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English language students and their motivation to learn the language

TRABAJO DE TITULACIÓN

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“Nosotros, Vallejo Arias Danilo Eduardo y Robles Nole Liliana Elizabet declaramos ser autores del presente trabajo de titulación: “English language students and their motivation to learn the language”, de la Titulación de Ciencias de la Educación mención Inglés, siendo la Mgs. Verónica Soledad Espinoza Celi directora del presente trabajo; y eximimos expresamente a la Universidad Técnica Particular de Loja y a sus representantes legales de posibles reclamos o acciones legales. Además certificamos que las ideas, conceptos, procedimientos y resultados vertidos en el presente trabajo investigativo, son de nuestra exclusiva responsabilidad.

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DEDICATION

Working on a research project is a challenging process that involves a lot of time, effort and other affairs. It had been impossible to do such a process without seeking my brother Hugo's assistance. This investigation is dedicated to him, for his support and encouragement, who has been of great help in my entire career.

Danilo

Firstly, I want to thank my beloved husband Jimmy Stalin, for his encouragement and support throughout my career and secondly, I want to express my words of appreciation to my family for stimulating me to reach my goals.

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed at investigating English language students and their motivation to learn the language, to answer, what students think motivate them to learn English and what they think hinder to learn it. It was conducted in two high schools in Cuenca, Ecuador.

A random sample of 100 male and female students (20 per class), whose ages ranged between 12 and 17, was comprised in representation of five classes, from 8th EGB to 3rd Senior high school, except 2nd Senior high school, during the period 2015-2016. Quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. A student's questionnaire and an observation sheet were applied to examine aspects that influence their motivation to learn English. Additionally, five lessons were observed to monitor the learning performance.

Results reveal that most of the students like to learn English because they are intrinsically motivated and instrumentally oriented. Nonetheless, main factors that hinder students to learn English are the complexity of topics, the number of learners in the classroom and their low level of knowledge in the language.

Keywords: student's motivation, hinder, teaching methods, intrinsic, teacher roles

RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo el propósito de investigar la motivación de los estudiantes de inglés para aprender el idioma, a fin de responder, qué motiva a los estudiantes para aprender el inglés y qué los impide hacerlo. Este estudio se llevó a cabo en dos colegios en Cuenca, Ecuador.

Se constituyó una muestra aleatoria de 100 estudiantes entre varones y mujeres (20 alumnos por clase), en edades de entre 12 y 17 años, en representación de cinco cursos, de 8^{vo} de EGB a 3^{ro} de Bach, excepto 2^{do} de Bach durante el periodo escolar 2015-2016. Se emplearon los métodos cuantitativo y cualitativo. Se aplicaron un cuestionario para estudiantes y una hoja de observación para examinar los aspectos que influyen en su motivación para aprender el inglés. Además, se observaron cinco clases para supervisar la ejecución del aprendizaje. Los resultados revelan que a la mayor parte de los estudiantes les gusta aprender el inglés debido a su motivación intrínseca con orientación instrumental. No obstante, los principales factores que les impide aprender el inglés están relacionados con la complejidad de los temas, el número de estudiantes en la clase y el bajo nivel de conocimientos del idioma.

Palabras clave: motivación del estudiante, impedir, métodos de enseñanza, intrínseco, funciones del profesor

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the most important languages all over the world. It is the official language in many countries, where people learn it to fulfill requirements in terms of academic purposes, business and travel, among other reasons. In Ecuador, it is not an exception. That is why, the Ministry of Education has designed the English Teachers Standards Domains and The English Language Learning Standards (Ministerio de Educación, 2009) which, in turn, are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) to achieve a proficiency level in the target language at the end of each school year period. On this subject, Harmer (2007) maintains, “CEFR levels and “can do” statements (...) are being used increasingly by coursebook writers and curriculum designers, not only in Europe but across much of the language-learning world” (p. 17).

In spite of the fact that teacher trainings about methodology, techniques, syllabus design, planning and other pedagogical matters are frequently provided, English teachers do not seem to be aware of how to apply them in the classrooms, since it is evident that there are still unmotivated learners longing for real meaningful learning in most high schools in Cuenca. Lack of motivation to learn the English language is a major issue among Ecuadorian students that affects the learning process. Due to this fact, it is essential to investigate the current topic: English language students and their motivation to learn the language.

In order to share more information about this aspect, this study attempts to answer the following questions: 1. What do you think motivates students to learn English? 2. What do you think hinders students to learn English? These questions will try to identify the factors that are involved in motivation more accurately, but firstly, it is substantial to learn about its implication.

According to Harmer (2007), “This desire to achieve some goal is the bedrock of motivation and, if it is strong enough, it provokes a decision to act” (p. 20). What is more, Nation and Macalister (2010) highlight that motivation represents how much learners are attracted and enthusiastic about learning the language and how valuable it is for them. Secondly, other features on this matter will be considered to provide a wider scope on motivation.

For instance, motivation and attitudes are essentially associated with authentic learning procedures in the classroom; that is why, it is important to know about the socio-pedagogical perspective when considering the different circumstances and attitudes involved in educational transformation. It is also a psychological concern, since its conditions will benefit or affect the students learning processes. It can be observed that positive attitudes enable learning improvement and success is determined by the way in which skills, attitudes and motivation are conducted and developed; nevertheless, attitudes are important yet not enough for linguistic accomplishment according to a study by Lifrieri in 2005.

Similarly, in a research by Bradford (2007), motivation is a feeling that looks for a goal, which contains three elements: the desire to fulfill an objective, the determination to achieve it and a good disposition to carry out this action. Two main types of motivation are considered in most of studies: “instrumental motivation” and “integrative motivation”.

With this in mind, some studies which have been carried out to investigate learners’ motivation to learn the English language will be briefly examined. For instance, a previous study with the topic, “Motivation and attitudes towards learning English: A Study of Petroleum Engineering Undergraduates at Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology was carried out by Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) to determine which of the three types of motivation

(instrumental, integrative and personal) could be the primary source of the petroleum-engineering students' motivation towards learning the English language. The findings revealed that instrumental motivation was the primary source of the petroleum engineering students' motivation toward learning the English language. Nevertheless, as far as the integrative orientation is concerned, learning this language as a matter of culture did not have a strong influence in the students' motivation.

To conclude, the authors found certain limitations associated with financial and time issues. For example, the present research was limited to 81 petroleum-engineering students. In addition, all the participants were males since there were no female students.

Moreover, Tahaine and Daana (2013) conducted a study to know Jordanian undergraduates' motivation and attitude towards learning English in EFL context and the two social psychological variables: motivation orientations (instrumental and integrative) of the Jordanian EFL undergraduates and their attitudes for learning the target language. The results of the study showed that the Jordanian female undergraduates majoring English as a foreign language at AAU-PAUC were both for instrumental reasons which included utilitarian and academic purposes but integrative reasons like the culture and its people were not very important in the students to learn English. However, the findings revealed that Jordanian undergraduates majoring English as a foreign language had positive attitudes toward the English language. Finally, a limitation of this study was the participant sample that consisted of four equal-sized strata selected randomly. The relationship among the students' level, their motivation and attitude were not included in the statistical analysis. Another limitation had to do with the gender of the

undergraduate students (184), as there were no male students in the department of English language and literature.

Eventually, a study by Juriševič and Pižorn (2013) attempted to explore the level of the students' motivation to learn a foreign language in a primary school in Slovenia, whose purpose was to find out what learning tasks motivated the children intrinsically as well as their learning competences and their learning goals. The research sample consisted of 591 children from 31 elementary schools corresponding to the 2008-2009 academic period. Just a questionnaire was used to collect data. The results indicated that most of the children possessed a positive concept about the language learning competences. The majority of the kids were intrinsically motivated, who recognized the effectiveness of learning English to fulfill their needs and felt pleasure when learning.

This study contributes to foreign language teachers of children identify their learners most important motivational features, whilst students satisfy their needs becoming proficient in the English language.

With regard to our current study, the results of this research can serve as a reference for teachers to know which factors are involved in the students' motivation or demotivation to learn English. Therefore, this study will help researchers, educational institutions and curriculum designers employ teaching methods, techniques and didactic materials more proficiently in order to reach motivation.

Alternatively, two main limitations were found. The first limitation had to do with the small number of teacher observations, since it was necessary to get further evidence to correlate data from the questionnaires to be contrasted with the data gathered up in the lesson observations.

The second limitation is related to lack of information, since most of students did not answer the questions thoroughly, especially the questions on graph 8.

CHAPTER I: Literature Review

Due to the necessity for improving students' English learning processes and develop proficiency in the language, in this chapter, several topics which are relevant to the investigation of motivation to learn the English language, will be presented, such as activities or strategies that motivate students to learn English, teaching approaches, methods and the roles of a teacher applied in schools. This research also includes several theories, concepts and definitions of high importance and interest for the students' learning progress, which will provide us with a better understanding of the ideas proposed in this study. Finally, a brief account of five previously conducted researches about motivation will be presented.

Motivation to learn English

According to a study by Bradford (2007), motivation is an attitude that looks for a goal, which contains three elements: the desire to fulfill an objective, the determination to achieve it and a good disposition to carry out this action. With this in mind, two main types of motivation are considered in most of studies: instrumental motivation and integrative motivation. In a research by Gardner (1983), integrative motivation is the act of learning a foreign language in order to be involved and identified with the society of the L2. This desire makes students to learn more about native-English speakers and makes possible to integrate into them because of their culture, traditions and values. Conversely, Gardner (1983) remarks that instrumental motivation is a type of impulse, in which someone seeks to obtain a profit. For instance, according to Wilkings (1972), English is used to pass evaluations, to apply it at work, to use it for holidays, to understand movies on television or to fulfill educational requirements.

Motivation is also classified as intrinsic and extrinsic. As for Cook and Singleton (2014), intrinsic motivation is a self-motivation state needed to accomplish the learning of a language

successfully. When intrinsic motivation appears, learners feel pleasure in doing the activities alone, while teachers provide good atmosphere to induce motivation. In order to help students develop intrinsic motivation, teachers need to know the required conditions for an interactive lesson to reach the proposed objectives. First, learning has to be interesting and meaningful. Second, learning has to be useful, relevant and helpful in the process of acquisition of knowledge. With similar views, Murray and Lamb (2011) state that intrinsic motivation; for example, helps improve students' performance when studying at a distance. Consequently, learners are intrinsically motivated and interested in what they are doing, combined with an appropriate classroom environment to obtain the desired outcomes.

On the other hand, Wood (2010) asserts that extrinsic motivation is related to things given in return; in other words, learning involves a behavior to obtain a reward; for example, to obtain gifts or grades. These rewards provide immediate enjoyment but leaves a little to keep in mind; that is why, a high motivation is desirable in case students do not have enough enthusiasm to continue with the learning process. Moreover, there are three categories in extrinsic motivation: the external regulation, the introjected regulation and the identified regulation. All of them are adjusted to levels of self-determination. This view is also supported by Apple, Da Silva and Fellner (2013) who consider that environment and social factors influence extrinsic motivation; however, in the learning process, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations work together to achieve the desired goals.

Activities or strategies that motivate students to learn English

Language learning should be attractive, interesting and capable of fulfilling learners' personal and immediate needs. In respect of motivational strategies, Dörnyei (2001) establishes six strategies. The first strategy suggests that teachers show eagerness and relevance when

teaching English. The second strategy deals with exploring the students' progress earnestly. The third strategy is about fostering friendship among students and being supportive with them. A fourth strategy seeks to connect teachers with the learners' parents in order to exchange information on academic matters. A fifth strategy relates with setting necessary regulations to get a harmonious classroom environment. The last strategy is based on workshops to stimulate the cooperative learning, the use of games for students to be more confident with the oncoming activities, the mixture of small groups, the planning of activities outside the classroom and the organization of competing teams.

In contrast, Richards and Lockhart (2007) classify motivating activities as presentation, practice, memorization, comprehension, application, strategy, affective, feedback and assessment. These activities will be developed as follows:

The presentation activities are explained at the beginning of the lesson for students to be acquainted with new topics. The practice activities reinforce previous items using a model to develop aspects like language functions, pronunciation, fluency and the development of reading skills. Though new approaches discourage its use, the memorization activities are used to remember information or to perform tasks such as learning lists of irregular verbs. The comprehension activities are employed to work on different levels of understanding, either in oral or written tasks. Concerning the application activities, these tasks link the students' creativity with their knowledge and are applied to new settings; for example, from a conversation to a role-play and from reading a text to writing an essay.

Furthermore, Richards and Lockhart (2007) highlight that the strategy activities are tasks on specific items to draw meanings from new vocabulary, to apply clues on listening and reading exercises and to make predictions. The tasks called affective activities are employed to develop

motivation in the classroom through journals on their learning experience. Other important tasks are the feedback activities, which provide useful information for future decisions about learning; for instance, drafts or vocabulary reinforcement on listening comprehension activities. The last strategy is called the assessment activities and it is used to evaluate the students' achievements or to reinforce weak areas in the language skills.

With regard to the application of strategies in the classroom, Herrell and Jordan (2012) classify them in 'predictable' routines and 'signals' to decrease anxiety. These strategies will guide learners sequence the topics. As an example of these strategies, homework or other activities are posted on a part of the board or on the bulletin board outside the classroom. In order to ease the comprehension of contents, the 'preview' of a lesson and its 'review' to back up understanding is done in L1 by using visuals and realia, while the lesson itself is carried out in English. In terms of visual scaffolding, images with the new vocabulary, flashcards and visual aids are linked to words and their pronunciation for a better understanding of topics.

Another useful strategy, according to Herrell and Jordan (2012), is to teach vocabulary with its definition in the target language to provide deeper understanding; that is to say, the use of mimes, pictures and cards along with the new vocabulary will help learners understand the tasks. This strategy gives students the opportunity to interact by using pictures to elicit descriptions and learn the new words. An effective vocabulary instruction will involve multiple exposures in the activities; hence, students who practice the new words would be able to apply them in daily life, either inside or outside the classroom. In the same way, vocabulary instruction will give a lot of comprehensible input to accomplish the learning goals. Using visual materials in the language learning processes is an effective strategy, which requires a good planning to encourage the students' participation and engage them in authentic tasks.

In addition, Herrell and Jordan (2012) state that working in strategies such as small groups, pair work, peer tutoring and skill groupings is a useful interaction experience to boost instruction. As a result, students will have more opportunities for verbal interaction, helping each other to develop the tasks while achieving the skills adjusted to their needs. The activities are based on specific topics in which students share their knowledge about different themes and work together under specific roles. At this setting, learners reinforce their weakest areas efficiently and more enthusiastically. All the members in the group can participate actively, either with students of the same level or with stronger students in the language leading the groups, so that they get more benefits from the activities during the interaction.

At making group interactions to reach goals, students can work discussing their tasks and exchanging their thoughts, making learning more cooperative. This cooperative strategy works according to the learners' interests and needs. Thus, the strategy will enable teachers and students to have a combined participation to reach the lesson objectives. For these reasons, teachers are able to see the advantages of cooperation and the development of partnership, not for competing necessarily, but for sharing. Alternatively, for verbal interactions, students make use of scripts preparing situational dialogues in advance to develop their communicative skills. Finally, the manipulative strategy is the one related to real things, in which learners handle objects to generate or link concepts in order to support the vocabulary learned (Herrell and Jordan, 2012).

On the same subject, Nation and Newton (2009) provide further elements considering meaningful contents essential in teaching and they prevent teachers from using too much grammar explanation on the vocabulary. In terms of keeping learners' interest, it is highly recommended by these authors that teachers vary the activities, making them shorter and more dynamic, so students can learn with real things which include songs and games. Moreover,

activities should be easy and not too long to maintain students' attention. The mentioned strategies require the simultaneous interaction of activities along with the implementation of useful materials, such as balls, pictures, short trips, among others.

When students interact with meaningful tasks, they can use the language cheerfully and learn it more productively; furthermore, learners should be comfortable and interested in acquiring the language; in other words, they will learn more efficiently when they are further involved in lively activities. Furthermore, Nation and Newton (2009) remark that a lot of new vocabulary is unnecessary and consider that students should learn a few words and they should practice them a lot. The mentioned principle is employed with different types of vocabulary games, pictures, information transfer and bingo in basic conversations. To conclude, when students learn a new language, they need more exposure to it, but not that much to overwhelm them; instead, English is better taught using pantomime, pictures and other visual support in a comprehensible way, providing a little vocabulary to make their learning much easier and more fun.

Teaching Approaches and Methods

There are various teaching approaches and methods. Some of them are more employed than others in motivation. An illustration of several of the most well-known and applied approaches and methods, pointing out their advantages and disadvantages, will be provided in the following paragraphs:

As a starting point, for Freeman (2003), the Communicative Language Teaching approach seeks to put the theoretical perspective into practice by developing communicative competence that is the purpose of language and communication. Likewise, functions of the language and other communicative forms are important in the learning process along with the negotiation of

meaning among students. At the same time, cohesion and coherence are required considering the four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing, included in all the activities in the English class. Therefore, the first two skills take place when the speaker and the listener negotiate the content meaning. It also occurs when the reader and the writer work with meaningful texts. Consequently, it will grant successful interaction among learners to develop fluency and accuracy in the target language.

According to Mukalel (2007), through Communicative Language Teaching, communicative tasks help develop social interaction situations inside or outside the classroom, provided that functions of the language are enhanced. The perspective of using this approach should be headed on the learners' communicating information tools and not exactly on the language structures. Hence, communicative language teaching will convey more significance in a cleverer way, switching from formal perspectives to a more resourceful learner-centered orientation.

Another important approach is the Cooperative Language Learning, in which students with equal or different capabilities develop grouping interaction among them. On this subject, Herrell and Jordan (2012) claim that the purpose of CLL is to encourage students fulfill their activities, considering their English proficiency through a shared strategy. Similarly, Cooperative Language Learning, according to Richards and Rodgers (2001), maximizes the work with activities in which students are organized in pairs or in groups, where they transfer information to increase their knowledge of the language. Moreover, this learner-centered approach is used to grant natural language acquisition and to provide attention to structures and functions through more lively activities. Besides, CLL is a motivational generator that promotes a harmonious classroom environment.

On the other hand, another significant approach is the one called, Content-Based Instruction. For Burns and Richards (2012), the CBI is more related to instruction with meaningful content than an emphasis on grammar aspects or tasks; that is why, Crandall (1999) claims that this method emphasizes on academic contents such as history, sociology or various contents that integrate science and social studies adapted to a second language. By the same token, for Hinkel (2011), this approach appears as instructional; that is to say, social studies or mathematics contents are learned along with a foreign language. Finally, regards Content-Based Instruction, in order to enhance students' motivation, teachers should consider some integrative activities such as the cooperative and the experimental ones within a meaningful context (Burns and Richards, 2012).

As for the Task-Based Learning, according to Lee (2004), this is an approach suitable to be employed with all levels. The use of specific learning activities will give students the opportunity to be immersed in meaningful tasks. These activities are designed for students to learn more about features of the language with a clearly motivating purpose to succeed proficiency. In relation to the English curriculum, this method let learners be acquainted with critical thinking, knowledge of processes and language structures. Teachers should be aware that before using it, it is important to make a list of activities which begin with the basic ones and finish with activities that include projects; and above all, the use of adapted materials and resources based on the students' needs.

Conversely, Robinson (2011) argues that Task-Based Language Learning should be promoted in class considering the following aspects: visual and written tasks, roles for performing activities, organization of groups and procedures to carry out tasks as well as

supervision on them, writing and speaking production and an evaluation on how learners perform the above tasks.

Regarding the Grammar-Translation Method, it has been the classic one preferred when teaching English. Richards and Rodgers (2014) mention that one of its characteristics is to focus on grammar rules and the translation of texts in the students' mother tongue, in which activities are designed to remember the structures of the language rather than acquiring it. Another characteristic is that this method emphasizes the translation while reading or writing, leaving out or paying less attention to listening and speaking. In this method, in order to learn the new vocabulary and make sentences, grammar rules are taught to transfer sentences out of the target language.

In addition, this method is related to vocabulary memorization, in which accuracy is demanded. Thus, the mother tongue is the center of instruction in the learning process. As a result, little attention is placed on communication and more emphasis is given on translation. Similarly, Byram and Hu (2013) state that a typical feature of this method is to summarize texts in the learners' first language in an effort to understand the contents by translating them; in other words, the mother tongue is used as the vehicle of instruction. At this point, little or no emphasis is given to communication.

To conclude the teaching approaches and methods, the Total Physical Response method proposed by James Asher (1977), is applied to connect speech with body language in order to develop the language by physical and psychological means, so that teaching a language could involve movement associated with the students' mental concepts and their memory. According to this method, "the more often or the more intensively a memory connection (conditioning) is traced, the stronger the memory association will be and the more likely it will be recalled" (Li,

2015). In the same way, successful learning of an adult could be considered similar to a child's natural acquisition of the language (Asher, 1977) in which comprehension skills are primarily developed. In other words, comprehension abilities should be taken into consideration before developing the productive skills (speaking and writing). Additionally, teaching perspectives should be focused on meaning rather than on the structures of the language.

Lastly, on this subject, Marshal (2009) observes that this method tries to simulate a natural environment such as the one, in which children firstly acquire the language to process and finally to use it. Besides, teachers are expected to use the target language all the time, starting with gestures and basic commands, then eliciting from their students the corresponding movements and ending up the activities applying role-plays or skits. In fact, this process helps learners become better listeners and react more spontaneously, as long as they are immersed in the target language.

The Roles of a Teacher

Once teaching approaches and methods have been considered, it is pertinent to mention about the teacher's roles as significant performance to generate motivation. To illustrate, roles such as controller, organizer, assessor, prompter, participant, resource, tutor and observer, among others, will be developed in the following paragraphs:

For Harmer (2001), the way in which teachers get near to students is a phenomenon with many issues. He states that teachers who constantly change activities in the classroom get better and more satisfactory outcomes. In addition, he asserts that English teachers who play the role of controllers are the focus of attention, showing authority for the knowledge of the subject and the control of the class. Consequently, learners do not have the required opportunities to work independently or to develop communicative skills. While teachers, in the role of organizers, are

in charge of giving clear instructions on the activities and tasks students will carry out and the way the groups will be arranged. Failure on these considerations will bring about disruption in the class.

Moreover, Harmer (2001) highlights that teachers in the role of assessors are evaluators in charge of measuring students' competences through formal and informal tasks or activities frequently. When assessing, the teacher needs to provide feedback for performance improvement and for correcting tasks. Equally important is that teachers bear in mind the application of fair assessment and inform students the rubrics with which they will be graded on. In the meantime, teachers in the role of prompters are expected to encourage learners when these fail to find words in conversation activities or they do not know how to carry on, so it is the right time to stop for a little while and have learners work on their own, "pushing" on the groups to be more creative. For instance, teachers might provide students a few words or phrases occasionally in the target language instead of using the mother tongue to help them continue the activities.

As far as the participant role is concerned, Harmer (2001) explains that it is prominent teachers get involved in the activities for a mutual enjoyment (teacher-student interaction) in the process of learning; of course, avoiding over control of the tasks. In contrast, Dörnyei (2001) believes that "teachers should aim to become 'good enough motivators' rather than striving unreasonably to achieve 'Supermotivator' status. (...) What we need is quality rather than quantity. (...) creating an overall positive motivational climate in the classroom." In addition, this author says that some teachers, who are well motivated, should apply the most basic techniques.

Likewise, teachers performing the role of resource (Harmer, 2001) provide enough information during the tasks, but teachers should keep in mind, they do not know everything

about the language; instead, students could look for further resources using a good dictionary for additional information. In the case of the teacher role as a tutor, s/he is expected to provide advice when working with small groups in a more private way, especially in conversation matters or written essays, offering some guidance when needed. As a result, learners will feel more encouraged by their teachers within a comfortable environment. Furthermore, he points out that the teacher in the role of observer is in charge of providing feedback, particularly in communication-based activities. The teacher role is not only to observe the student performance, but also to encourage them when carrying out tasks. In consequence, observations will provide the required feedback as well as the necessary change of materials in future lessons.

According to Babad and Lazarus (2009), teachers perform a double function at school: they are part of an institution staff and they are teachers in the classroom. As members of the staff, teachers coordinate and plan their activities under supervision, while in the classroom they present and develop the instructions alone under their own responsibility. The effectiveness of their teaching strategies is revealed in the progress of the students' learning in class, though their job is carried out in private. Moreover, it is highly important that the institution itself promotes cooperation among its members as teams, in which all of them share ideas and experiences about the teaching procedures, the discipline matters or other factors to accomplish the objectives in a more comfortable and suitable atmosphere.

In the case of the teacher roles as educator and instructor, they are under scheduled activities and they get students work on diverse types of tasks to assess their performance. The main points in language learning, consequently, are related to cognition, feelings and satisfaction. Finally, from a psychological perspective, the teacher role could change depending on the age of the group with whom they are working.

On the same subject, Richards and Lockhart (2007) remark that the roles of a teacher in particular educational environments contain the following characteristics: a ‘needs’ analyst teacher is the one who examines learners’ requirements under institutional established methods. Conversely, the ‘curricular’ developer teacher is the one who designs his or her own English syllabus adjusted to the students’ necessities. As for the ‘material’ developer, s/he is the professional who designs teaching tools to perform a particular task. As a ‘counselor’, the teacher is resourceful and prompt to provide academic support when students cannot understand the lesson.

Complementary to this, the teacher is a ‘mentor’ when they share their experiences with other colleagues. The teacher is a ‘team’ member, when they are expected to co-participate in teaching activities. Undoubtedly, the teacher as a ‘researcher’ is involved in further studies to get higher expertise on the language. As last in the series, the teacher as a ‘professional’ is always up to date on seminars, English workshops and teacher trainings.

In contrast, for Babad and Lazarus (2009), when a teacher functions as a ‘manager’, s/he shows leadership to obtain academic achievements and to get students pleased with the efforts they make. Particularly important is that teachers as managers are highly concerned for class production and are interested in the students’ emotional peculiarities as well. In the same way, they state that teachers as ‘authority’ usually want to attain perfection and are highly demanding, different from others, that rather avoid using force or threats to make learners do their tasks. Subsequently, the teacher as a ‘leader’ shows real determination to achieve satisfactory classroom environment and positive academic results.

Instead, Patel and Jain (2008) claim that English teachers are to fulfill some teaching requirements; for example, they should enjoy teaching the target language, possess good

knowledge on literature, on the English language and know how to apply different types of methods. Indeed, they propose a set of characteristics to become a good English teacher such as possess particular qualities, good emotional responses, important social roles, positive feelings, expertise and sound knowledge of English. Actually, for them, teachers should become ‘facilitators’, ‘instructors’, ‘material’ and ‘content’ designers as well as classroom ‘managers’. However, according to Babad and Lazarus (2009), teachers performing the role of a ‘model’ are unique with defining features and reasonable attributes. Learners also perceive them as good and bad teachers. As an illustration, good teachers are seen as determined, open-minded and skilled; on the contrary, bad teachers are perceived as close-minded, severe and a little reliable.

To complete everything said so far, some previous studies about English language students and their motivation to learn the language will be presented. They will provide significant contribution in terms of objectives, methods, results and conclusions.

The first study corresponds to Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) who examined petroleum-engineering students at Hadhramout University of Sciences and Technology in Yemen in order to establish the types of motivation they possessed: personal, integrative, and instrumental and the type of attitude students had towards learning English. The research sample consisted of 81 male students in the academic year 2006-2007. In this research, the above authors employed a questionnaire and some interviews to gather information. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data.

The results were that the students had good disposition for learning English, but negative feelings toward the culture of English-speaking countries. Moreover, they showed that the majority of the learners had a negative opinion about using English, either in public offices or in companies.

Clearly, it revealed that instrumental motivation toward learning English was the most important

issue. Personal reasons were considered second in importance and integrative motivation was the least significant for these students. It can be observed that the current study was limited in terms of time, economy, and pedagogical matters. Furthermore, there were not female university students in this research.

The second study was carried out by Habibah (2011), who investigated the students' perceptions of classroom environment concerning to motivation, in Malaysia. The main objectives were to examine the level of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learning English and to explore the relationship among the learners' perceptions of the classroom atmosphere. As sample of this study, 144 students were surveyed in a high school classroom. The specific research instrument used was the questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistic: the means, standard deviations and the Pearson correlation analysis.

As a result, findings revealed the learners liked working together, but hardly ever paid attention or participated in the classroom activities. Regarding intrinsic motivation, the most satisfying issue for them was to understand the contents of lessons. As far as the extrinsic motivation is concerned, students desired better grades as their immediate objective. In summary, the level of extrinsic motivation was higher than the level of intrinsic motivation in the English classroom due to a good student-teacher relationship.

The third study, undertaken by Tahaine and Daana (2013), on the Jordanian female undergraduates wanted to know the students' level of instrumental and integrative motivation in learning the English language, as well as their attitudes about native-English speakers. The sample consisted of 785 female undergraduates during the academic year 2011-2012 in the English language and literature department at Amman-Jordan, Al-Balqa Applied University-Princess. In this research, a questionnaire in the English language was employed. Descriptive

and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data as well as the means and standard deviations were applied to calculate them.

In consequence, 60.2 % of the students were integratively motivated and 83.97 % of them were instrumentally motivated in learning English. Besides, most of the learners regarded English-speaking people positively and they were longing for studying English as a foreign language. In conclusion, this investigation revealed that Jordanian undergraduates, who studied English, showed positive opinions about native-English speakers, their culture and their language. A limitation on this research was the non-coeducational system of this University; that is to say, only female students.

The fourth study, performed by Muftah and Rafik-Galea (2013) in Malaysia, was primarily to establish how instrumentally or integratively oriented students were toward learning the language. Afterwards, to recognize the students' attitudes and motivations for learning English once they entered the university. The sample consisted of 182 pre-university students among females and males in Klang Valley. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect data. The only research tool used was a questionnaire. Accordingly, the results showed that the majority of the pre-university students considered an increase in motivation due to the importance of English for academic purposes. Clearly, the research showed that the above-mentioned students were more instrumentally than integratively motivated to learn English as a foreign language. However, further research was needed to obtain a wider scope of the previously mentioned issues.

The last study, carried out by Jurišević and Pižorn (2013), attempted to explore the level of students' motivation to learn a foreign language in a primary school in Slovenia. In principal, to find out what learning tasks motivated the children intrinsically as well as their learning

competences and goals. The research sample consisted of 591 children from 31 elementary schools corresponding to the 2008-2009 educational period. Just a questionnaire was used to collect data. Accordingly, the findings revealed that most of the children possessed a positive concept about language learning competences. The data analysis also revealed that the majority of them were intrinsically motivated due to watching cartoons, movies, book-reading activities and playing games, which made their language learning more meaningful. In summary, the students recognized the effectiveness of learning English to fulfill their needs and personal interests in social contexts.

CHAPTER II: Method

Setting and participants

This research study, whose topic is “English language students and their motivation to learn the language”, was conducted in the city of Cuenca, which is located in the province of Azuay, Ecuador. The research methods used in this investigation were a questionnaire for students to identify their motivational concerns in learning English and a teacher observation sheet to monitor the learners and instructors’ performance. The participants were one hundred. Twenty students per each class, ageing between 12 and 17 years old. Two high schools were selected randomly, one public and another private, to apply the survey. Two female teachers (one of them was an assistant teacher) and four male English teachers were in charge of the classes. In these high schools, grades 8th, 9th and 10th correspond to EGB (Basic General Education), while 1st and 3rd grades correspond to “Bachillerato” (Senior high school). The mentioned learners were surveyed to respond the student questionnaire about their motivation to learn English, during the academic year 2015-2016.

Procedures

To have a better understanding of the topic in this research, scientific information and previous studies related to “English language students and their motivation to learn the language” were gathered from different sources such as books, websites and journals. The mentioned sources were chosen and arranged by their importance in this investigation. Besides, the most relevant information has been included in the Literature Review, as well as five related studies were examined. More importantly, the quantitative method was mainly used to obtain information on the aspects that motivated or demotivated students to learn English, whilst the

qualitative method was employed in a few cases to get evidence on the learners' particular reasons for learning.

The instruments used in this survey were a questionnaire, which consisted of eight questions to identify the students' motivation to learn the English language and a teacher observation sheet which contained seven aspects.

Questionnaires were applied to collect data from the sample group. This questionnaire was administered in Spanish because the participants were Basic English students. First, learners were asked to review the questions, read them and in case they had any questions, they were discretionally allowed to ask for further information. Next, the questionnaires were distributed and participants had enough time to fill in them.

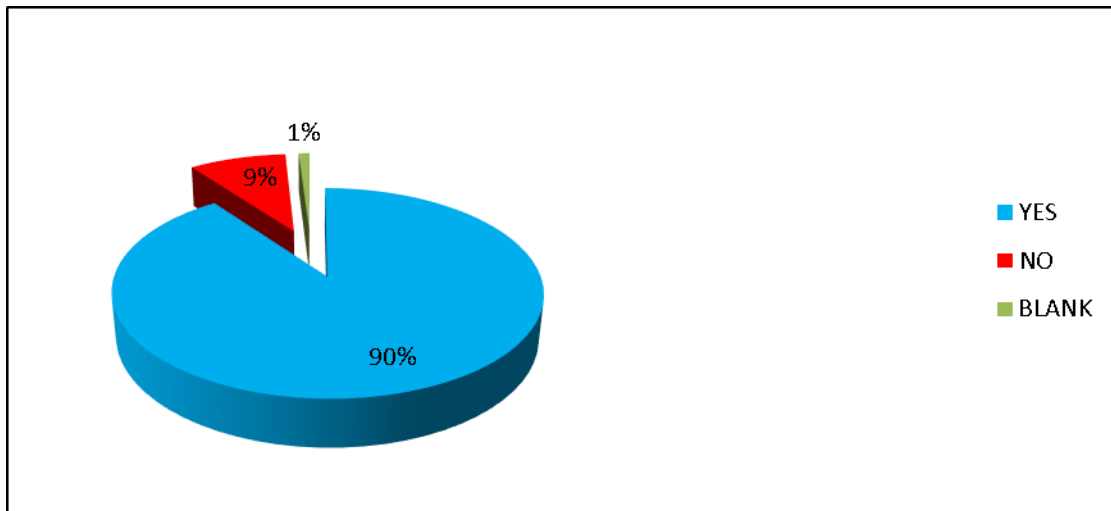
After the questionnaires had been taken, the data was gathered up, arranged systematically and moved to the Excel program in order to give a clear representation of the results on graphs. These graphs showed the amount of learners who chose each one of the options. Conversely, during the lesson observations, information was also gathered to be contrasted with the students' data.

Lastly, the findings in the questionnaires and the observation sheets were compared in base of the highest and lowest scores of each issue to know about positive or negative correlation aspects toward the desire of learning English. Later on, these results were contrasted with related authors and studies to reach scientific considerations on motivation.

CHAPTER III: Results and Discussion

Description, Analysis and Interpretation of Results

This section includes a quantitative and qualitative analysis from the results of the students' questionnaires and observations made to teachers about learners' motivation and factors that affected students to learn English. The information collected through questionnaires is displayed on eight graphs. The findings were also contrasted with what has been observed in the classrooms along with the corresponding theory related to the topic.



Graph 1: What do you think motivates students to learn English?

Do you like to learn English?

Source: Students' questionnaires

Authors: Liliana Robles and Danilo Vallejo

In relation to the first question, graph 1 shows that 90% of the students like to learn English. By contrast, 9% of them do not like it and the remaining 1% of the learners does not answer this question. These results reveal that the majority of the students like learning the English language. Students present several reasons to justify the importance of learning another

language. For instance, some claim they like it because it is interesting, fun and essential to learn, since it is an international language. Besides, it offers them some job opportunities in the educational field. In general, it is crucial for their future as professionals. According to Gardner (2010), this type of motivation is instrumental, in which learning a language is made for useful reasons.

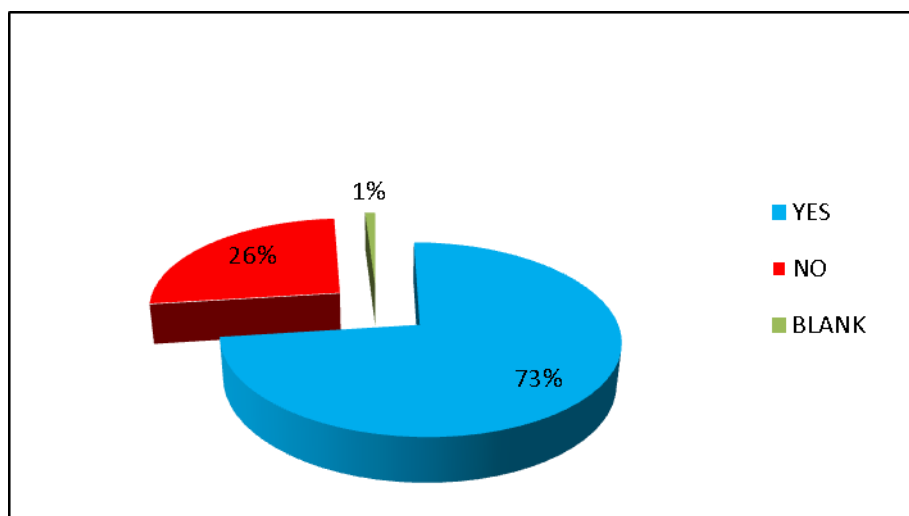
Another group even asserts that their major concern in learning English is because they would like to continue their studies abroad to meet and communicate with people from other parts of the world. This type of motivation is called integrative and Gardner (1983) explains its purpose saying, “learning a language because the learner wishes to identify himself with or become integrated into the society of the target language”. While Bradford (2007) remarks, motivation is an attitude that looks for a goal and contains three elements: the desire to fulfill an objective, the determination to achieve it and a good disposition to carry out this action.

From the information collected through questionnaires and observations, it can be determined that most of these students like to learn English because they enjoy doing it and they feel satisfaction when listening to music in English, for example. Consequently, their highest level of motivation is mainly intrinsic. These results have a strong support with what Cook and Singleton (2014) claim that intrinsic motivation is a self-motivation state needed to accomplish the learning of a language successfully. When intrinsic motivation appears, learners feel pleasure in doing the activities by themselves, whenever teachers provide a good atmosphere to induce motivation

On the other hand, the minority of the learners claims they do not like to learn this language because it is not necessary for them; they do not find it interesting or they do not understand it. They attend to classes only to obtain grades. According to the results, these

students are extrinsically motivated. Considering this, Wood (2010) asserts that extrinsic motivation is related to things given in return; in other words, learning involves a behavior to obtain a reward (e.g. gifts or grades). Similarly, the research study carried out by Habibah (2011), who investigated the students' perceptions of classroom environment concerning to motivation, demonstrated that learners extrinsically motivated desire better grades as their immediate objective.

The findings from the observation sheets with regard to students' motivation to learn English, agree in great part with the findings from the students' questionnaires, for they were motivated to learn the language because two of the five teachers generated in them a liking for learning the target language since their teaching was clear and interactive. Under these circumstances, Dörnyei (2001) establishes three important strategies. The first strategy suggests teachers show eagerness when teaching, while the second strategy relates with establishing regulations to get a favorable classroom environment and the third strategy is about fostering friendship among students and being supportive with them.



Graph 2: Are you motivated to learn English in class?

Source: Students' questionnaires

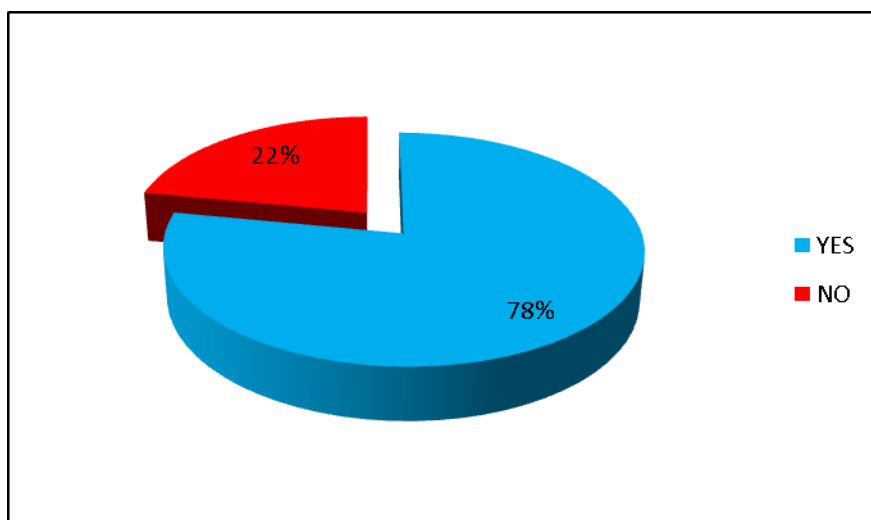
Authors: Liliana Robles and Danilo Vallejo

In graph 2, it can be observed that 73% of the learners are motivated to learn English, while 26% of them are not motivated, yet 1% of the students do not answer this question. Findings show that the majority of the learners are motivated to learn English in the classroom. The major reasons were that they learned something different every day, such as new words, new expressions and sounds. These learners made emphasis that the target language was necessary for their future as professionals. On this subject, a research by Joseba (2005) found students' motivation as instrumentally oriented since they study English as a useful international language of science and technology. Another important point is that the students express their teacher is a source of motivation because s/he has the ability to teach this language, the activities are fun, innovative and the lessons are interesting. Furthermore, these teachers encourage them all the time to comply with the proposed objectives.

In contrast, the minority of the students were not motivated to learn English because they argue that they do not like it and they get bored in the class. More importantly, others assert that their teacher does not respect them, they are very strict and they usually translate the readings from English into Spanish. In relation to this aspect, Dörnyei (2001) asserts that teachers are required to be prominent motivators and provide a confident atmosphere in the classroom. On the other hand, the observation sheets showed that only two teachers received positive comments by the students since they liked their teaching style, the topic of the lesson, the type of activity and the didactic materials used in the classroom.

Subsequently, the observation sheets showed that the majority of the teachers did not demonstrate a good command of methodological strategies and teaching techniques. For instance, one of the teachers was devoted to the construction of sentences the whole session, while another remained in the same activity all the time; and still another one taught the new vocabulary without a context and did not vary this activity during the lesson. Concerning this aspect, Herrell and Jordan (2012) remark that using strategies, teaching vocabulary with its definitions in the target language and using mimes, pictures and cards will provide learners of deeper understanding in the activities, whereas for Nation and Newton (2009), teachers are required to vary the activities, making them shorter and more dynamic.

In brief, the findings in the observation sheets coincide with the information in the questionnaires that most of the students were self-motivated to learn English in the classroom; and according to a study by Gardner (2006), this desire for learning English is considered one of the most important characteristics of motivation.



Graph 3: Do you like your teacher's way of teaching English?

Source: Students' questionnaires

Authors: Liliana Robles and Danilo Vallejo

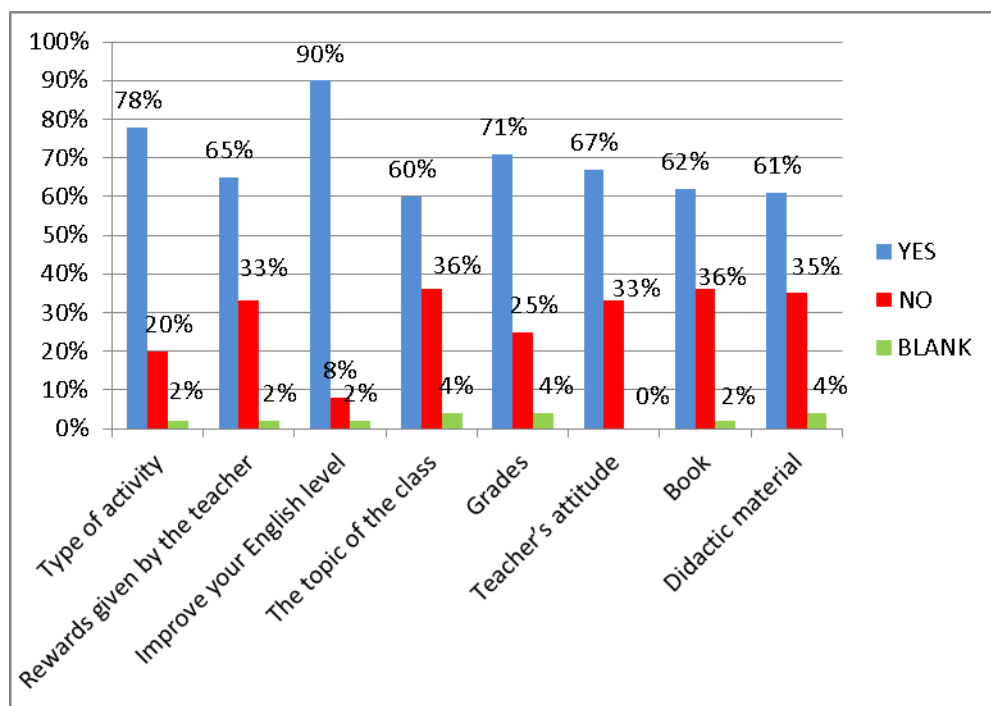
The findings in graph 3 reveal that 78% of the students like their teacher's way of teaching, while 22% of them do not like it. This research discovers that more than half of the learners like their teacher's way of teaching. Students point out that their teacher has willingness to teach; s/he is patient, dynamic and treats them well. In contrast, the minority of learners argue they do not like their teachers' way of teaching because they are strict and they do not like the materials used either, whereas others complain their teacher explains the lessons in English and they do not understand most of the vocabulary employed.

Even more, students claim they dislike it because their teacher does not respect them and that his/her teaching is based solely on the activities of the textbook, while other students remark their teacher does not have them work in pairs or in groups. A study done by Nugent (2009) on this point, finds that teachers are able to influence their learners' motivation positively through a

good teacher-student relationship, appropriate materials and fulfillment of the students' needs. The above-mentioned findings on motivation to learn English coincides with Brophy's (1999) proposal on the idea of stimulating the zone of the learners' proximal development, based on Vygotsky's theory, by taking care of intrinsic motivation in school backgrounds.

Information from the questionnaires revealed that a slight majority of the students said they liked their teachers' way of teaching. Whereas observation sheets showed that, these students were interested in learning and willing to participate in the activities. Furthermore, two of the observed teachers in the study allowed their learners to put all their confidence to interact in the activities during the session.

As a final point, a significant aspect was that none of the teachers had treated their students badly. What has been noticed is that some of the teachers were firm with several of the learners due to disciplinary concerns; for this reason, it is imperative to design encouraging lesson plans that include diverse strategies, techniques and procedures to get students' attention in class. On this matter, Dörnyei (2001) remarks that students are aware of rules; however, if teachers do not apply the norms properly, learners might consider them as unimportant; consequently, these regulations will be disobeyed.



Graph 4: Do the following aspects motivate you to learn English in class?

Source: Students' questionnaires

Authors: Liliana Robles and Danilo Vallejo

Graph 4 shows learners' responses regarding the question of which aspects motivate them to learn English. Based on the results, 90% of the students are motivated to learn English because they want to improve their English level. Then 78% with the "type of activity" and 71% with the "grades" are their main reasons for learning the language. The three above-mentioned items seem to have the greatest positive influence on the students' second language motivation.

On the contrary, the items that obtained the lowest positive scores and most of the negative answers were the "teacher's attitude" with 67% positive answers, but 33% negative answers, "rewards given by the teacher" with 65% positive answers, but 33% negative answers and "the book" with 62% positive answers, but 36% negative answers. Curiously, these items

were not supported through reasons since there were not open questions. Therefore, the answers should be taken as implied. Nonetheless, the most motivating aspect learners had was to improve their level of English; that is why, Thompson and Vaughn (2007) point out that students require practice and help from their peers and teachers to improve their fluency in the language.

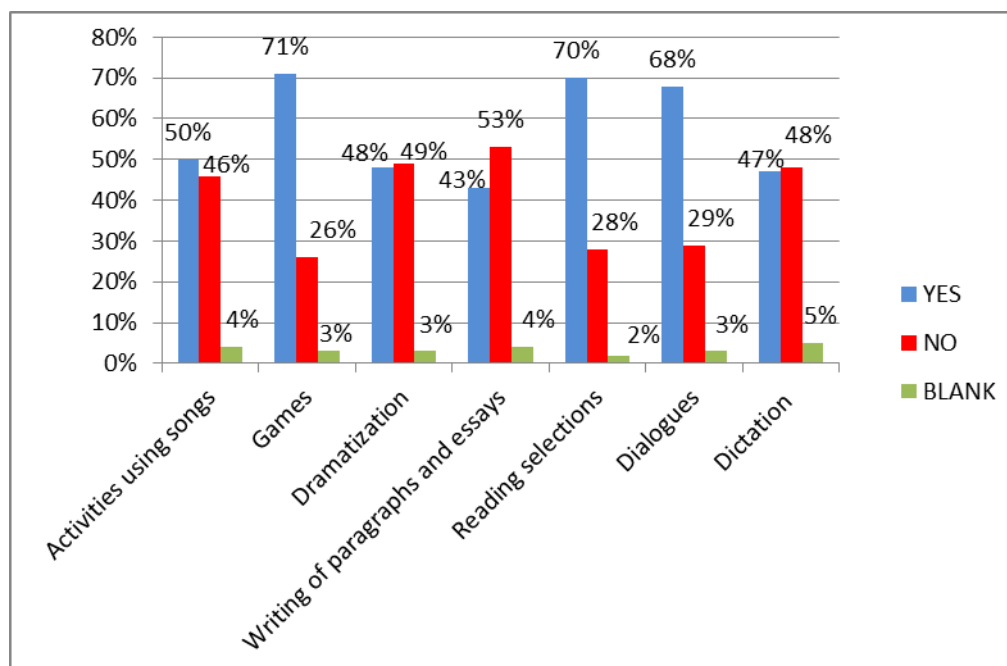
In regard to the “type of activity”, it showed a high score since this aspect is associated with designing the lesson plans. In this way, the lesson plan is a guide whose activities need to be attractive to generate students’ motivation in achieving learning objectives and goals. On this subject, researchers Richards and Renandya (2002) claim that when teachers design lesson plans, they require to take into account a variety of activities to keep the class interested in them. In consequence, findings from the observation sheet on this aspect indicated that the type of activity developed in the class, to a certain degree, did stimulate students to learn English.

As an illustration, two of the teachers carried out stimulating activities in their classrooms; they used posters and photos that encouraged their students to participate actively in such events. In particular, Richards and Lockhart (2007) highlight the importance of motivating activities such as presentation, practice, memorization, comprehension, application, strategies, affective, feedback and assessment applied in the class. Besides, these researchers claim that strategy activities are tasks on specific items to draw meanings from new vocabulary.

Another item with certain high influence was the “grades”. It is important to note that grades are closely related with extrinsic motivation, since high grades motivate learners, but low grades demotivate them to continue learning. According to Wood (2010), extrinsic motivation is related to things given in return (grades), while Blackburn (2013) claims that grades externally motivate students to learn. However, information from the observation sheets did not provide any evidence on this item.

Based on the current evidence, lower positive scores and lower negative answers come from the “teacher’s attitude “, the “rewards given by the teacher” and the “book”. The observation sheet data about the “ teacher’s attitude” are in accordance with the information presented by the students in the questionnaires who claim that certain teachers’ attitude indeed motivated them to learn the English language, for their vocation, patience and willingness. Accordingly, Walker (2013) states that teachers who have a positive attitude create an encouraging classroom environment. To support it, the observation sheet results indicated that two of the teachers were teaching the topic cheerfully and the students were participating in the activities enthusiastically.

Another important aspect is the “rewards given by the teacher”. A study by Brophy (1999) points out that some teachers reward their students all the time using grades, recognition and social rewards. Similarly, authors like Keefy and Jenkis (2013) remark that rewards such as stickers, grades, among others, to carry out tasks, influence strongly in the learners’ attitude. Consequently, some students often expect to be rewarded after performing the activities. In contrast, the observation sheet revealed that the learners’ motivation in this study did not depend on gifts since only one teacher awarded her students’ participation with candies. With regard to the item, “the book”, findings in the questionnaires showed that the book represented a source of stimulus for most of the surveyed students, as it was practical, with many illustrations, which helped students understand the topic. Clearly, most of the teachers made use of this material in their lessons as a motivating tool.



Graph 5: Do the following activities motivate you to learn English?

Source: Students' questionnaires

Authors: Liliana Robles and Danilo Vallejo

Data in graph 5 suggest that 71% of the students are motivated to learn English through the employment of games during the sessions. Another item that reached a considerable score was “reading selection” with 70% of positive responses and “dialogues” with 68% of positive answers. On the other hand, the activities with negative responses were “writing on paragraphs and essays” with a total of 53%, “drama” with 49% and “dictation” with a total of 48%. Therefore, “games” was the most popular activity during the lessons, only followed by “reading selections” and “dialogues”.

With regard to this point, Fernandez (2009) mentions that games are an essential part of any curriculum and it is one of the most useful tools during the activities. According to Harmer (2001), it is essential that teachers get involved in the activities for a mutual enjoyment between teachers and students in the process of learning. Likewise, the percentages in the graph above

show that the majority of the learners recognize that games give them the required motivation to learn the English language. Nevertheless, in this study, not all of the teachers employed games in their sessions. Only two of them applied dynamics and one of them picked out some students randomly to participate in the construction of phrases on the board.

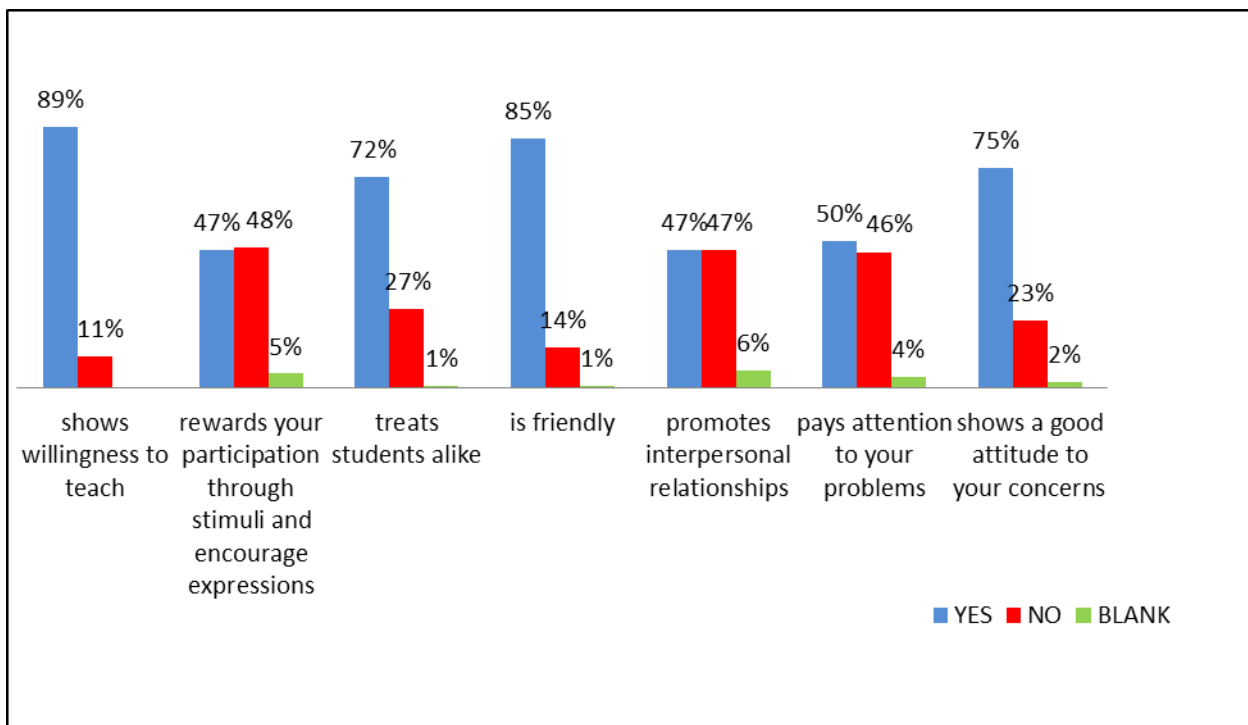
Curiously, the second in importance, according to data, was “reading selections”. In a like manner, based on the observation sheets, most of the teachers carried out reading activities, but they did not provide any prior vocabulary or applied reading techniques. On this subject, Herrell and Jordan (2012) explain that an effective vocabulary instruction will involve multiple exposures in the activities; hence, students who practice the new words would be able to apply them in daily-life circumstances. Furthermore, insufficient vocabulary could make learners present a negative attitude toward this activity.

Moreover, teachers applied the classic Grammar-Translation Method all the time, for they translated the texts as they read them. In relation to this method, Richards and Rodgers (2014) mention that one of its characteristics is to focus on grammar rules and the translation of texts in the students’ mother tongue. Similarly, Byram and Hu (2013) consider that a typical aspect of this method is to summarize texts in the learners’ first language in an effort to ease their reading.

On the other hand, according to the obtained data, the third most important motivational activity was the “dialogues”. It is probable that certain students chose this activity, already mentioned as integrative oriented, because they want to learn English to communicate with other people. The approach that supports this idea is called, “Communicative Language Teaching”. According to Freeman (2003), CLT seeks to put the theoretical perspective into practice by developing communicative competence, which is the purpose of language and communication. As a result, effective interaction among learners is provided to develop fluency and accuracy in

the target language. In addition, Mukalel (2007) remarks that communicative tasks help develop social interaction. However, observations revealed there was no evidence that these teachers worked in the development of communicative competences to motivate their students to speak English.

In relation to the activities with half of negative answers, in particular, “writing of paragraphs and essays”, “drama” and “dictation”, it is important to note that they are vital to develop writing and speaking skills. Nunan (1992) observes that English language lessons are to prepare students for their lives outside the classroom, even with opportunities to experience collaborative writing. While concerning to “drama”, Braüer (2002) states that drama is a natural and gestural form of communication. Nonetheless, according to the information from the observation sheet, none of the teachers applied activities to motivate their students to the development of speaking and writing skills; hence, they did not constitute a source of motivation for them.



Graph 6: What is your teacher’s attitude in class?

Source: Students’ questionnaires

Authors: Liliana Robles and Danilo Vallejo

Findings in graph 6 illustrate that there are four items with high scores and three items with similar low scores, with positive and negative answers. The three main highest scores obtained, concerning the teacher’s attitude were “shows willingness to teach” with 89%, followed by “is friendly” with 85% and “shows a good attitude to teach” with 75%. In the meantime, the items with three negative lower scores were “rewards your participation through stimuli and encouragement expressions” with 48%, “promotes interpersonal relationship” with 47% and “pays attention to your problems” with 46%.

The results show that most of the learners affirm their teacher has willingness to teach and s/he is friendly. All these items represent what a teacher needs to keep in mind when teaching. To

illustrate, Patel and Jain (2008) propose a set of characteristics to become a good English teacher such as positive feelings, expertise and sound knowledge of English. Paradoxically, the observation sheets indicated that the majority of the teachers were unwilling to teach. Probably, on the observation day, the teachers changed their attitude and performed their job different from any other day because of the researchers' presence. However, their students provided them with a high positive score on this issue. It clearly shows that the teacher's attitude influences strongly on the learners' motivation and their behavior in the class.

Moreover, teachers who possess a positive attitude will grant a significant effect on the students' learning. Authors Savage and Savage (2010) point out that some teachers tend to use inappropriate behavior as opportunities to help students learn from their mistakes, whereas other teachers see inappropriate behavior as challenges. Additionally, Cooper (2014) argues that teachers who are not enthusiastic about what they teach can hardly foster enthusiasm in their learners. Yet a survey conducted in 1998 by Dörnyei and Csizér revealed that the most important motivation "tool" was the teacher's own behavior.

Under these circumstances, the results from the observation sheet revealed that only two of the teachers had willingness to teach; they showed expertise in teaching and applied dynamics to interact with the activities. Besides, they were friendly with their students providing an advantageous atmosphere for learning, whereas the rest of the teachers did not have a good disposition to teach, so their students felt demotivated because these teachers failed motivating them to learn by praising their effort.

With regard to the issue, "rewards students' participation through stimuli and encouragement expressions", Vizard (2009) states that learners love rewards and these rewards can be words of appreciation. Likewise, Taylor (2004) claims that praise and rewards are the

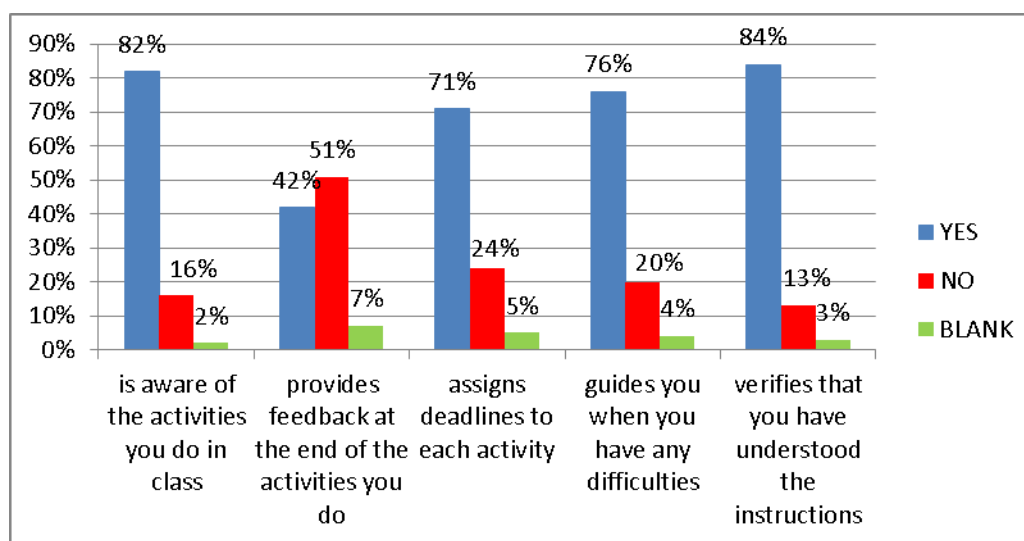
principal factors that teachers need to take into account when trying to increase the students' motivation. Learners are further motivated to learn when they consider they will be rewarded for their effort or stimulated with praises and the necessary feedback. Nonetheless, findings from the observation sheet indicated that the classes had been developed without having any evidence of this aspect, since the majority of the teachers did not assign any grades to the activities done and did not stimulate them with any words of consideration for their participation.

In relation to the item, "promotes interpersonal relationship" and according to the analyzed information, teachers are needed to be sensitive when working with students, putting aside any authoritarianism or rigid attitude. Due to this fact, a study by Gopee (2010) suggests developing a good relationship to enable communication skills and explains that there are two levels of communication. The first level is a "foundation level communication" which is verbal and non-verbal and it is acquired in daily activities. The second level is called "specialist level communication" which requires a special training, whereas for Vitto (2003), relationship is built up through a positive empathy with students as the best way to increase motivation. The findings from the observation sheet coincide with the answers of the students' questionnaire in that only two teachers considered the interpersonal relationship an important factor to motivate students in the learning process.

As far as the issue "pays attention to your problems" is concerned, Richards and Lockhart (2007) remark that the roles of a teacher contain the following characteristics: a 'needs' analyst teacher is the one who examines learners' needs under institutional established methods. Conversely, the 'curricular' developer teacher is the one who designs a syllabus adjusted to the students' requirements. As for the 'material' developer, s/he is the teacher who designs teaching tools to perform particular tasks. Based on the students' answers but contrasted with the

observation sheet results, paradoxically, just two of the teachers paid careful attention to their students' problems and had a good disposition to clear their doubts about the activities, since they were very kind in answering their questions.

Conversely, the other three teachers were not very enthusiastic in solving their students' difficulties; instead, they looked grave and rigidly formal in front of the class, so these teachers did not show a good attitude to their learners' concerns. We assume that our presence in their classes might have influenced on these teachers' attitude.



Graph 7: What is the role of your teacher in class?

Source: Students' questionnaires

Authors: Liliana Robles and Danilo Vallejo

Data on graph 7 reveal the learners' responses in relation to the question, "What is the role of your teacher in the class?" According to data, 84% of the students said their teacher verified learners have understood the instructions, 82% responded that their teacher was aware of the

activities they performed in class, 76% indicated that their teacher guided them when in difficulties and 71% confirmed their teacher assigned deadlines to each activity.

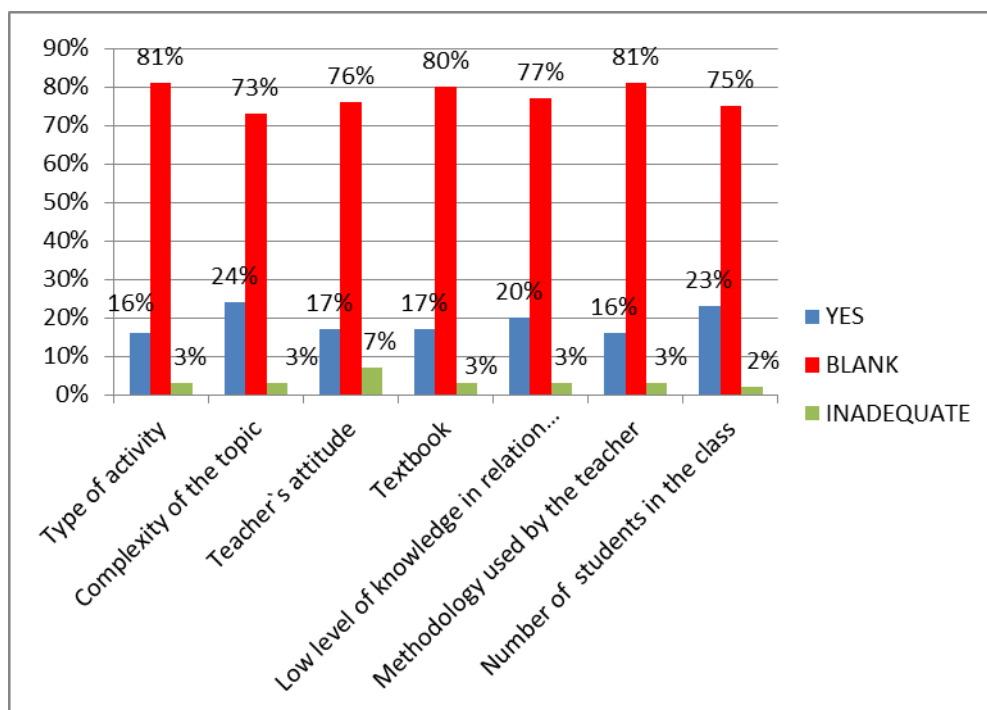
All the above-mentioned items received positive answers, except one that received a low score with positive answers and a high score with negative answers, which is “provides feedback at the end of the activities you do”. Based on this fact, Harmer (2001) mentions that teachers need to provide feedback for performance improvement and for correcting tasks. Similarly, Osborne (2005) point out that feedback should be the most important element in the lesson. Feedback is the remarks about students’ performance in a task as a useful tool to enhance students’ accomplishment in learning. However, according to the observation sheet, none of the teachers made a necessary feedback to provide a review at the end of the learning process; students were just asked if they understood the topic or if they had already finished the activities.

Regarding the item, if the teacher verifies that students have understood the instructions, it had the highest score in positive answers. For Harmer (2001) teachers are in charge of giving clear instructions on the activities and explain openly which activities students will carry out. Ironically, the data analysis from the observation sheet bring out that these students did not have any difficulties in understanding because the majority of the observed teachers provided the instructions in Spanish, while only a teacher explained the instructions in English.

Another item that received a high score in positive answers was “the teacher guides you when you have any difficulties”. Richards and Lockhart (2007) assert that one of the teacher roles is to be resourceful and prompt to provide academic support when students cannot understand the lesson. Complementary to this, Babad and Lazarus (2009) claim that teachers are leaders who show real determination to achieve satisfactory classroom environment to obtain positive academic results.

Nonetheless, it is crucial to have learners work on their own, from time to time, to make them become more independent and develop their creativity. Thus, teachers are expected to consider these aspects wisely. In this respect, the observation sheet showed that teachers left their learners to perform their tasks on their own and provided slight guidance in developing them without assigning deadlines to the activities.

Regarding the issue, “the teacher is aware of the activities you do in class”. According to Harmer (2001), teachers in the role of prompters are expected to encourage students when they fail in activities they do not know how to perform. Nevertheless, based on the observation sheet, none of the teachers was aware of their students’ assigned tasks. They merely gave instructions on the activities, but never carried out any control of them; even more, teachers remained in front of the students all the time without monitoring the activities.



Graph 8: What do you think hinders students to learn English?

Which of the following aspects do you think hinders the learning of English?

Source: Students' questionnaires

Authors: Liliana Robles and Danilo Vallejo

The graph above represents the analyzed data of the students' answers. Considering the question of which aspects hinder their English learning, it is important to note that most of the students did not respond to these questions. It is very likely, that these issues were not clear enough for the students to answer properly in this part of the questionnaire. Nevertheless, the graph reveals the different percentages of the given answers. The major reasons that hinder the students to learn English, with positive answers were "complexity of the topic" with 24%, followed by "number of students in the class" with 23% and "low level of knowledge in comparison to the rest of the students in class" with 20 %. Other factors that also affected the

students in learning the English language were “the teacher’s attitude” and the “textbook” with relatively the same percentages; that is to say, with 17% and the “teacher’s methodology” with 16%. It is worthwhile to mention that some students gave certain reasons, which affected their learning.

It can also be noted that in the graph above, issues that hinder the learning of English, with high positive answers were “complexity of the topic” with 24% and “low level of knowledge in comparison to the rest of the students in class” with 20%. The students complained that these aspects not only hindered their learning but they also confused them, for they did not understand the topics at all. The learners also stated that not all of them were able to learn the topics at the same pace. On the other hand, other students argue that the topics were not interesting enough and they contained a lot of new vocabulary to learn. Interestingly, other students said they did not have a homogeneous knowledge of English; consequently, they could not progress in the language. Accordingly, Harmer (2007) states that teachers need to apply mixed-ability group techniques, in which students are able to help each other for a better understanding of the topics of the lesson.

In relation to the “number of students in the class” with a 23% of positive answers, constituted another main factor that hindered students to learn English as well as the noise, the environment of the class and the students’ behavior, which obstructed their concentration in the activities. They emphasized that there were many learners in the same classroom and that this situation excluded them from participating in the activities more frequently. Harmer (2007), under these circumstances, points out that a class with many students can cause difficulties either for learners or for teachers. Hence, teachers can make use of some techniques; for instance, group

work, pair work and group leader, which keep students' expectations on the activities, as classroom environment plays an important role in motivation. According to a research by Daniels (2010), teachers are the ones who create environments where students' motivation for learning could be supported or discouraged.

In a study undertaken by Bahanshal (2013), the researcher found that students in large classes did not receive individual attention by their teacher; they seemed to be demotivated and showed no interest on the tasks. Additionally, this study showed that a large number of students in a small space did not allow teachers walk around the class and monitor the activities. These problems had a negative impact in the teaching and the learning processes. On this subject, Dörnyei (2005) remarks that motivation is generated or affected by an improper learning environment. This means that motivation is not only affected by pedagogical issues but also by the atmosphere in which the learning process is being carried out. Likewise, it should be noted that in the current investigation, there were from 35 to 40 students in each classroom; consequently, their active participation was infrequent and most of the time the learners remained seated listening to their teacher.

Other aspects such as "the teachers' attitude" with 17% and "the teacher's methodology" with 16%, are discussed together because they have similar percentages of answers. A small minority of the students said that their teacher's attitude and their methodology hindered their learning and remarked that they were very strict and they did not have a good disposition to teach this language.

On the teacher's methodology, Elizabeth and Brashkara (2004) highlight that methods are very important in the learning process. A good teacher always searches for a good method to

teach; the best selection of the correct methods ensures the students' success and helps to achieve the aim of the lesson. Herrell and Jordan (2012), in turn, state that working with strategies such as small groups and pair work is a useful learning experience, since in groups or in pairs, students can discuss their tasks and exchange their thoughts, making learning cooperative.

By way of contrast, findings from the observation sheet revealed that most of the teachers kept a single activity, becoming the lesson in an uninteresting and monotonous experience. Indeed, the majority of the teachers involved in this study, not only lacked of knowledge of methodology and teaching techniques, but also they did not have enough experience in teaching, since their lessons seemed to be carried out on intuition. A study by Bernaus and Gardner (2008) demonstrated that learners who even have a positive attitude toward the classroom atmosphere are not successful in learning a language if their positive attitude is not linked to their motivation.

In relation to the "textbook" with 17% of positive answers, the students responded that the book was an element that hindered their learning. They claimed that a particular obstacle was the "advanced" vocabulary and that is why they did not understand it. In relation to this item, Elizabeth and Braskara (2004) observe that some textbooks contain flaws that difficult students to study them; even more, the structures of sentences and the vocabulary contain errors. Due to this fact, students feel demotivated to study them. According to the findings from the observation sheet, some learners seemed to be studying a new book containing new elements with a probable different methodology and a higher level of vocabulary for their low level of English.

Another aspect mentioned by the learners was the "type of activity" with 16% of positive answers. Based on the questionnaire results, this issue constituted for the minority of the students an obstacle to learn the English language, since it was difficult, repetitive and there was no

variation in the activities to motivate them to learn. Another group asserted that teachers did not explain the corresponding procedures clearly enough to carry out the tasks. On this particular, Mishan and Chambers (2010) claim that activities need to be challenging to keep learners interested and motivated to learn the target language. Therefore, activities are to be creative, interesting and carefully designed, which consider the students' learning style, their level of knowledge of the language and foster pair and group work. However, in base of the observation findings, the activities in the classroom seemed simple and easy to do; consequently, they were not a real challenge for their learning.

Regarding the “complexity of the topic”, results from the observation sheet showed that the subjects seemed slightly complex and not very suitable with the students' level of knowledge, due to the fact that the majority of the learners had a very low knowledge of the English language, so they considered the topics difficult to understand. By the way, another important issue was the “low level of knowledge in comparison to the rest of the students in class”. Results from the observation sheet showed that most of the learners had a very low level of knowledge of English since their performance in the class was carried out poorly. On the other hand, observations about “the teacher's attitude” revealed that it prevented an increasing motivation for learning, since most of the teachers did not have a good disposition to teach. Due to this fact, in a study by Bradford (2007), concluded that motivation is the core for acquiring a second language successfully.

As a result, just a minority of the teachers stimulated the learning of the English language, since their teaching was clear, exciting and interactive. Instead, the majority of them did not produce any stimulus in their learners; on the other hand, students were not treated badly as they

mentioned in the questionnaire. Finally, pedagogical matters are to be considered by teachers to make their students become more active and cooperative in the classroom, since they do not approach their learners with stimulating activities and a proper methodology to obtain higher levels of motivation.

CONCLUSIONS

This research study demonstrated that most of the surveyed students liked to learn English because they enjoyed learning it. Besides, it was significant for their future as professionals. Consequently, their highest level of motivation was mainly intrinsic and instrumentally oriented.

The qualitative analysis showed that learners liked their teacher's way of teaching in spite of the fact that, according to the observation sheet, only two of the teachers were patient and dynamic and allowed their learners to put all their confidence to succeed in the activities.

This research also revealed that relevant aspects which motivated most of the students to learn English were the improvement of the language, the type of activity and the grades. Although they have not been observed, games, reading selections and dialogues issues motivate students to learn English.

Regarding the teacher's attitude, the observation sheet showed that three of the teachers did not have a good disposition for teaching and they were not friendly with their students. These teachers were not concerned with the learners' needs either. Accordingly, it was considered an obstacle for students to learn English.

Findings from the observation sheet also revealed that all of the five teachers failed to provide feedback at the end of the activities, since it is one of the teacher roles in the classroom.

The investigation revealed that the complexity of the topic, the number of students in the class and their low level of knowledge in the language, in comparison to the rest of the students in the class hindered their motivation to learn English.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In relation to the students' motivation to learn English, teachers should apply more lively activities to satisfy their learners' needs and enhance their instrumental and intrinsic motivation using songs, games and real-life situations, focusing on communicative competences to make learning meaningful.

Teachers are also required to apply suitable methodological strategies and teaching techniques to increase learners' motivation and above all, boost their students' extrinsic motivation by praising and rewarding them when performing tasks. Furthermore, they should focus on implementing dialogues, drama and proficient reading and writing activities to improve the language skills.

A change in attitude should be considered by instructors to become more dynamic and enthusiastic at solving their students' difficulties; particularly, after providing instructions on the activities, they should monitor them. In addition, they should teach the lessons in English most of the time and show a good disposition to create a respectable student-teacher relationship.

Feedback should be taken into account for future performance improvement and for correcting tasks to enhance students' accomplishment in learning.

Finally, methodological strategies such as group work and pair work, among others, are suggested to be applied in large classes, to keep students interested and stimulated in learning English, as well as the employment of supplementary materials to provide variation and reinforcement in the topics and to strengthen their knowledge.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

ENGLISH DEGREE

Dear student,

The aim of this brief questionnaire is to obtain information concerning *your opinion about the aspects that motivate you to learn English.*

The information provided will be strictly used in academic/research purposes. Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible.

Informative data: Please fill in the information below

Name of institution :			
Type of institution:	Public ()		Private ()
Year:	8th	9th	10 th
	1st	2nd	3 rd

City:	
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Instructions: Mark with an X the response that best reflects your personal opinion. Indicate the reason of your response.

1. Do you like to learn English?

YES	NO
Why?	

2. Are you motivated to learn English in class?

YES	NO
Why?	

3. Do you like your teacher's way of teaching English?

YES	NO
Why?	

4. Do the following aspects motivate you to learn English in class?

Aspects	YES	NO
Type of activity		
Rewards given by the teacher		
Improve your English level		
The topic of the class		
Grades		
Teacher's attitude		
Book		
Didactic material		

5. Do the following activities motivate you to learn English?

Activities	YES	NO
Activities using songs		
Games		
Drama		
Writing of paragraphs and essays		

Reading selections		
Teacher's attitude		
Dialogues		
Dictation		

6. What is your teacher's attitude in class?

The teacher:	YES	NO
shows willingness to teach		
rewards your participation through stimuli		
and encouragement expressions		
treats students alike		
is friendly		
promotes interpersonal relationships		
pays attention to your problems		

7. What is the role of your teacher in class?

The teacher:	YES	NO
is aware of the activities you do in class		
provides feedback at the end of the		
activities you do		
assigns deadlines to each activity		

8. Mark with an X the aspects that hinder your English learning. State the reasons of your responses.

Type of activity		Why?
Complexity of the topic		Why?
Teacher's attitude		Why?
Textbook		Why?
Low level of knowledge in relation to the rest of students in the class		Why?
Methodology used by the		Why?

Teacher		
Number of students in the class		Why?

Thank you!

ANNEX 2



UNIVERSIDAD TÉCNICA PARTICULAR DE LOJA

La Universidad Católica de Loja

OPEN AND DISTANCE MODALITY

ENGLISH DEGREE

Observation Sheet

INSTITUTION:	
DATE:	
YEAR:	

1. Students feel motivated to learn English in class.

YES	NO
Why?	

2. Mark which of the following aspects motivates the subset of students observed to learn English in class.

Aspects	YES	NO
Type of activity		
Rewards		
The topic		
Teacher's attitude		
The book		
The material		

Notes:

3. Students' attitude in the class

The students:	YES	NO
voluntarily participate		
are attentive to the teacher's explanations		
interact with their classmates		
show interest in the proposed activities		
engage in other activities		
interrupt their classmates		

4. Teacher's attitude in the class

The teacher:	YES	NO
shows willingness to teach		
rewards students' participation		
treat each student equally		
is friendly		
promotes interpersonal relationships		

pays attention to the students' problems		
shows a good attitude to the students' concerns		

5. Teacher's role in the class

The teacher:	YES	NO
is aware of the activities students do in class		
gives feedback at the end of the activities		
assigns a time limit to each activity		
is friendly with the students		
guides the students when they have any difficulty		
verify that students have understood the instructions		
is fair with all the students		
provides confidence for the students to voice their concerns		

6. The following activities motivate the students to learn English.

	YES	NO
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Type of activity		
Complexity of the topic		
Teacher's attitude		
Textbook		
Low level of knowledge		
Methodology used by the teacher		

Others:
