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Master's Dissertation

MOTIVATION AND COVID-19 IN SECONDARY EDUCATION AND BACHILLERATO: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This research was carried out during the exceptional situation of lockdown due to the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic. During the three months that the lockdown lasted in Spain, students tried to cope with a new system of online education which they were not used to. In this context, we decided to reorientate the original plan for this dissertation to analyse the impact of the aforementioned situation on a particular group of students.

The present study chiefly tries to analyse how motivation influences achievement as regards Communicative Competence. For this, we will first zero in on the most prevailing types of motivation present in Secondary Education and Bachillerato and, later, we will investigate whether the extraordinary situation lived by students during the lockdown changed their views and motivation, comparing the first term on the one hand, and the second and third on the other.

For our research, we asked 172 Spanish students of Secondary Education and 41 of Bachillerato to complete a questionnaire with 16 items in a public school of Zaragoza. The questionnaire contained 16 questions: 13 aimed at measuring quantitative data (closed-ended questions) and 3 measuring qualitative data (open-ended questions). The first part of the questionnaire measured the predominant type of motivation in the screened students while the second part was added to measure the changes in students' perception when comparing regular and online lessons. These results were quite conditioned by the exceptional situation that Spanish students had to cope with for several months: state of emergency and lockdown, which lasted for one month and a half. The idea was to extract any possible conclusions about the students' motivation type before the lockdown and after it.

The results showed that students who were intrinsically motivated in the first and second term continued to be so in the third term. Similarly, those who were not initially motivated did not experience an increase in their motivation even though the assessment criteria had changed to benefit them.

The results also demonstrated how students' shyness prevents them from using English actively, being the oral skills the ones in which they feel weaker at.

The results obtained point to some possible remedial strategies to be implemented in class to improve motivation. Interestingly enough, students seem to know what they lack and what they need.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study arises from the researcher's curiosity after 16 years of teaching in Spanish Secondary Public Schools. In Spain, there is an increasing concern on the importance of foreign languages in public education and curricula. It is a must imposed not just by Local and State governments, but also by Europe and society in general. The disappearance of frontiers, the need to find climb up the job ladder, the need to communicate and be part of a global community, the need of travelling to other countries, having access to information published in other languages, etc., all have emphasized such language requirements.

As a consequence of this increasing interest in foreign languages, curricula and educative terms have changed. For instance, in Aragón (one of the 17 autonomous communities into which Spain is divided, which holds devolved powers on education as the rest), Piblea 1, 2 changed into Brit. Aragón; POLE became PALE (see BOA 2013a, BOA 2018, BOA 2013b and BOA 2016), etc. All these changes are indicators of the transition towards bilingualism. At the same time, terminology has been changing. The Official Language Schools adapted themselves to the *Companion Volume* (Council of Europe, 2018), which revisited the *Common European Framework of Reference* (Council of Europe, 2001). The concept of mediation, which was expanded in the 2018 version, would change the foreign language curriculum in the years to come.

English in Spain is a foreign language used in an official context, the class. Currently, an increasing number of students uses English outside school thanks to the popularity of TV series, streaming platforms, videogames and songs. Yet, according to the Eurobarometer survey carried out by the European Commission in February 2016 on "Europeans and their Languages", the use of English is still marginal in Spain if compared to other European countries such as Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands, etc. (Eurobarometer, 2006). Foreign languages are starting to be valuable, not just a plus but a must. Educational policies as well as the role of motivation in learning, can give us the clues to implement our students' academic results and language competence. In this context, we turn our attention to the perception of languages in class and to the degree to

which our students feel motivated to learn them. Students' acquisition of oral competence will depend on students' motivation towards learning a foreign language. Boosting and improving their motivation could be the clue towards oral skills success.

2. JUSTIFICATION OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Studies on motivation have been frequent in the literature for decades now. This interest proves that motivation is one of the factors deemed as decisive in the acquisition of any personal goal. This fact is what led us to deepen into the study and revision of some previous theories and then to analyze them in a concrete context, the class. The present study takes place in an extraordinary, unpredictable and confusing moment, the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown in Spain which, in our opinion, add a particular interest to the results obtained.

3. OBJECTIVES, APPROACH AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

This study was carried out to determine the level and type of motivation to learn English in several groups of students of English as a foreign language from both secondary education and high school. For this we first reviewed the main definitions of motivation in literature. Anticipating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on motivation, we aimed to provide some strategies to improve the levels of motivation in the aforementioned students.

In our approach, we departed from the necessary literature review and then we moved on to identify different types of motivation, which helped us to achieve an operational definition of motivation (see section 4). To collect data for our research we designed a questionnaire whose implementation (see section 5) has yielded some interesting results thanks to which we will propose strategies likely to ameliorate student's motivation (see section 6).

In the final formulation of open-ended questions of the questionnaire we took into account the exceptional influence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Spain, along with the adjustments made towards online teaching and the shift of assessment criteria in the national education system.

This research was conducted in Secondary Education and Bachillerato (the Spanish term for Higher Education) during the third term of academic year 2020 and with the cooperation of 6 English teachers. This means that data collection was carried out during

the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The main objective was to find answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of motivation is the prevailing one among the sample population?
2. What strategies can be suggested to improve the motivation of the sample population?
3. Does an unpredictable, unexpected situation such as a lockdown, influence on students' motivation?

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Literature review

Success in learning a foreign language depends on a variety of factors, being motivation one of them. Understanding these factors could help students be more motivated and get better results (Oxford, 1996:71-80)

The study of motivation is relevant because beneath its surface lies a series of ideas that teachers should know to get their students highly motivated. Teachers frequently find themselves on a Grail quest when trying to find the reasons why students do not get motivated in their lessons. If this search is not fruitful, the consequences are easy to guess: students do not learn and some of them develop negative attitudes towards the subject. Motivation is also important because it influences other factors such as FL learning strategies, the interaction with native speakers, proficiency or perseverance and maintenance of learners' FL skills after their language study finishes.

Lots of motivation theories have been conceptualized and developed over the years. Research studies started with the concepts of integrativeness and instrumentality by Gardner & Lambert (1972) in which culture and attitude were underlined as main components to learn a foreign language. According to this theory, the learner's attitude is what makes him/her want to form part of the culture. Later on, this theory was considered insufficient to account for all phenomena interacting in motivation, and a social component was included giving way to the attribution theory (Weiner, 1992), self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) and autonomy theory (Ushioda, 1996). Weiner's attribution theory tries to explain why people do what they do. Two perspectives can be found: if success depends on oneself, attribution is given to that person and to his/her personal skills, however, if success is not personal, achievement is attributed to

luck. Therefore, achievement depends on effort, ability, level of task difficulty, or luck. Deci & Ryan self-determination theory establish three basic psychological needs for a person to be motivated: competence, autonomy, and psychological relatedness. Ushioda's autonomy theory pays special attention to the relationship between motivation and autonomy: autonomous individuals are motivated. Finally, the theories by Dörnyei (1998, 2001a and 2001b) attempted to introduce psychology as a science to explain motivation as a multifaceted construct built by different components originated in the learner's self. As Guerrero (2015: 95-106) points out, Dörnyei distinguishes between the perception that the learner has of himself/herself using a language as a member of a community; the influence of expectations and punishments and finally, the context.

Dörnyei's theories add a new element in the study of motivation: psychology and cognitive processes inside of the learner. They also stress the relevance of the learner's self-image together with the context.

From a chronological point of view, the aforementioned approaches yield three different periods in the attempt to describe motivation: the socio-psychological period, characterized by the importance given to social context and attitude; the cognitive-situated period, characterized by the importance given to cognition and mental processes, and finally, the process-oriented period showing a special interest in learners and their context.

However, we will also take into account other authors in order to explain some of the proposed strategies that can motivate students. The different stages of cognitive development of students are the starting point to motivational strategies. Piaget (2002a.) explains through the cognitive constructivist theory the four stages of cognitive development, namely the sensorimotor stages (0-2 years based on object permanence, goal achievement and imitation); the preoperational stage (2-7 years based on egocentric behaviour and the development of the symbolic thought or the use of language to represent the world); the concrete-operational thought stage (7-12 years) in which spatial, mass, temporal, shape changes may occur and finally the formal-operational stage (12-18 years), in which the creation of abstract thought as well as inductive and deductive reasoning takes place.

Experience and literature alike tell us that students' learning styles are not similar. Gardner (2008) explains the relevance of his theory on multiple intelligences relating

types of learners to a higher achievement and results. In that way, Gardner (2008) distinguishes six types of learners: visual learners, auditory learners, kinesthetic learners, logical-mathematical learners, interpersonal learners and finally, intrapersonal learners. Closely related to the interpersonal and intrapersonal styles of learning is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning (also called socio-constructivist theory). Bruner (1984) explains in detail Vygotsky's theories. According to Vygotsky, we learn by using a kind of private speech making our thoughts external and learning to thinking them aloud. Another contribution by Vygotsky was the idea that learners learn best through exposition to others' ideas. In that way, learners develop self-awareness and a critical thought and our thought system develops systematically. Finally, Vygotsky also talks about the "zone of proximal development". According to this theory, learning occurs or does not occur depending on the difficulties and complexity of the task. Best learning happens in the intermediate zone (neither too easy nor too difficult tasks) in which learners can manage with some help: teachers' or peers' help, technological help (online tutorials) or interactive- metacognitive learning to learn strategies.

Deeply connected to this idea is Bruner, Goodnow, Austin & Brown's (2009) social constructivist theory. The teaching-learning process should start from the student's learning level and tasks should be reasonable and within reach. He asserts that extrinsic motivation in the form of rewards or punishment has not got a long effect on students. The only extrinsic reward with a positive effect on intrinsic motivation is positive feedback. Frank (2010) considers that students who depend on external rewards when doing activities can not achieve their goals without external motivations. If students rely on external motivation, they learn to compare themselves. However, intrinsic motivation is doing something for the sake of personal satisfaction "just because", because it satisfies their curiosity and they are willing to learn new things. Curiosity and creativity should be stimulated if teachers want intrinsically motivated students in their class. We firmly believe that creativity is intelligence having fun and, therefore, our task as teachers is using creativity in a funny way in order to have motivated students. In that way, a motivating atmosphere surrounded by low anxiety levels, contributes, according to Krashen's affective filter hypothesis (1981:21) to lower the filter and increase students' motivation. Students' perception and feelings about the learning environment (positive or tense) will open this filter to learning and to the language acquisition device.

In the questionnaire that we developed we took into account most of the aforementioned approaches to motivation (see section 4.2). Although each type of motivation theory adds a new aspect (sometimes there are slightly differences) digging into the causes affecting motivation in order to understand the term better is a must. Internal and external factors such as attitude, psychological traits and social/cultural components are also remarkable. Learners are multifaceted, the same as motivation and in our opinion, the borders between the inner forces coming from the learner and the external influences are not clear. Human beings are used to creating dichotomies just to control the world. It is either black or white. As Brown (1994:57) states: “and this intrinsic-extrinsic continuum is applicable to foreign language classmates around the world to harness the power of intrinsically motivated learners who are striving for excellence, autonomy and self-actualization”.

Other authors even establish a differentiation between the motivation that arises outside or inside the educative context. This quotation by Richards & Schmidt (2002:343-344) is interesting because it summarizes what motivation is by referring to most of the aforementioned types of motivation and theories:

in general, the driving force in any situation that leads to action. In the field of language learning a distinction is sometimes made between an orientation, a class of reasons for learning a language, and motivation itself, which refers to a combination of the learner's attitudes, desires and willingness to expend effort in order to learn a second language. Orientations include an integrative orientation, characterized by a willingness to be like valued members of the language community, and an instrumental orientation towards more practical concerns such as getting a job or passing an examination. The construct of integrative orientation (most prominently associated with R.C. Gardner) therefore includes the integrative orientation, positive attitudes towards both the target language community and the commitment to learn the language (socio-educational model). Another widely cited distinction is between intrinsic motivation, enjoyment of language learning itself, and extrinsic motivation, driven by external factors such as parental pressure, societal expectations, academic requirements, or other sources of rewards and punishments. Other theories of motivation emphasize the balance between the value attached to some activity and one's expectation of success in doing it (expectancy-value theory), goal setting, the learner's attributions of success and failure (attribution theory). Motivation is generally

considered to be one of the primary causes of success and failure in second language learning.

Motivation is the most important factor affecting learning and that is one of the reasons why it continues being an endless topic to debate on. As Masgoret & Gardner state (2003:193): “hypothesis 1 states that the correlations of the attitude, motivation and orientation are consistently positive and the correlation of motivation with achievement in the language is higher than for the other measures”

4.2 Types of motivation considered in our research

As we can see from the multiple approaches described in section 4.1, building a unitary definition of motivation is a complex task. In order to use an operation construct (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000:40), this research has considered a great range of diverse conceptualizations, terms, authors and linguistic theories. However, in order to develop the questionnaire (see Bueno, 2015:33), two main distinctions have been made, namely between intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and between integrative/instrumental motivation. Though the differences among such conceptualizations of motivation have already been introduced in section 4.1, in the following lines we will zero in on such differences with more detail.

The concept of intrinsic motivation refers to the satisfaction of learning for personal pleasure and fulfilment. Therefore, the learner learns because it pleases himself/herself and it makes him/her feeling good.

Extrinsic motivation is related to external regulations, awards, rules or choiceful behaviour (Dörnyei, 2001b). Carreira (2005:39-64) comes to a similar conclusion. For him, intrinsic motivation is directly linked to an individual's pleasure and satisfaction when he /she performs an activity. Carreira states that intrinsic motivation entails doing an activity for its own sake (*ibid.*:55). Additionally, Dörnyei (1998:121) stresses that intrinsic motivation must endorse autonomy as a “prerequisite for any behaviour to be intrinsically rewarding”. According to Carreira (2005:55), extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is directly linked to external rewards or threats according to Carreira (2005:55). The fact that the border between both types of motivation is not clear has led some researchers to state that “intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are not dichotomous but continuous” (*ibid.*). As we will see later, this idea is present in the answers of some of the respondents to our questionnaire. For example, some of them talk about learning

because they like the subject and they wish to acquire a new language but at the same time most of them get good results if their results in the foreign language learning subject is acknowledged. Thus, intrinsic motivation goes hand in hand with extrinsic motivation and rewards. Probably, what leads some more intrinsically motivated students to learn lies inside of them. It is a force or drive coming from the learner, but this inner drive is also held by extrinsic types of rewards (score, better marks in the class, parent' encouragement, etc.). On the other hand, extrinsically motivated students usually turn their parents' wish for good marks into their own goals. This is the reason why intrinsically motivated students find more difficulties in sustaining their motivation.

Instrumental motivation refers to the use of a foreign language as an instrument to achieve a goal. It could be to pass an examination, to climb up the job ladder, to improve your qualifications, to have access to a better position in life to improve one's social and economical status. As Ellis (2019:75) stresses, "in some learning contexts, an instrumental motivation seems to be the major force determining success". This idea is linked to some students' extrinsic motivation to get a reward, in such cases, language is the instrument to get a reward. For Carreira (2005:39), instrumental motivation is defined as "the potential utilitarian gains of L2 proficiency, such as getting a better job or higher salary". On the other hand, integrative motivation refers to integration or sense of belonging to a culture. For Dörnyei (2003), integrative motivation implies a positive "disposition toward the L2 group, the desire to interact (...) and become similar to valued member of that community". The learner is open-minded, feels respect for the language and the community and has a desire to integrate in that community. Carreira develops Dörnyei's definition in depth by underlining that integrative motivation refers to "positive attitude and feelings towards the target language group" (Carreira, 2005:39). As we can see, the limits between both terms are not clear, as Gardner (1985:12) points. For Gardner, instrumental motivation is not dichotomous, since it "involves an attitudinal component (as well as) a goal-directed behavior". This is what more frequently happens, but other studies such as Ellis (2019:75) suggested that some learners may be influenced by a "Machiavellian motivation", the desire to learn the L2 in order to manipulate and overcome the people of the target language. This sociocultural model is less relevant for our study because students learn in a closed space, the class, and are not yet interested in constructing a social identity based on investment, struggle and reward (*ibid.*). Some authors even consider instrumental and intrinsic motivation as opposites:

intrinsic motivation is essentially the opposite of instrumental motivation since an individual engages in an activity for no utilitarian purpose, but merely because she/he gains pleasure and satisfaction for it. It is doing something for its own sake without expectation of tangible reward. So it is more relative to the doing of the activity rather than on the completion of it.” (Buckledee, 2008)

This idea could also be linked to Ellis’ resultative motivation, according to which the “cause of learning is motivation and at the same time motivation is the result of it” (Ellis, 2019:75).

This blurred differentiation between intrinsic/extrinsic and integrative/instrumental motivation types has been taken into account to create our questionnaire on motivation. Other motivational factors such as teachers, parents, materials, strategies and methodologies are included as context or external factors. Some of the questions refer to several types of motivation as we recognize the importance of most of the previous assumptions and theories on the multifaceted and individual traits of motivation. A similar conclusion is reached when analyzing the theories on motivation through the last 50 years.

4.3 An integrative construct of motivation

The concept of motivation is one of the most controversial concepts among linguistic researchers. This controversy is reflected on the following words by Gardner & Lambert (1972:5-6) “Motivation is a fundamental factor in the learning process. It is a complex and multifaceted construct, but it has to be considered one of the factors that most influence the success of second language learning by teachers and researchers”.

The definitions associated to this term are diverse as we have seen in 4.1 and 4.2 being Richards @ Schmidt (2002:343-344) the most revealing one, because it gives a clear definition of motivation and types of motivation.

In our study, we have focused on the dichotomy between intrinsic/extrinsic motivation and integrative/instrumental motivation. Nevertheless other factors (Ellis: 2019) such as the social context of learning and individual psychological differences (as age, aptitude, attitude, learning style or motivation) have also been taken into account from an integrative perspective.

Multiple definitions, multiple schools and evolution of the term through different periods: from a social-psychological to cognitive and process oriented periods make us think on the abstraction of the term motivation and the need to make it more tangible. In that hope, a Fulcher (2007:7) talks about constructs and concepts:

“concepts become constructs when they are so defined that they can become “operational” – we can measure them in a test of some kind by linking the term to something observable (whether this is ticking a box or performing some communicative action), and we can establish the place of a construct in a theory that relates one construct to another”

According to these definitions and extracting a personal construction of what motivation is, we would dare to say, that motivation is like a cube with different sides. It depends on the individuals' feelings and it varies depending on the task on duty. As a student, I have just kept in mind the most valued learning I learnt in Primary Education. One of the gifts teachers gave us when we finish Primary Education (EGB) was a tray in which it was written “with effort and perseverance you will achieve your goals”. This idea together with a favorable and attractive context and tasks actuating as boosters, is what makes the learner learn. A force coming from outside and at the same time from inside of us.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Procedure, instruments, and participants.

A questionnaire, created with Google Form and containing 16 questions was sent to the seven teachers of the English department of a High School of Zaragoza (using a link). After that, the seven teachers sent the questionnaire to the students who they considered would be interested in this topic. The classes were therefore selected according to the teachers' criteria, except for the researcher who sent the link to all her students by means of Google Classroom. The questionnaire was sent online on the first week of June 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown. The total amount of students who answered the questionnaire is 213, most of them belonging to working-class families. Students from the first level ESO to the second year of Bachillerato participated. The topic seems to have been attractive to respondents, since it only took five days for 170 secondary education students and 43 Bachillerato students to answer the questionnaire. Female participation was slightly higher than male participation (52.9% vs 47.1 %). After having

explained to the teachers and to the students the purpose of the test, it was handed out using a great diversity of digital means and platforms: Google Classroom, Moodle, mail, Drive and WhatsApp. The greatest part of students had no problems in answering the test, because it was completed at the end of the course and students knew how to use their main platform of communication, Google Classroom which contrasts with the problems encountered at the beginning of the lockdown. At the beginning of the lockdown, some difficulties of use and access to the digital means and platforms were found. Some students did not know how to use Google Classroom and a small number of them decided either not to connect or their families did not have technical means (computers, access points, mobile data) to do it. The lockdown revealed the challenges of digitalization at school.

The questionnaire was anonymous, neither name nor class were required and students as well as teachers were really interested in helping the researcher to carry out the research.

The questionnaire was divided into 3 parts. In the first part, participants gave personal information regarding their level and sex.

The second part of the questionnaire was based on Gardner's International Attitudes/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) (Gardner, 2004) and on an article on motivation, Saheb (2015) and included 14 multiple-choice questions with three options. The test was first handed to the English teachers of the department to corroborate if the test was appropriate. Instead of using more precise scales such as Likert's 5 options scales, the researcher preferred 3 options scale to make the task easier for students. Although ideally the questionnaire should have been both qualitatively and quantitatively validated, the researcher had to take swift decisions to ensure the success of the test in an unexpected and unpredictable situation. Consequently, only a qualitative validation was carried out with the help of those teachers who distributed the questionnaire and also with the TFM tutor's help. Although Likert scale questionnaires "allow quantification and objective analysis" according to Bueno (2015:76), the researcher preferred the use of the "mixed questionnaire technique combining both closed-ended and open-ended questions" (Bueno, 2015:77). It should not be forgotten the fact that students had been locked down for two months at the point in which the questionnaire was carried out, and that it was the end of the academic year and they felt very tired. Less options also gave them the

opportunity to be more precise and make a decision. Each question refers to a different type of motivation and they could be grouped in the following way:

1. Questions 1-4 refer to intrinsic motivation.
2. Questions 5 and 12 refer to extrinsic/instrumental motivation.
3. Questions 6 and 13 refer to individual confidence or anxiety.
4. Question 7 refers to parents' encouragement and support towards the learning of a foreign language.
5. Question 8 refers to the teacher as encourager, organizer, helper (context).
6. Question 9 refers to the students "perceptions of skills' complexity".
7. Question 10 and 11 refer to the class (context) and use of English.

In the third part of the questionnaire, the participants could answer to 3 additional open-ended questions related to the COVID-19 situation and its possible effects on their motivation. This configuration of the test was envisaged following a first draft of the TFM, which was modified to analyze the possible impact of the lockdown.

5.2 Data management

The questionnaire had a great success and it was well accepted. The questionnaire was created using Google Form and it was handed out through Google Classroom, Moodle, mail, Drive or WhatsApp. The data were studied using the tools Google Form provided: Excel sheets and pie diagrams. The answers referring to each question could be easily quantified and qualified taking into account intrinsic as well as extrinsic factor.

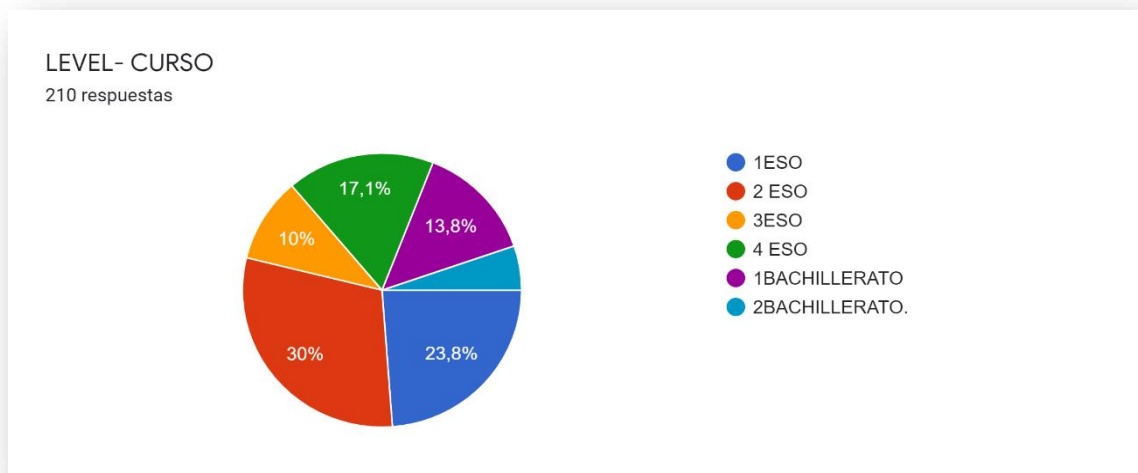
6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Analysis of the results

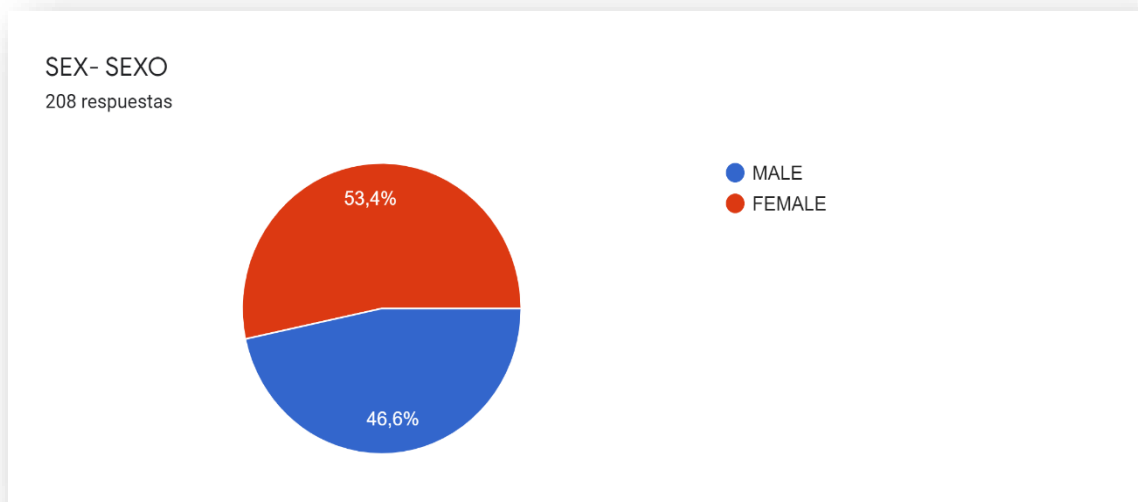
As stated in 5.1, each group of questions has been divided into different subgroups depending on the topics addressed. The subgroups are: personal data, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic/instrumental motivation, intrinsic individual factors, extrinsic/contextual factors and open-ended questions. The pie diagrams below are followed by a description of the results and they are associated to their corresponding questions. Notice that the number of the question does not refer to the number that the diagram occupies in the section. These are the results and their interpretation:

A. PERSONAL DATA

Pie diagrams 1 and 2 below show personal students' data, level, and sex. We appreciate that 81% of the students (pie diagram 1) are secondary education students, whereas 19 % are non-compulsory education students. We also note that 53.4 % are female students (pie diagram 2) and 46.6 % are male students.



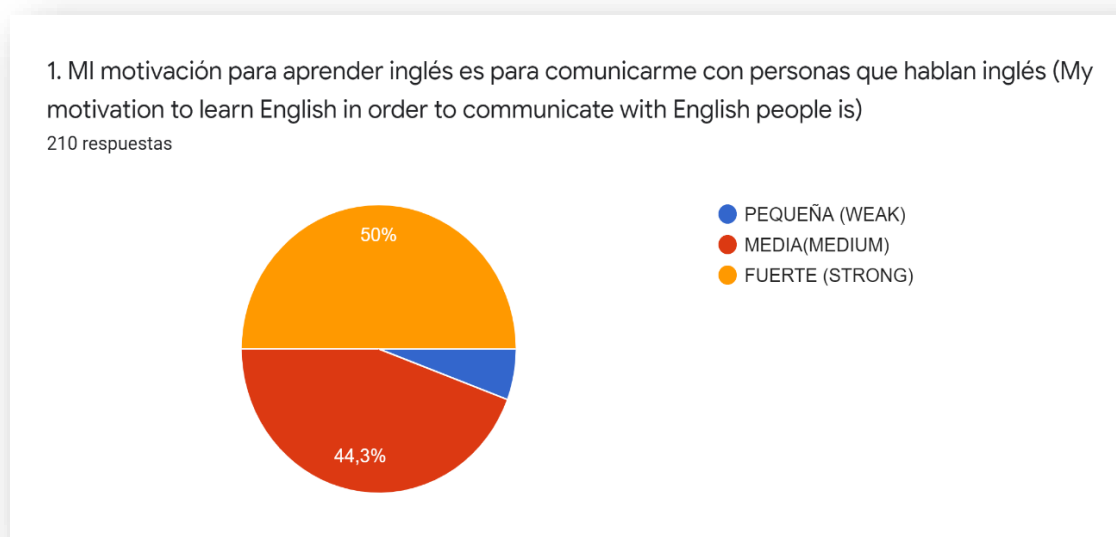
Pie diagram 1



Pie diagram 2

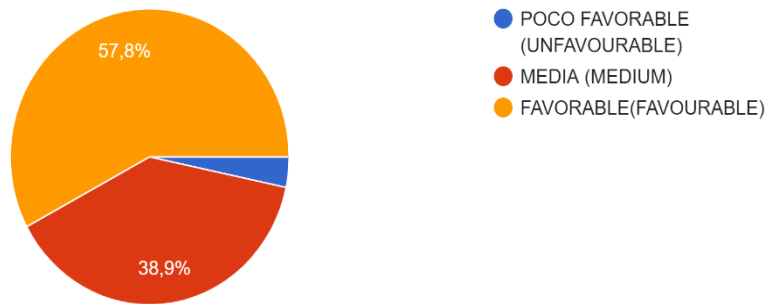
B. INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Pie diagrams 3, 4, 5 and 6 (questions 1-4) were designed to obtain data on intrinsic motivation. Pie diagram 3 shows that students' intrinsic motivation is chiefly medium (44.3 %) or strong (50%) if it refers to English as an instrument of communication. This percentage is quite similar if attitude towards English people is considered: 38.9 % medium and 57.8 % favorable (pie diagram 4). Therefore, if students feel motivated to communicate with English people and their attitude is positive, it means that they are highly interested in the acquisition of a foreign language (pie diagram 5): medium 28.7 % and high 67.9 %. Moreover, students' attitude (pie diagram 6) towards English as a subject personified in the figure of a teacher is incredibly positive (medium 26.2 % and favourable 71.9 %). As we see, students recognize the importance of English and their overall interest and attitude towards the subject is positive.



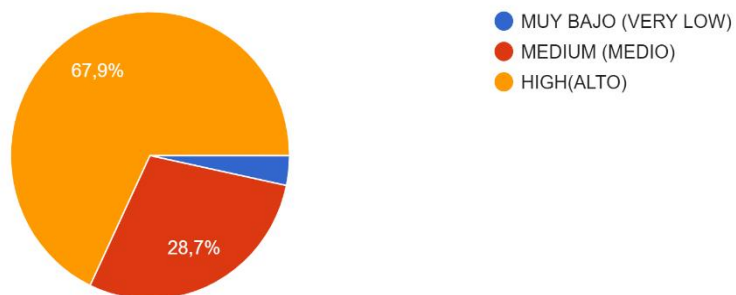
Pie diagram 3

2. Mi actitud hacia la gente que habla inglés es: (my attitude towards English speaking people is)
211 respuestas



Pie diagram 4

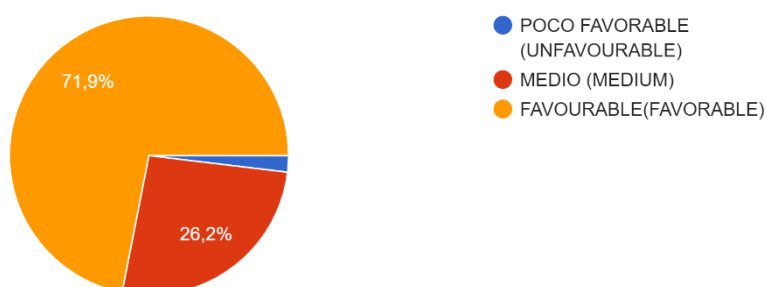
3. Mi interés en adquirir un segundo idioma es (my interest in foreign language is)
209 respuestas



Pie diagram 5

4. Mi actitud hacia mi profesor/a de inglés es (My attitude towards my English teacher is)

210 respuestas



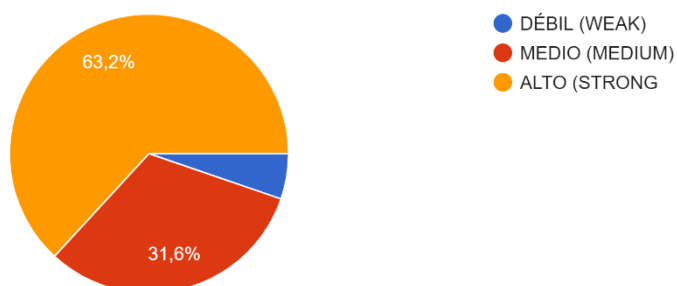
Pie diagram 6

C. EXTRINSIC/ INSTRUMENTAL MOTIVATION

Pie diagrams 7 and 8 (questions 5 and 12) are related. They both refer to extrinsic /instrumental motivation. Two thirds of the students claim to be motivated to learn English as an instrument to get a job or a degree for practical purposes (pie diagram 7) and 84.8% of the students, consider English extremely useful for their future (pie diagram 8). One explanation for this difference in the figures could be that students have not understood the concept of “practical”, but they understood the word “future”. They see English useful for the future, whatever its use be, so probably parents encourage this idea on them (84.8 % agree). Pie diagram 7 implies that two thirds of the participants think they have a strong motivation to learn English for practical purposes, for instance, to get a job. Moreover, 84.8% of the students consider English to be helpful for the future, either academically or in work (pie diagram 8).

5. Mi motivación para aprender inglés por propósitos prácticos (conseguir trabajo, etc) es: (My motivation to learn English for practical purposes (to get a job,etc) is)

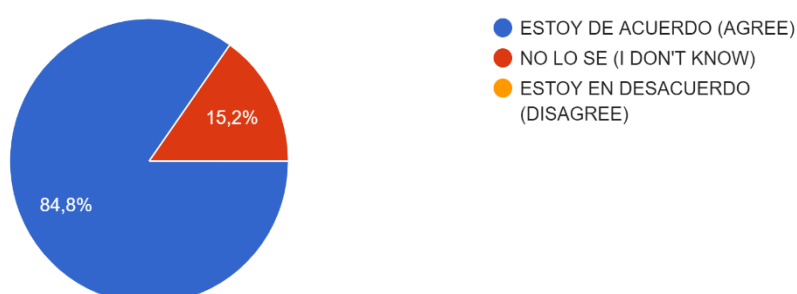
209 respuestas



Pie diagram 7

12. El inglés sera útil para mi futuro (carrera, trabajo) (English will be helpful for the future)

211 respuestas

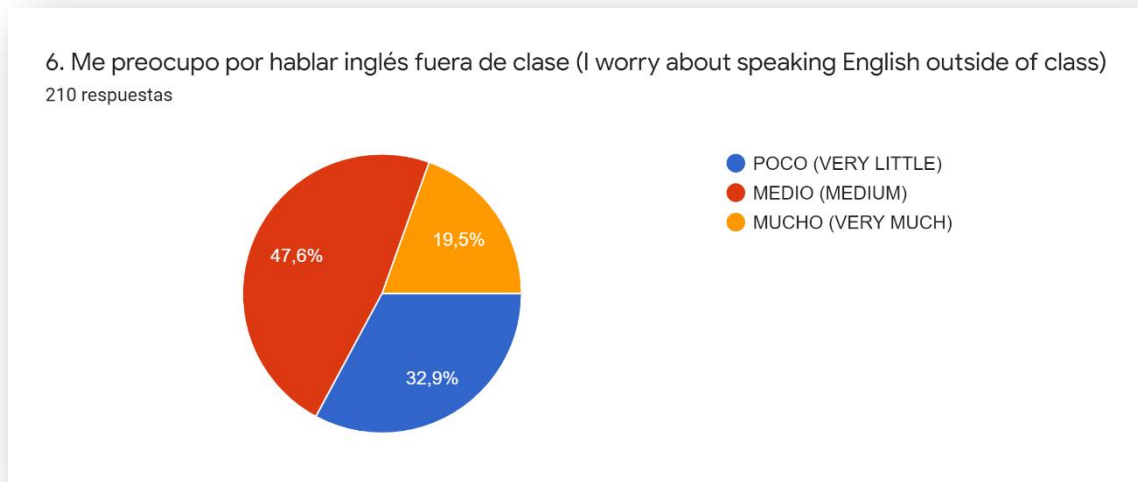


Pie diagram 8

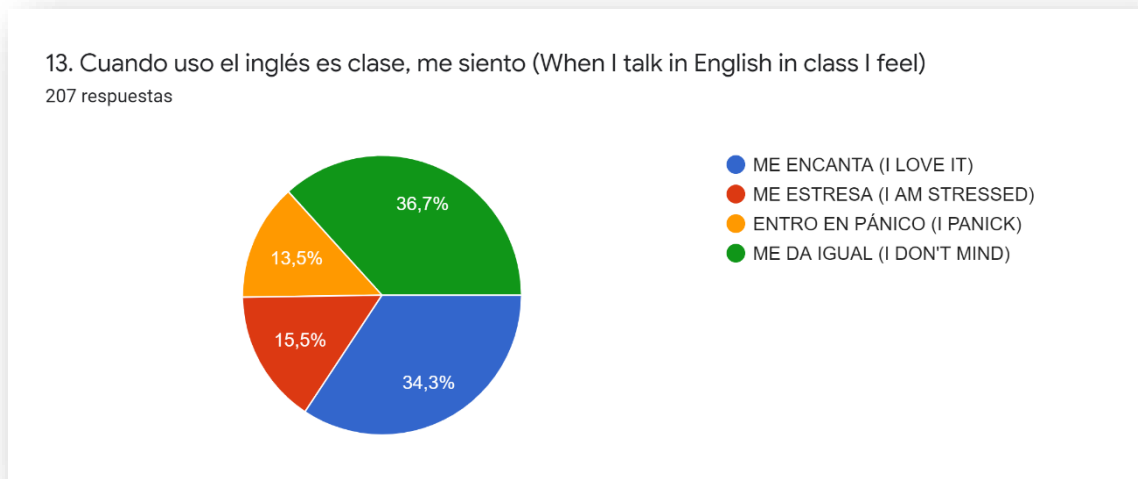
D. INTRINSIC INDIVIDUAL FACTORS (CONFIDENCE OR ANXIETY).

Pie diagram 9 shows that two thirds of the students are worried about speaking English outside of the class. Therefore, they feel a need that it is not covered in class, namely context-depending needs. This idea has to do with the results of pie diagram 10. Half of the interviewed students feel panic or stress and the same percentage (36.7%) show a positive attitude towards it. The rest of the students do not mind at all. So according to these results we could conclude that students feel negative feelings when using English

in class (see 4.1 and the discussion about Krashen). They recognize the importance of the acquisition of a foreign language and they report having felt anxiety problems and having suffered from lack of confidence. It might be related to the evolutive moment they are in the acquisition of the language or to other causes.



Pie diagram 9

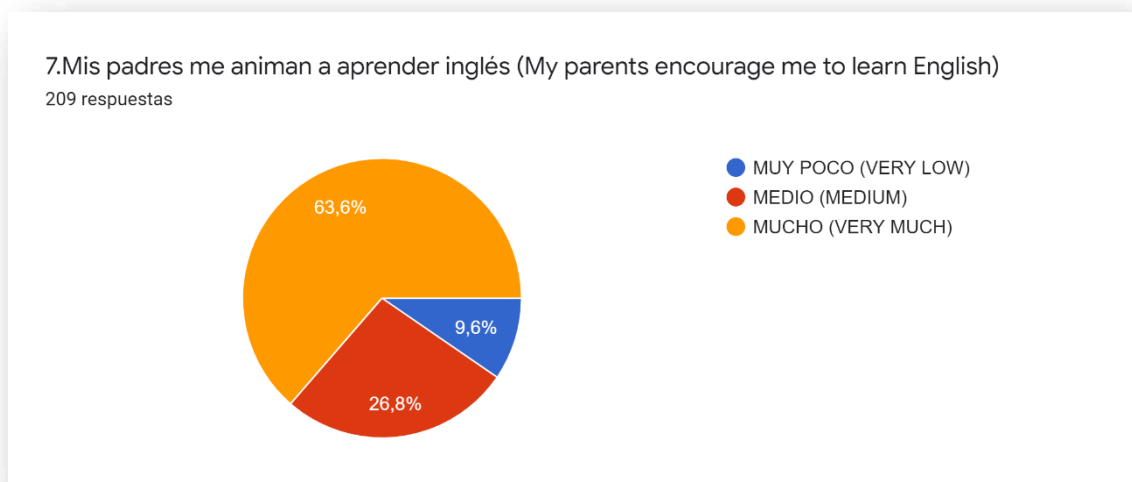


Pie diagram 10

E. EXTRINSIC CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

- Parents

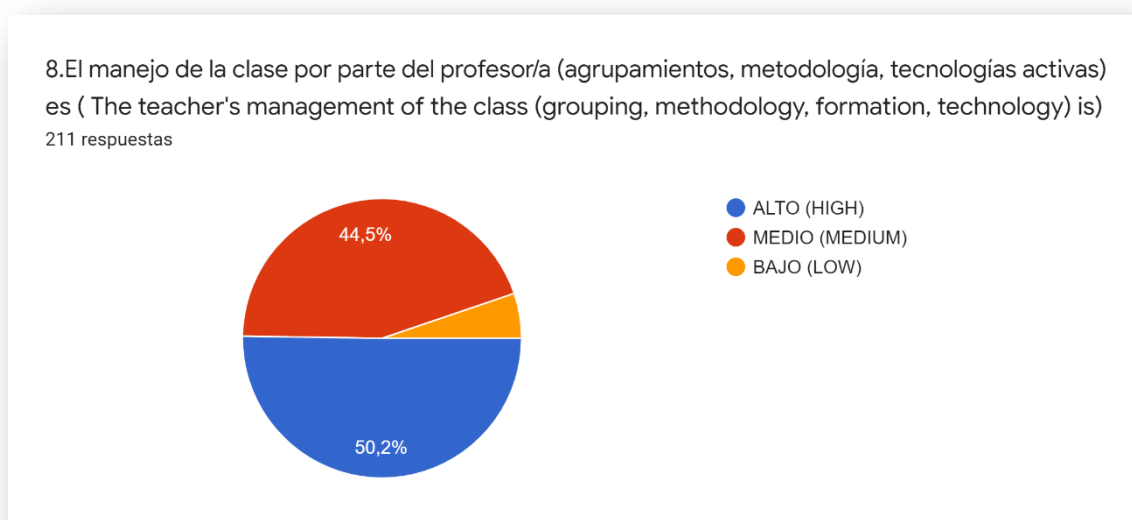
According to the answers, parents generally encourage students to go on learning English (63.6% very much and 26.8 % medium).



Pie diagram 11

- Teachers

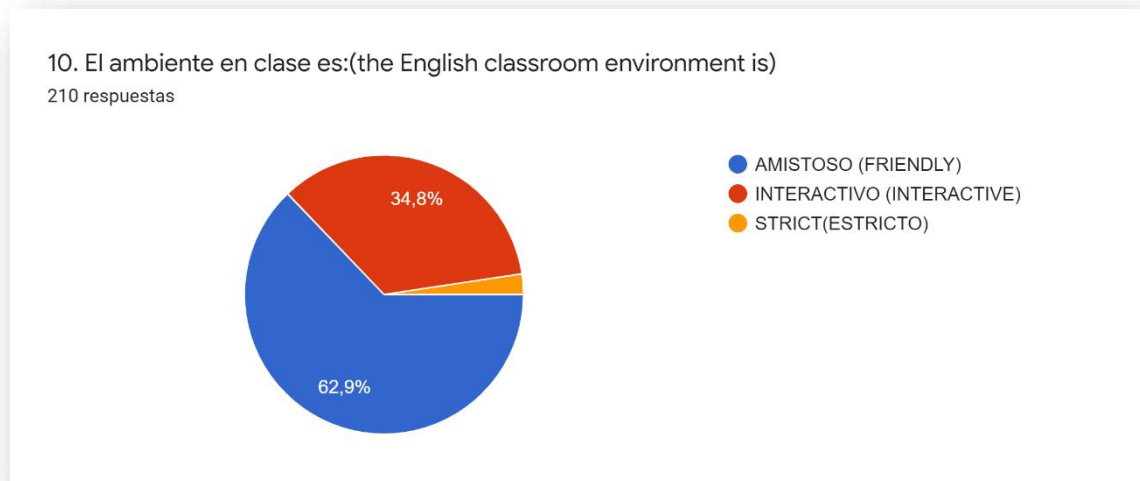
According to respondents, their teachers' class management skills range from medium (44.5%) to high (50.2 %). The fact that almost half of the interviewed students think that teachers' methodological techniques are medium, suggest that learners are critical on some of those aspects (grouping, methodology, training, technology) or that they do not have a clear idea of the meaning of the aspects asked for.



Pie diagram 12

- Class

Two thirds of the class consider the classroom atmosphere as friendly. It might be a good starting point to lower the filter and open students' mind to learn a new language (Krashen, 1981)

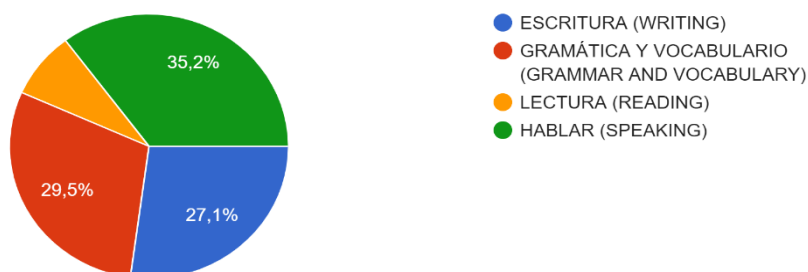


Pie diagram 13

Pie diagram 14 refers to the difficulty of components according to students' perception. Students consider reading as the easiest skill to learn; grammar, vocabulary, writing receive a similar percentage and speaking a bit higher. Speaking (productive, oral skill) is deemed as the most difficult one. This might be linked to the fact that the class does not provide students with a natural and real to life speaking context. Their affective filter is not low enough (Krashen, 1981:21) and they feel anxious and negative emotions if English is used in class.

9. En mi opinión la destreza más complicada es: escribir, gramática y vocabulario, leer, hablar (In my opinion, the most difficult skill is: writing, use of English, reading, speaking)

210 respuestas

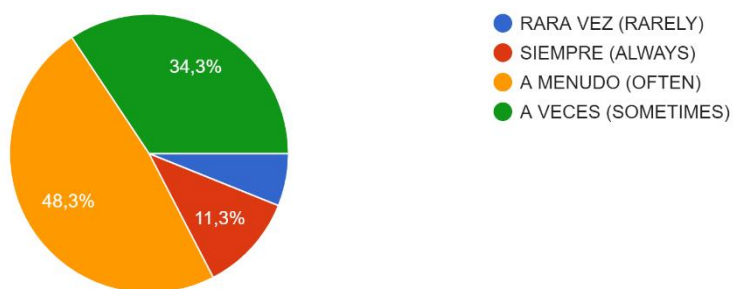


Pie diagram 14

Pie diagram 15 refers to the use of English in class. As we can see, students do not use English all the time. Most of them, use English “often” (48.3%) or “sometimes” (34.3%). Just a small percentage (11.3%) “always” use English in class.

11. Uso inglés en clase (I use English in class)

230 respuestas



Pie diagram 15

F. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS (questions 14, 15, 16)

Question 14 was as follows: do you feel more motivated during the third term or in the previous two terms?

This question was included to assess the possible changes in motivation in students as consequence of a different teaching-learning situation from the previous two terms. The results were quite surprising, because assessment criteria for the third term were modified due to the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown. Such modifications were aimed at giving students an advantageous situation by making assessment more lenient. The assumption might be that, given a set of more lenient assessment criteria, students would feel motivated to boost their marks by doing the same or a reasonable amount of work. However, as we are going to see, this was not always the case.

Before the pandemic and the lockdown, the assessment criteria of the English department to which the students belonged were the following ones: 1st term multiplied by one, 2nd term multiplied by two, 3rd term multiplied by three; final mark: it was calculated by adding the results of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd term and then, it was divided by six. Thus, for example, if one student obtained 5 in the 1st term, 5 in the 2nd term and 7 in the 3rd term, the final result would be 6 (5 multiplied by one, 5 multiplied by two and 7 multiplied by three makes a result of 36; if we divided 36 into 6 it gives 6). However, as mentioned, such criteria were highly modified by educative authorities during the lockdown. Retaking subjects or whole courses were deemed as exceptional measures and only applied if parents agreed to them. New concepts and contents could not be taught (3rd term marks included attitude and homework) and the final mark was the addition of the first and second term divided into two. Even more, those students getting a 5 (i.e. a pass) in the last term would pass the whole subject and all of them were going to pass to the following course regardless the number of subjects they had failed. Although these were demotivating criteria for teachers, *a priori* they were motivating for students. However, the results contradicted such hypothesis. The results show that 47.6 % (half of the students) felt more motivated on the 1st and 2nd term or they felt that their motivation was similar during the 1st, 2nd and 3rd term. This could mean that students need an external context (class, teacher, tasks) to get motivated (extrinsic factors) or that the context of stress in which they were living was also affecting their responses. In a way, the results obtained contradicted some of the previous questions referring to the prevailing motivation types. There is a quite interesting article referring to this by the Diario Digital Universidad Jaen which reveals a similar result of an experiment done by the students of Psychology by the UJA during the lockdown (Diario Digital Universidad de Jaen, 2020)

Question 15 referred to question 14 and it was as follows: why do you think it is so?

This question shed some light on the aforementioned topic about lack of motivation. Even though the class is an artificial setting when learning a language and it is not the best place to acquire it, students highlight some of the reasons why beneficial assessment criteria to get a pass or better marks, is not enough for them, i.e., the prospect of better marks was not enough motivation for students in the third term. The answers given are quite interesting. Some motivated students since the beginning of the course claimed to feel motivated at the end of the school year. They stated: “if you want to learn, you do it”, “ what matters is learning”, “I feel motivated for the subject” or, although the setting changes, motivation does not”. The answers change when referring to those whose motivation has gone down if compared to the first and second term. The reasons could be gathered in a big group (context) and were the following ones:

1. Lack of interaction.
2. Different atmosphere. Preference for face to face learning.
3. Lack of encouragement and feedback.
4. Lack of support/encouragement on the teacher/ friends’ side.
5. Lack of guiding lines.
6. Home lacks study environment.

Question 16 referred to the students’ proposal to improve their motivation. It was as follows: what would you suggest to improve your motivation in English?

The answers refer to possible strategies suggested by students that could be used, according to their own criteria, to improve their motivation and consequently, their communicative competence. An insight of the strategies suggested by them and later on included in the “Proposed Strategies Section” is:

1. Practice by means of attractive, fun activities.
2. Dynamic classes and interactive oral lessons.
3. Make English a bit more useful by associating it with films, songs (i.e., the use of real resources to learn the language).
4. Interactive games and methodologies such as Kahoot (learn out of the box and learn by doing).
5. Peer education, teachers’ help and tutorial videos.
6. Scaffolding (start from the students’ level).

7. Out-of-school exchange trips with native families just to be exposed to real situations and native pronunciation.
8. Motivated teachers.
9. Realia: books, plays, songs, films.
10. Bilingual school trips.

6.2 Proposed strategies

Question 16 gives valuable and valid suggestions to improve students' lack of motivation. Students' suggestions could be used as a starting point for the researcher in order to propose motivational strategies to learn English in a formal context: the class. English is considered to be a practical subject but students find lessons boring, and in a sense, as another theoretical lesson as for instance History or Geography. Students associate the English subject to lots of homework, vocabulary to be learnt by heart, grammar with many rules (spelling, word endings, word (formation, verbal tenses and endless grammatical exercises) and with traditional lessons carried out in a closed space (the class). The learning atmosphere in secondary education groups differs from that of primary education: learn by playing, learn by doing, probably because children are in a different level of cognitive development. (cf. section 4.1; Piaget, 2002).

During primary education children, have a higher brain plasticity and they are eager to learn because they are curious and absorb learning easily. However, as their cognitive level changes and they start secondary education, creativity and curiosity are not so deeply encouraged. Formal thinking and the development of front cortex change greatly with high school teaching methodologies. Primary education encourages learning by doing whereas in secondary education and higher education, students are taught cognitive and metacognitive strategies to learn new concepts: skimming, scanning or inferring to quote but a few. Students are encouraged to improve their abilities of thinking out of the box by questioning the task and their solution to it and improving in that way, methodology and procedure; by giving themselves time to carry out an activity developing in that way self-awareness; by reflecting while on the task (students in the first levels are guided when doing a task; later on students achieve cognitive skill abilities based on reflection, modification and trial and error strategies). Self-awareness makes them conscious of the prevailing learning style. Besides, children have different learning styles (cf. section 4.1; Gardner, 2008). This theory matches with students' answer to the questionnaire's question 16, in which they propose some solutions to be more motivated.

In suggestion to number 5, they consider chiefly peer work, teacher's help and tutorial videos. If tasks are not demanding enough, they get bored because they are repeating the same; if tasks are too complex, their motivation diminishes because they cannot cope with the task whereas if the task is medium-level and they have an external help (peers, teachers) learning becomes optimal. Krashen (1981:21) talks about the importance of providing learners with a comprehensible input+1 (a bit more advanced than learners' actual level) in order for learning to take place.

Bruner et al. (2009) uses the term "scaffolding" to refer to this term. There is a student in the questionnaire who talks about starting learning from the student's level. Teachers usually start from a course level and then, they adjust it to the level of the class. The whole teaching-learning process is a readjustment process. It starts the first school day and continues throughout the course. Some students, however, have a much lower level than the course/class level and they can't follow the lessons/explanations. Probably, this student belongs to this group, but without an immense effort, work and external help, these students fail and get demotivated. Scaffolding refers to that process in which the teacher presents the steps to solve a problem and learners learn how to do it by themselves. During the process, questioning, providing feedback, encouragement and reinforcement are required if the learner is to solve the problem independently. If the student fails, the teacher provides him/her with help. Therefore, teachers' and peers' help together with reasonable/within reach tasks are required for students to achieve their goal and do not give up. Following students' suggestions, some strategies could be implemented in the class to increase internal inward motivation as well as providing them with an encouraging context in which to learn. Some useful tips (Section 4.1) in order to boost motivation could be the following ones (Mulvahil, 2018):

1. Know our students. We should design our instruction around motivating factors.
2. Provide a mix of independent, partner and group work. Use of technology. Incorporate art.
3. Give them ownership of their environment.
4. Make sure they have a solid foundation of knowledge, making sure they have the resources.
5. Give students feedback that focuses on their strengths instead of their weaknesses.

6. Encourage students to direct their own learning.
7. Allow students choice in their work.

Inhibition could be attenuated and the capacity for empathy could be increased through active methodologies or activities which combine practice, knowledge, moral and social conventions, spontaneity, imagination, and the implementation of the key competences. Drama, role-plays, Total Physical Response activities integrate vocabulary and structures creating a pleasant atmosphere and forgetting about anxiety, stress or panic relaxing students and calming them down. Miming and gesturing involve gestural movements and non- verbal language developing attention and memory by visual association and by visual association and relating it to a daily situation. Some activities to be implemented could be charades, scenes, pass the object, locomotion, drama games, play reading, acting out stories, reenactment, using chroma, recording videos in YouTube, Audacity, Theatre. (Marzano & Pickering, 2010)

Students could choose project topics that interest them and these may be assessed in a variety of ways. Students must make the connection between classroom activities and real-world situations.

Games promote problem solving situations, learning through discovery, a positive classroom atmosphere in which competition or collaboration can be fostered and creativity can be boosted. Without creativity, there would be no progress and we would be forever repeating the same pattern. Games have rules and are fun and they can be used as methodological strategies to encourage different types of intelligences and learning styles. In a foreign language class and having in mind the students' proposals on the questionnaire some games could be implemented (Hadfield & Hadfield:1990). Students state the necessity of active activities or games in which they could participate. There are lots of different games which combine activity (Simon says), competition (Jeopardy, The Million-Dollar Pyramid, Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?), communication (describe and draw, construct it), skills (crossword, puzzles, Bingo, Pictionary, tongue twisters, Tic-Tac, Toe), new technologies (CALL, Computer-assisted language learning), new tendencies (escape rooms), thinking outside the box and divergent games, etc. These activities and games boost what students were asking for in the questionnaire (last open-ended question): active participation, real-life activities, dynamic classes, cooperation and

contact with peers, the use of new and active methodologies in order to engage students into learning.

Summarizing, school activities which take students out of a formal space to a real speaking atmosphere help them to improve inhibition problems they may have. Shyness is one of the main difficulties Spanish students of a foreign language have to face. When they are in front of a situation in which they are alone (for instance, when communicating with a native family during an exchange), they realize they have more strategies and resources than they thought. This reassures their self-esteem and they become more motivated because they are improving their intrinsic/integrative motivation. They are learning by doing, and they are developing problem solving strategies. Of course, to implement all of these strategies and methodologies, students need motivated teachers or at least, teachers interested in students.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Final conclusions

There is not a consensus in literature about the definition of motivation. Both experience and the results of the present research lead us to the conclusion that we cannot talk about a prevailing kind of motivation in students, but about different types of students with different types of motivations. Good practitioners should be aware of this multiplicity of motivation types and, ideally, adapt their teaching practices to each individual.

According to the results obtained in the questionnaire, students who show high levels of intrinsic motivation are motivated most of the time, no matter the circumstances. Intrinsic motivation is basic for students who always feel motivated whereas for those others whose intrinsic motivation is not so high, it is the context (peers, teachers, class, interaction) that helps them to maintain motivation. Instrumental motivation is also present in most of the motivated students (for example, when students are aware of the meaning of “future”). Students are still growing up and most of them do not have clear job goals and yet, they relate their future with English. English can make their future better and the knowledge of this may turn into a powerful change tool for teachers.

This research shows that students perceive motivation differently and that such perception depends on their personal preferences, beliefs, and personality. Highly motivated students show a preference for intrinsic motivating factors. Nonetheless,

external factors can also help such students to become more motivated. These factors reinforce students inner force to go on learning

Following the answers obtained in the questionnaire, this study proposes some strategies to improve motivation based on the students' answers of their situation. Dynamic, interactive and fun activities based on active methodologies together with the use of real-life materials and peer education led by motivated teachers are some of the strategies towards which students are leant. Teaching-learning strategies are required to implement and maintain both intrinsic and instrumental motivations.

The change in assessment criteria for Spanish students during the 3rd term of the 2019-2020 academic year did not correlate positively with an increase in student motivation. The assumption was that a more lenient assessment system might be a motivating factor. However, results proved that those students who were already motivated during the 1st and 2nd term remained so while those who were not initially motivated did not experience major changes in their attitude towards the English subject.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown which affected Spanish students made clear the type of education that they prefer. Students realized they missed face-to-face education (rather than online classes) and the classroom context (participation, interaction, teachers', and peers' support).

Motivation greatly influences the acquisition of students' communicative competence. The fact that their motivation to communicate in English is medium (44.3 %) and the use of English in the class is not high (11.3% always use English) influence in their answers to the question referring to the difficulty of each skill. The result is that the most demanding skill for them is speaking and the easiest one is reading (active vs passive skills). Besides, results showed that 29% of students reported having felt stressed when using English; 35.5% did not care and, finally, 35% claimed to enjoy the subject partly due to the fact that the class atmosphere was friendly. The main reason for their inhibition or shyness could be cultural, probably they feel that making mistakes means they know less or they feel inferior if compared to their peers.

7.2 Project limitations

The main project limitations are the lack of face-to-face contact with students and the use of observation techniques while the questionnaire was carried out. The use of various

questionnaires which were merged into a single could have benefited from a more thorough validation which, in this case, had to be carried out by means of experts' consultation.

It remains to be seen to what extent our sample population is representative of areas other than Aragón and thus, to what extent the results here presented are similar to those that may be found in other regions.

7.3 Future research lines

The strategies proposed by the students in the questionnaire could be useful for strategical and methodological implementation and even for a future research on the impact of Covid-19 on the Spanish educational system. Besides, using the data extracted from the questionnaire, a quantitative validation could be done and if the data is good, the questionnaire could be validated for other researches.

Moreover, the starting point for future research lines could be a thorough analysis of the impact of the lockdown on internal/external factors (context, peers, teachers, class, parents, methodology, grouping) and its subsequent impact on the 2019-2020 academic year from a sociological, academic and even psychological point of view.

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