaking skills. Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode. It is more complicated than it seems and involves more than just pronouncing words and sentences. The aims of beginners course in listening and speaking, according to Nation and Newton (2009) are the following:

- To help the learners to be able to cope with meaning-focused input and meaning-focused output as early as possible.
- To motivate the learners in their language study by getting them to engage in successful speaking and listening.
- To make the early learning as important as possible to their use needs.



As Millington (2011) stated, children are, most of the time, keen to learn how to produce new sounds and this can involve a large amount of practice. Teachers can use minimal-pair drills, but those kinds of activities will not be interesting for children. On the other hand, songs allow pupils to practice and experience new sounds without creating a sense of boredom. Songs have a natural rhythm with a periodic beat that is like the stress patterns of spoken English. Those patterns make certain songs useful and effective for practicing stress and rhythm.

### **3. STUDY**

#### **3.1 Objective and hypothesis**

The main objective of this study is to find out what Catalan Primary English teachers believe about games and songs as resource to teach English to young learners in the EFL classroom. This investigation aims to discover whether Catalan Primary English teachers appreciate the pedagogical value as well as the advantages that games and songs can offer as well as the difficulties and negative aspects of using games and songs in the Primary classroom.

Bearing in mind the main goal of the study a questionnaire was sent to some Primary English teachers in Catalonia in order to find out their attitudes and opinions about the use of games and songs as well as their beliefs on the positive and negative aspects of them.

Based on the claims of the related literature that games and songs are beneficial for the YL learners, (Martin, 2006; Edelenbos, et al, 2006; Wright, et al, 2006; Ersöz, 2007;...)I formulated my hypothesis which implies that teachers may use games and songs in their EFL classrooms but they may not use them as a resource to teach and learn English but as time fillers or as a reward for good behaviour. However, my hypothesis also implies that teachers may find some negative aspects about using games and songs in the classroom, such as losing the control of the class or wasting time.

The questionnaires will hopefully help me to discover the use as well as the opinions and beliefs of some Catalan Primary English teachers towards the use of games and songs.

## **3.2 Methodology**

### **3.2.1 Research design**

This study was designed as a qualitative study with the goal of exploring the opinions, beliefs and attitudes of the Primary Catalan EFL teachers towards the use and value of games and songs to teach and learn English in the YL EFL contexts.

### **3.2.2 Participants**

Thirty EFL teachers from 17 different schools, all teaching in Catalan state and state-assisted Primary schools voluntarily participated in the study. 82,3% of them were in state schools and a 17,6% were in state-assisted. Ones 93,3% of the EFL teachers were female and a 6,6% were males.

The vast majority of the schools are from the province of Barcelona (88,2%), specifically from the area of Bages (52,9%), Anoia (5,8%), Osona (17,64) and Barcelonès (11,7%). However, there is also a minority from the area of Ripollès (5,88%), in the province of Girona and from the region of Pallars Sobirà (5,88) in the province of Lleida.

### **3.2.3 Research instrument**

The instrument used to carry out this study was a questionnaire. A questionnaire is a research method which consists of a series of questions and whose purpose is gathering useful information from a selected group of people. Questionnaires are a useful method of collecting a wide range of information from a large range of individuals.

To create my own questionnaire I used as a model and as guidance questionnaires included in some of the papers and studies that I looked up to write the theoretical framework, Sevik (2011), Yolageldili and Arikan (2011) and Wang (2010).

The questionnaire used was composed of twenty questions listed, divided into two charts, ten related to games and ten related to songs. The teachers were asked to fill in the square that best showed their opinions and beliefs about the use of games and songs in their EFL classroom. The questionnaire included a four-point Likert scale with four options namely “strongly agree”, “agree”, “disagree” and “strongly disagree”. The items were related to the literature of the topic and since all of the participants were EFL teachers, the questionnaire was provided in English. Almost all the questions were the same or similar for the games and for the songs, even though there were also certain specific questions for each topic.

### **3.2.4 Survey procedure**

The survey questionnaires were sent to more than thirty Catalan private and state Primary schools selected randomly. The vast majority of the schools were from the region of Bages in the province of Barcelona, but the questionnaires were also sent to schools from the provinces of Girona, Tarragona and Lleida. A total of thirty EFL teachers answered the questionnaire and all of them were completed and accepted as valid. Despite the fact that the findings do not represent completely all the attitudes opinions and the methodologies of Catalan EFL teachers, the results of this study show the teachers’ use and beliefs about the use of games and songs in their EFL classrooms of a significant part of the Catalan EFL primary teachers.

### **3.2.5 Data analysis**

In order to analyze the results of the questionnaires about games, the different items in the games questionnaire were grouped under three categories. The first category was a general one about the use that teachers make of games and included three statements:

- Games should be given a special role in the FL class.
- Games should be used as a reward for good behavior.
- Games are frequently used in my FL classes.

The second category included statements about advantages and positive aspects of the games:

- Games are both fun and useful to teach English.
- Games can reduce the pupils' anxiety.
- Games are motivating and encourage pupils to learn.

The third category dealt with disadvantages and negative aspects of the games

- Using games in the session can be time-consuming.
- I can not measure the pupils' knowledge of English through games.
- It is difficult to find appropriate games for each topic.
- Games can make teachers lose the control of the class.

The same procedure was carried out with the questionnaire about the songs. As in the case of games, the ten items were divided into three main categories. The first one was related to the general use of songs, which included the following statements:

- Songs are frequently used in my FL classes.
- Songs should be an essential resource in the FL classes.

The second category included the following statements about the advantages and positive aspects of the songs:

- Songs help pupils to learn and imitate the pronunciation of the words.
- Songs can reduce the pupils' anxiety.
- Songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary.
- Songs are very important in developing the pupils' listening skills.

The third category focuses on the disadvantages and negative aspects of the songs and included the next statements:

- It is difficult to find an appropriate song for each topic.
- Songs can be time-consuming
- I can not measure the pupils' knowledge of English through songs.
- Songs may distract pupils' attention during the lessons.

For each particular item in the main categories, percentages were calculated.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The answers for each statement of the questionnaires are presented in the graphs below under three categories for the purpose of discussing the results.

First of all, I will focus on the data collected about the games and then I will focus on the questionnaires about the songs.

### Games

#### ➤ 1. Use of games

Results for the statements related to the use of games indicate that a great majority of the Catalan EFL teachers interviewed (93%) use games in their classrooms, only a 7% of the teachers disagree even though none of the participants strongly disagreed with using them (Figure 1). Similarly, focusing on the statement about the role of games in the FL class only a 7% of the participants disagree. Therefore, the vast majority of them considered that games should have a special role in teaching and learning English. Those results show that the participants appreciate games as an important resource to help pupils learn English and that they use games in their classrooms. Hence, there is a connection between the answers of the statement about the role of games in the EFL class and the use of games, since almost all the teachers that consider that games should be given a special role in the EFL class answered that they use games to teach English.

However, the results for the figure 3 indicate that a significant number of teachers (40%) use games as a reward for good behavior, and they may not use them for their pedagogical purpose.

Figure 1 (games)

**Games are frequently used in my FL classes**

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

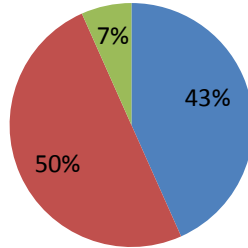


Figure 2 (games)

**Games should be given a special role in the FL class**

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

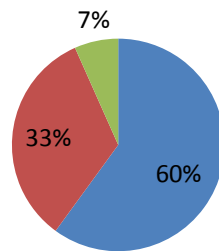
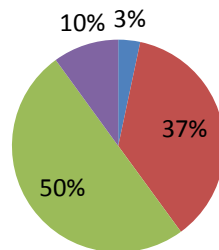


Figure 3 (games)

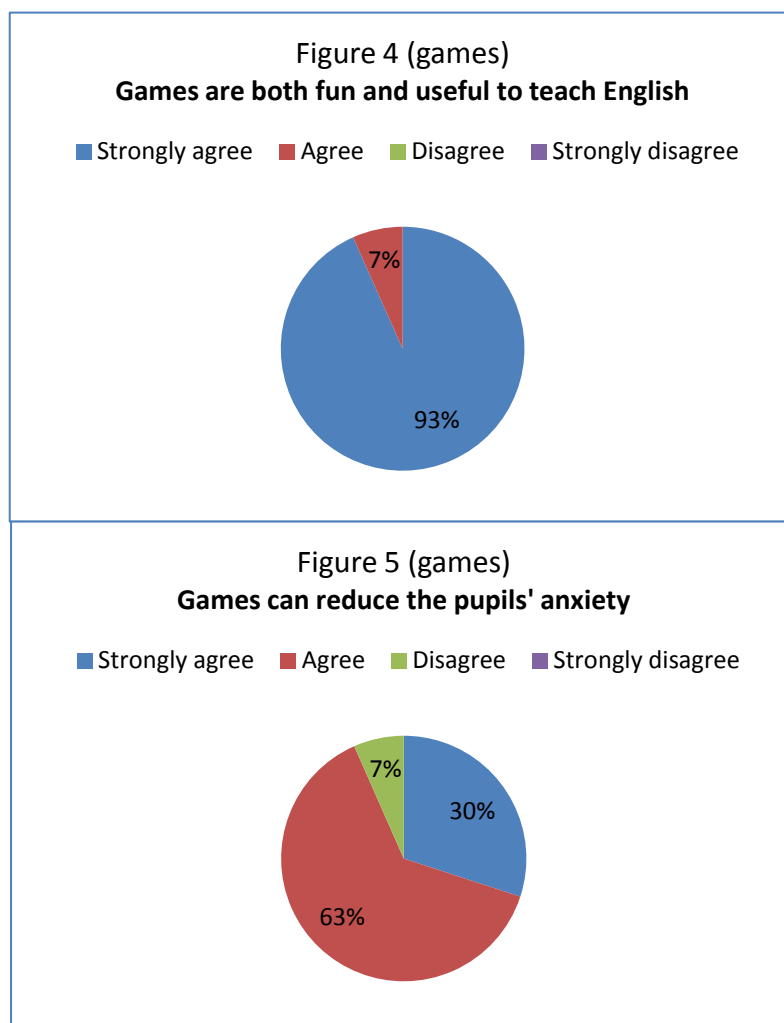
**Games should be used as a reward for good behavior**

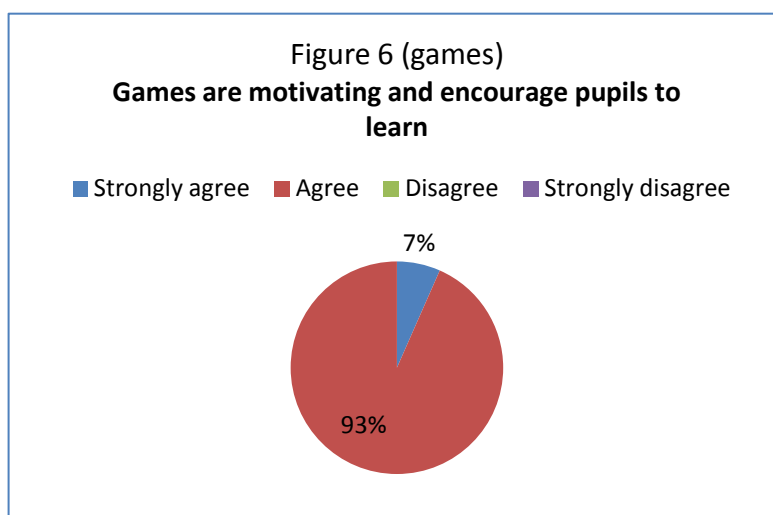
■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree



➤ **2. Advantages and positive aspects of games**

The results of the category about the advantages and positive aspects of games show that almost all the teachers appreciate and recognize the opportunities and advantages that games can offer since, a great majority of the participants (93%) strongly agree that games are both fun and useful to teach and learn English (Figure 4). None of the teachers disagreed with this statement. In a similar way, the results indicate almost all the teachers believe that games are motivating and encourage pupils to learn, (figure 6). Figure 5 indicates that a significant number of the participants (93%) consider that games can reduce the pupils' anxiety, while only a minority (7%) does not believe it.





### ➤ 3. Disadvantages and negative aspects of games

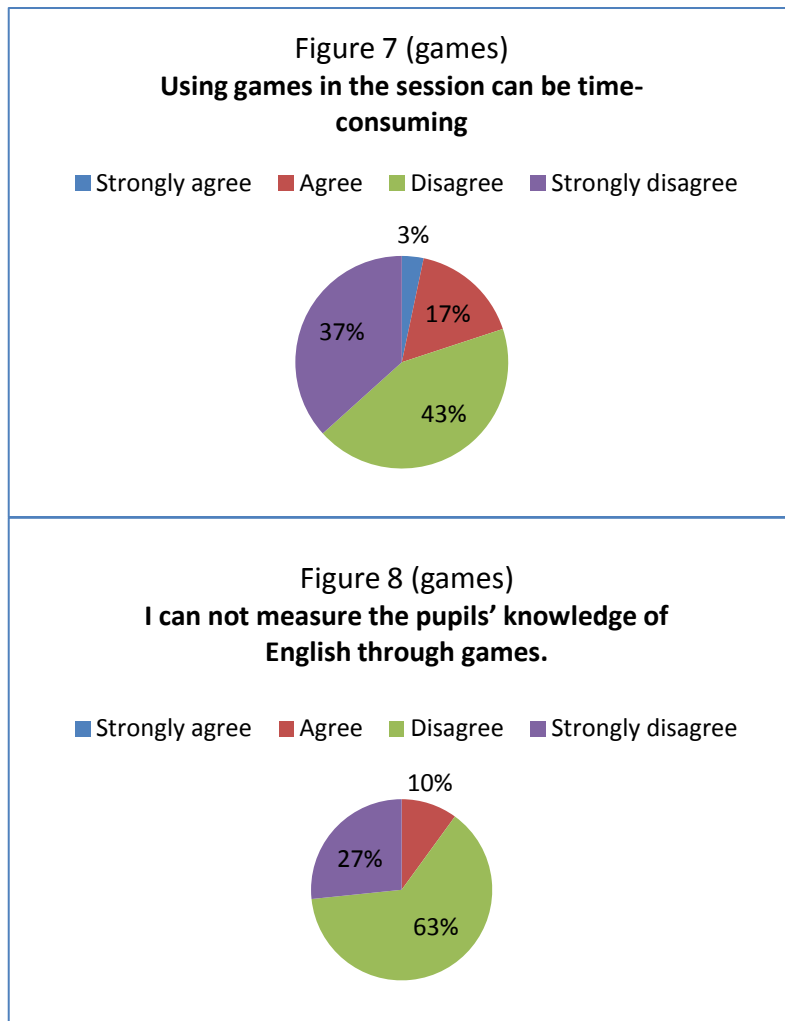
The results for the last category, which is about the disadvantages and negative aspects of games, indicate that a great majority of the participants (80%) do not consider games as time-consuming, since as it can be seen in figure 7, 43% of the participants disagree and a 37% strongly disagree. A minority (20%) believe that games can be time consuming but only 3% of the teachers strongly agree with this statement (figure 7).

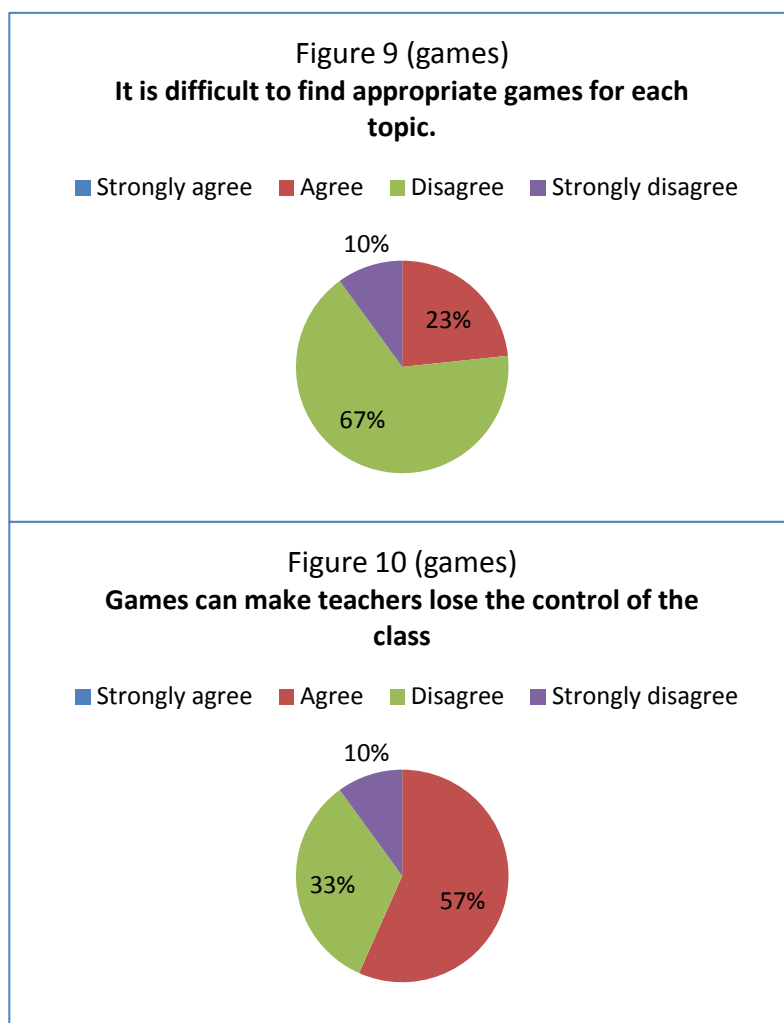
Moreover, moving on to the next statement of that category, almost of the participants (90%) do not think that it is difficult to measure the pupils' knowledge through games, since 63% disagree with this statement and 27% strongly disagree. 10% of the teachers consider that they can not measure the pupils' knowledge through games, but none of them strongly agree with this statement (figure 8). Figure 9 shows that a 77% of the participants do not consider that it is difficult to find appropriate games for each topic, while 23% agree with the statement. However, only 10% strongly disagree with the statement and none of them strongly agree with the idea that it is difficult to find appropriate games for each topic.

As for the fact that games can make teachers lose the control of the class, the results show that there is not a significant majority, while 57% of the teachers agree with this statement, a 43% do not consider that games contribute in losing the control of the class. However, none of the participants strongly agrees with this statement but 10%



strongly disagree with the statement. Hence, the only negative aspect of games for slightly more than the participants is the fact that games can make teachers lose the control of the class.



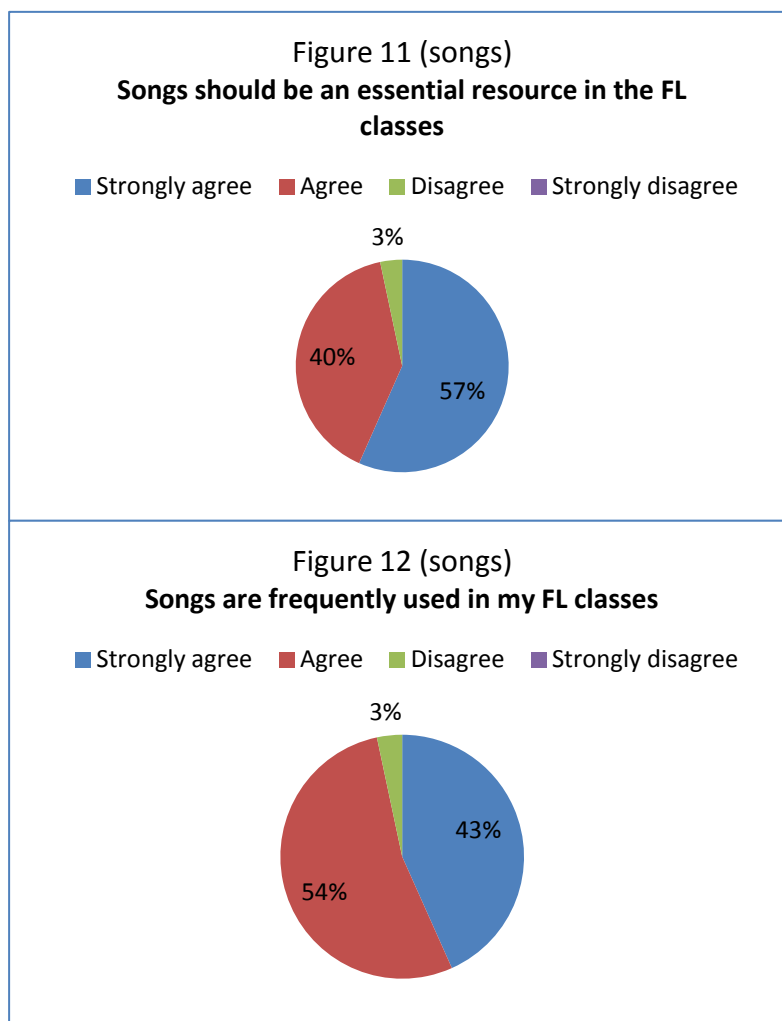


## Songs

### ➤ 1. Use of songs

The results of the category related to the use of songs show that Catalan EFL teachers consider songs important in teaching and learning English; as figure 11 indicates, only 7% of the participants disagree with the statement that songs should be an essential resource in the FL classes. A great majority (97%) believe that songs are an essential resource (57% strongly agree with the statement, which is more than a half of the participants). There is an obvious connection between this statement and the next one, since 97% of the teachers answered that they use songs in their FL class and this

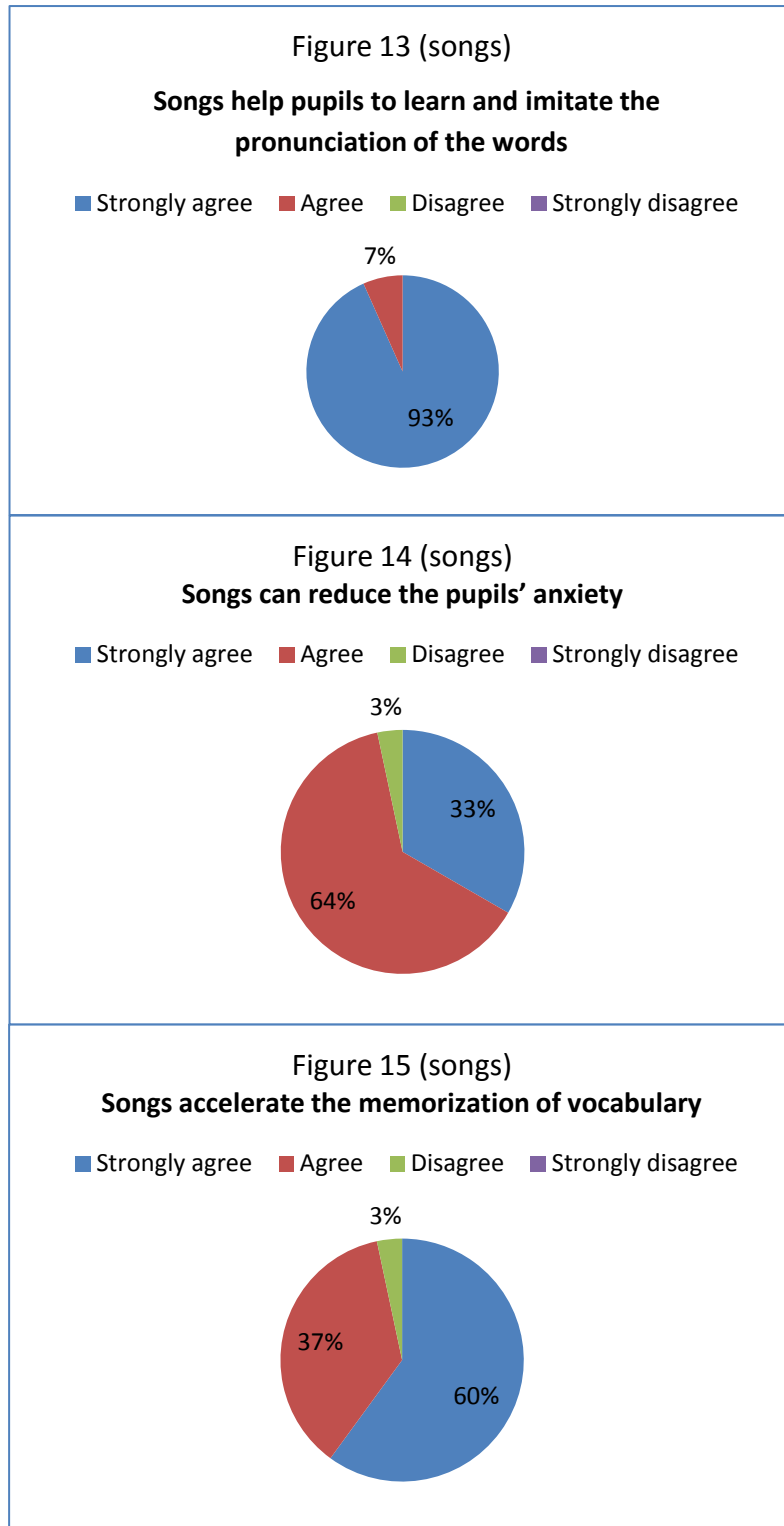
percentage almost coincide with the previous statement; as figure 12 shows 54% agree and 43% strongly agree.

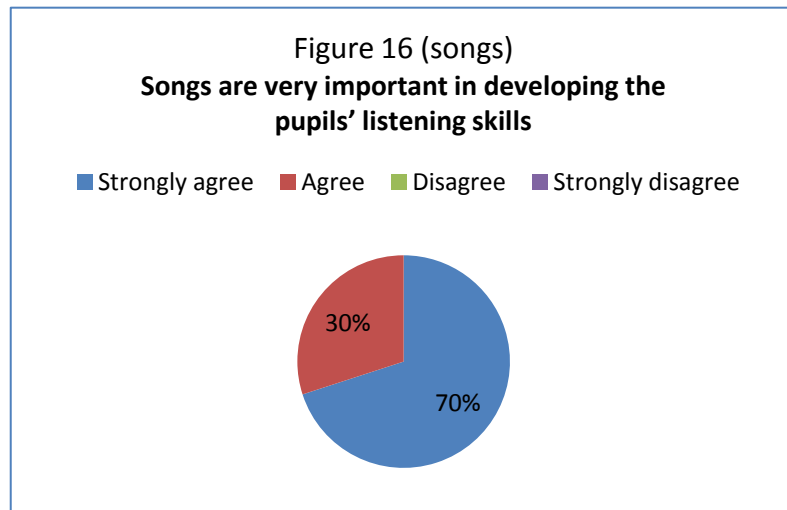


## ➤ 2. Advantages and positive aspects of songs

Related to the advantages and positive aspects of songs, as all the figures show almost all the participants take into account and recognize that songs have several advantages in teaching and learning English. Focusing on the first statement, all the participants consider that songs help pupils to learn and imitate the pronunciation of the words, since while none of them answered disagree or strongly disagree a 93% strongly agree and 7% agree with this statement (figure 13). Moving on the next figure the results indicate that a great majority (97%) believe that songs can reduce the pupils' anxiety and only a very small minority (3%) disagrees with the statement. Similarly, 97% of the participants consider that songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary and only a 3% disagree with the statement. The last statement of this category indicate that all

the participants think that songs are very important in developing the pupils' listening skills since 70% strongly agree and 30% agree, but none of the participants disagree or strongly disagree (figure 16).





➤ **3. Disadvantages and negative aspects of songs**

Moving on the disadvantages and negative aspects of songs, figure 17 indicates that a majority (67%) do not think that it is difficult to find an appropriate song for each topic. However, 30% of the participants agree with the statement and 3% strongly agree. Hence, 33% of the teachers consider that it is difficult to find songs for each topic. In figure 18 it can be seen that 76% of the participants do not consider that songs can be time-consuming but 23% of them do.

Figure 19 indicates that some teachers may not use songs to discover the knowledge that the pupils have achieved, since 36% of the participants consider that they can not measure the pupils' knowledge through songs. However 63% of the participants do not think that because they disagree with the statement. Figure 20 shows that none of the participants believe that using songs in the classroom may distract the pupil's attention, since 66,6% disagree with the statement and 33% strongly disagree.

Figure 17 (songs)  
**It's difficult to find an appropriate song for each topic**

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

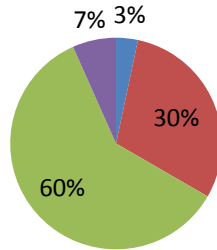


Figure 18 (songs)  
**Songs can be time-consuming**

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree

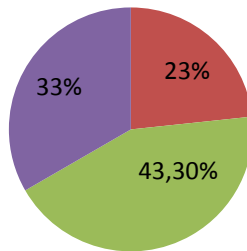
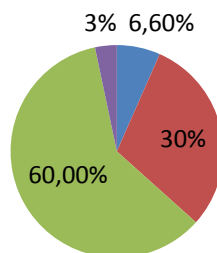
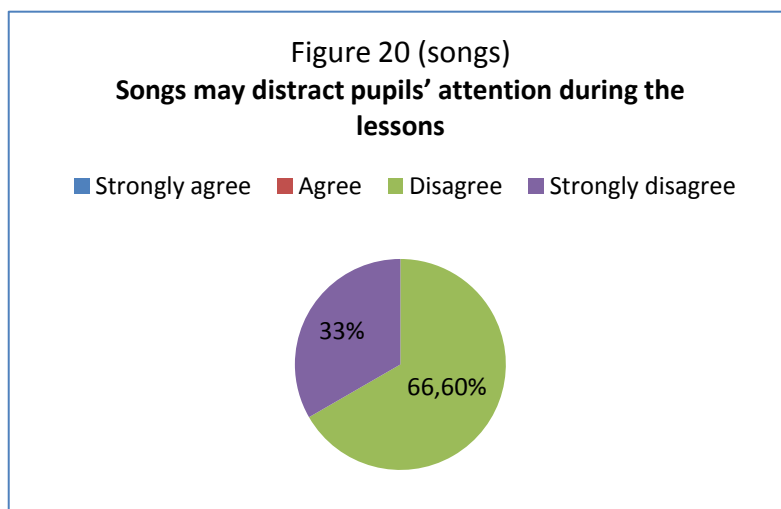


Figure 19 (songs)  
**I can not measure the pupils' knowledge of English through songs.**

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree





## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of the project was to explore the opinions of Catalan Primary English teachers about the use of games and songs to teach and learn English in the YL classroom. In order to collect their opinions I created a questionnaire, which was sent to thirty EFL teachers from seventeen Catalan state and state-assisted schools. The questions of the questionnaire were related to the literature about games and songs to teach and learn English to YL and included statements about the use of games and songs, their positive aspects and their negative ones.

The results indicate that, in general, Catalan Primary English teachers interviewed use games and songs in their EFL classrooms and consider that they should be an essential resource. The teachers interviewed also recognized the advantages of games and songs to teach and learn English, especially the fact that games are fun as well as useful to teach English and that both of them can reduce the pupils' anxiety. Related to the disadvantages of games and songs, some of the teachers interviewed consider that games can make teachers lose the control of the class. Some of them use games as a reward for good behavior and they may not use them as a resource to teach English content.

In conclusion, the results show that a majority of the Catalan Primary EFL teachers who took part in this project recognize the pedagogical value of using games and songs in

the YL classrooms to teach and learn English and the vast majority of the participants stated that they frequently used games and songs in their classrooms, even though some of them recognized the weaknesses of games and songs.

The results of this project are in line with most of the claims of the literature about the use of games and songs as a teaching resource to teach and learn a foreign language to YL, since they are common and natural in children's life and, as Wright, et al (1984) stated language games and highly motivating for young language learners. Haycraft (1979:94) suggested that "games are an agreeable way of getting a class to its initiative in English". Games and songs can provide with real context in the class and encourage pupils to use the language communicatively. Saricoban and Metin (2000) stated that songs are one of the most enhancing and culturally rich resources than can easily be used in the EFL classrooms.

One of the main limitations that I had during the elaboration of the project was that I wanted to collect the opinions and beliefs of some Catalan Primary EFL teachers from all the provinces of Catalonia and I sent the questionnaire to different schools of them, but I could not obtain information from the teachers of Tarragona and I obtained little information from the teachers of Girona and Lleida, because I did not receive their answered questionnaires. It was also difficult to get thirty full questionnaires because some schools only had one or two English teachers and others were busy because of the end of the school year and did not answer my emails.

To improve and explore more about the use of games and games to teach and learn English as well as to discover the opinions and attitudes of Catalan Primary English teachers about the use of them, I believe that I could have included other items in my questionnaire such as the age of the participants as well as the levels of Primary Education where they teach in order to investigate further and obtain more detailed data of the participants and explore how those two aspects influence the teachers' perceptions and beliefs about the use of games and songs in their classes. In this way I could have known whether they are more keen to use games and songs to teach certain levels of Primary Education.



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## Appendices

### TEACHERS' BELIEFS ABOUT THE USE OF GAMES AND SONGS IN THE CLASSROOM

For each of the following statements check the column that best represents your beliefs.

#### Games

|  | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. Games are both fun and useful to teach English.                   |                |       |          |                   |
| 2. Games should be given a special role in the FL class.             |                |       |          |                   |
| 3. Using games in the session can be time-consuming.                 |                |       |          |                   |
| 4. Games should be used as a reward for good behavior.               |                |       |          |                   |
| 5. Games can reduce the pupils' anxiety.                             |                |       |          |                   |
| 6. Games are motivating and encourage pupils to learn.               |                |       |          |                   |
| 7. I can not measure the pupils' knowledge of English through games. |                |       |          |                   |
| 8. It is difficult to find appropriate games for each topic.         |                |       |          |                   |
| 9. Games can make teachers lose the control of the class.            |                |       |          |                   |
| 10 Games are frequently used in my FL classes.                       |                |       |          |                   |

## Songs

|   | <b>Strongly agree</b> | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Strongly disagree</b> |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Songs should be an essential resource in the FL classes.               |                       |              |                 |                          |
| 2. It's difficult to find an appropriate song for each topic.             |                       |              |                 |                          |
| 3. Songs help pupils to learn and imitate the pronunciation of the words. |                       |              |                 |                          |
| 4. Songs can be time-consuming  |                       |              |                 |                          |
| 5. I can not measure the pupils' knowledge of English through songs.      |                       |              |                 |                          |
| 6. Songs can reduce the pupils' anxiety.                                  |                       |              |                 |                          |
| 7. Songs accelerate the memorization of vocabulary.                       |                       |              |                 |                          |
| 8. Songs are very important in developing the pupils' listening skills.   |                       |              |                 |                          |
| 9. Songs may distract pupils' attention during the lessons.               |                       |              |                 |                          |
| 10. Songs are frequently used in my FL classes.                           |                       |              |                 |                          |