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Master's Dissertation

THEATRE AND MOTIVATION IN EFL: A TEACHING EXPERIENCE

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Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1. Research Background	4
1.2. Purpose of the Study	5
2. MOTIVATION IN EFL: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND.....	5
2.1. Definition of Motivation	5
2.2. Motivation in Language Learning.....	7
3. THE INTEGRATION OF THEATRE INTO ELT	12
3.1. Potential and limitations of theatre in EFL.	13
4. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK	15
4.1. Description of Procedure and Methodology.....	15
4.2. Objectives.....	16
4.3. Sample: School context and Participants	17
4.4. Material and Instruments	18
4.4.1. Material and instruments aimed at students	18
4.4.2. Material and instruments aimed at evaluating the teaching practice.....	21
4.5. Activities, tasks and project.	22
4.6. Data Collection	33
4.7. Data Analysis	33
5. CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS	40
6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	41
7. REFERENCES.....	42
APPENDIX 1. Materials	45
APPENDIX 2. Data collection instruments.....	48
APPENDIX 3. Final project.	55

ABSTRACT

Theatre as educational tool was introduced to develop different abilities in students such as acting skills, expressivity, communicative competence or confidence, but many other gains have been found out. This paper aims to investigate how the integration of a theatre-based approach motivates students to learn English as a second language. This project puts a theatre-supported teaching unit into practice with a group of students in 1st Year of Compulsory Secondary Education characterized by socio-cultural difficulties and low interest towards language learning. The results of the investigation seem to be consistent: integrating theatre into the language classroom evidences students' positive reaction and increasing motivation toward the foreign language, which, ultimately, involves a significant benefit to learn the language.

Key words: motivation, theatre, language learning, ESL, secondary education.

RESUMEN

El teatro como herramienta educativa se introdujo con el objetivo de que los alumnos desarrollaran diferentes habilidades como la actuación, la expresividad, la competencia comunicativa o la confianza, pero se han encontrado muchos otros beneficios. El objetivo del presente estudio es analizar el potencial que tiene el teatro para sustentar la motivación de los estudiantes para la adquisición efectiva de la L2. Este proyecto pone en práctica una unidad didáctica con un fuerte componente teatral con un grupo de alumnos de primer curso de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria que se caracteriza por un contexto socio-cultural desfavorecido y un bajo interés hacia el aprendizaje de lenguas. Los resultados obtenidos son consistentes: la integración del teatro en el aula de idiomas refleja una reacción positiva y un incremento de la motivación en los estudiantes hacia la lengua extranjera, lo que finalmente supone una ventaja significativa para aprender el idioma.

Palabras clave: motivación, teatro, aprendizaje de lenguas, inglés como segunda lengua, educación secundaria.

1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter has several purposes. Firstly, it offers an overview of foreign language learning and some important factors that intervene in this process. Further on, it reveals the purpose and the rationale behind to conduct this study, posing several research questions that will act as a guide for the investigation.

1.1. Research Background

Foreign language learning is one of the most significant challenges that students face today. Abundant research has been done aimed at finding out those elements that intervene in the process of learning a foreign language. Elements such as age, sex, student's personality, learners' variables and interest have proved significant when learning a language. Nonetheless, there are other external factors as syllabus design, methodology employed, teachers' behaviour or classroom environment that influence students' motivation and eagerness to learn a foreign language. Therefore, taking into consideration what the role of methodology in education is and to what extent its implementation may increase students' motivation toward language learning is of paramount importance since, as Nummenmaa (2007: 11) shows: "the variety of emotional experiences created in the classroom environment can potentially influence the learning process".

Under these premises, the teaching of foreign languages has to be founded on an integrated approach where the materials engage and support students and build their confidence in the use of the language. Using materials and resources which are more natural, more intuitive and closer to how we typically deal with language and that place the learner at the center of their learning is the cornerstone in any language teaching approach since it will ultimately lead learners to achieve their goal.

During this year I have been teaching English to a group of students in 1st year of Compulsory Secondary Education in a highschool in the Region of Murcia. Most of these students present detachment from school and academic difficulties due to their poor sociocultural context and their low perceived abilities. Additionally, this group of students lack willingness and interest towards the learning of the English language. Within this context, this study aims at investigating how the design and implementation of a didactic unit with a theatre-

based approach positively influences students' motivation to learn English as a foreign language.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

Foreign language instructors and course designers sometimes forget to consider what is behind language attainment: students' motivation. Thus, the rationale to conduct this study was to draw general conclusions on whether learners' motivation toward the language is produced after introducing theatre in the classroom setting and its effectiveness for language acquisition.

This paper provides an overview of the capabilities derived from integrating theatre to support students learning in EFL classrooms and to examine how the implementation of a didactic unit using theatre-based activities to learn English influences students' motivation and perceptions toward the language. This general objective will be achieved through answering the following research questions:

- How do the potentials involved in the integration of theatre (such as socialization, authenticity and personalization) influence learners' motivation to learn the language?
- How does students' motivation gained through a theatre-based approach affect learning and achievement?

This study has been structured into three main blocks. The first block deals with the concept of motivation and examines some of the most important theories of motivation in the field of language learning. The second block presents an overview of the relation between theatre and education, focusing on their potential and challenges in the field of teaching EFL. The third block provides an analysis of the investigation conducted on the effect of theatre-based methodology on students' motivation toward language learning.

2. MOTIVATION IN EFL: THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Definition of Motivation

Throughout history, theologians, philosophers, anthropologists and psychologists have tried to explain with very different theories why people, under particular conditions, act in a certain way. More recently, the psychological investigation on motivation has cared about the

role of the internal and external conditions in human behavior. In this light, numerous authors have researched into the field of motivation in an attempt to discover what its role is in human behavior but the disparity of theories, together with the lack of experimental research, has caused certain controversy in its understanding.

It seems, however, that there is some kind of consensus regarding its role as determining the human behavior; the drive that makes a person “*to be moved* to do something” (Ryan & Deci, 2000:1). In the same line, McClelland (1987:4) defined motivation as what “has to do with the *why* of behavior, as contrasted with the *how* or the *what* of behavior”. Dörnyei & Ushioda, years later, conceptualized it as “what moves a person to make certain choices, to engage in action, to expend effort and persist in action” (2011:3). Palmero (2008:2), from a more evolutionist perspective, points out that motivation is “a term that we employ to describe the drives acting on, or within, an organism so as to initiate and run its behavior (...) to get objectives which increase its chance of survival both in a biological and social dimension¹”. Thus, these four approaches share some points: inner drives that move a person to start an action aimed at getting one’s goal and persist in its process.

Then, motivation refers to an inner process that drives the individual to act; a process which relates to some external event (Palmero, 2008:3), and whose main components are choice, effort and persistence. These characteristics are related, according to Gardner (2001: 2), to the ingredients needed to learn a foreign language: “Second language acquisition refers to the development of near-native-like language skills, and this takes time, effort and persistence”. That is the reason why motivation has traditionally been an important factor associated to learning in general and to second language (L2) acquisition specifically. Bernaus reinforces this idea by asserting that “the qualitative and quantitative analyses have shown that the motivational factors are more important than the other factors when favoring students’ English achievement. Motivation accounts for 48.5% of students’ English proficiency” (1995: 20).

¹ Proposed translation. Originally: “*motivación* es un concepto que usamos cuando queremos describir las fuerzas que actúan sobre, o dentro de, un organismo, para iniciar y dirigir la conducta de éste (...) mediante la obtención de objetivos que incrementan la probabilidad de supervivencia, tanto en el plano biológico, cuanto en el plano social” (Palmero, 2008: 2).

2.2. Motivation in Language Learning

This section includes a review of the main theories in the study of motivation in language learning, how several scholars understand the notion of L2 motivation and how the theoretical knowledge has turned into practical formulae in language teaching to motivate students.

Motivation is considered by many scholars to be an integral part of L2/FL learning. Motivation, together with ability, has been found to be highly related to second language acquisition. Following Dörnyei, the principle of motivation involves one of the essential keys to language learning since it “explains *why* people decide to do something, *how hard* they are going to pursue it and *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity” (2003: 7). Then, if students are motivated to learn the language, the learning process will be successful; on the contrary, students just learn for accomplishing a requirement (Yulin, 2005: 21).

In this line, several authors have researched over the last decades on the variables that influence the L2 learning process. Iragui (in Luján, 1999: 271) puts forward the following classification:

1. *Individual variables*: Those related to aptitude, intelligence, abstract reasoning, etc. They are inner qualities of the individual.
2. *Socio-structural variables*: These variables include factors such as age, sex, place of living, socio-economic and socio-cultural levels of the student. Except age and sex, these are external factors that can exert a strong influence on students' disposition toward the L2.
3. *Psycho-social variables*: Students' attitudes and disposition toward the target language and its community. These consist of the learner's interest in learning the foreign language in order to interact with and even become a member of its community.
4. *Socio-educational variables*: These variables refer to the instruction that the student has received over his/her FL learning period, such as the kind of school, extracurricular education, stays in other countries, etc.

Even so, the author emphasizes that student' motivation and attitude, in other words, the psycho-social variables, cause a higher impact on L2 learning than other variables such as

intelligence or aptitude. This is especially due to the fact that students' motivation is more likely to increase with the adequate didactic techniques (Iragui, in Luján, 1999: 271).

Based on Iragui's classification, it makes good sense to assume that there are two broad sources of motivation: *internal* and *external*. Palmero (2008: 9) includes, within the internal sources, factors such as genetics, personality and psychological variables. That is, *internal motivation* explains why people decide to start an activity when there is no external reward: human psychological needs such as curiosity and competence account for this behavior. Within the external sources, the author comprises all those different stimuli, external to the individual, that influence on him/her. It is important to take into account the characteristics of the stimuli (quantity, quality and temporary nature) to understand one individual's behavior.

Palmero (2008: 10) concludes that, both internal and external events, are necessary to produce the motivated behavior. In every external stimulus, there are always internal factors present that provide the individual with the required motivation to carry out the activity.

Based on this dichotomy, Ryan & Deci (2000) developed their motivational theory of language learning. The so-called *Self-Determination theory* aims to enhance students' intrinsic impulses in order to behave in an adequate manner. Ryan & Deci's theory consists of three orientations to motivation sorted in an ascending order toward self-determination: *amotivation*, *extrinsic motivation* and *intrinsic motivation*. *Amotivation* refers to a learner's belief that the outcomes of his/her activity are unrealistic or unreasonable. That is to say, there is a complete lack of motivation. *Extrinsic motivation* comes from any kind of reward or pressure from the social context to learn a foreign language. By contrast, Ryan & Deci define *intrinsic motivation* as "the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence" (2000: 56). Besides, Ryan & Deci (2000) add that the impression of satisfaction in intrinsic motivation is brought about by a feeling of competence, autonomy and relatedness. Therefore, what this theory confirms is that, as Liu & Huang (2010: 2) state, "intrinsic motivation contributes more to achievements in learning a second language than instrumental motivation".

Additionally, according to Williams (in Dörnyei, 2003: 15) learning a foreign language "involves far more than simply learning skills, or a system of rules, or grammar; it involves an alteration in self-image, the adoption of new social and cultural behaviors and ways of being,

and therefore has a significant impact on the social nature of the learner”. Thus, scholars have focused over the last decades on how the L2 culture and community influence students’ language learning. In this field of research, it has been assumed that students’ goal to learn a SL can be classified in terms of two main orientations. Dörnyei (2010: 74) describes both types as follows:

The former [*integrative motivation*] refers to the desire to learn an L2 of a valued community so that one can communicate with members of the community and sometimes even become like them. *Instrumental motivation*, on the other hand, is related to the concrete benefits that language proficiency might bring about (e.g. career opportunities, increased salary).

According to this socio-psychological theory of L2 learning, developed by Gardner and Lambert in 1972, the student’s attitude toward the L2 community will determine his/her success in the acquisition of the new language. Further, Gardner concluded that “integratively oriented students were more successful in learning the second language than students who were instrumentally oriented” (2001:15). These findings are related directly to the conclusion reached by Liu & Huang (2010), whose study determined that “(over)emphasizing learning English for utilitarian purposes may result in extra pressure and anxiety in the learners, which may ultimately debilitate their performance in English. On the contrary, intrinsic motivation and interest in foreign languages and cultures proved to be positive predictors of students’ performance in English, as predicted by Gardner”. In this way, these authors show that increasing students’ fascination for L2 culture will benefit their learning of the second language.

In his *Socio-educational model theory*, Gardner clarifies that “there is an important distinction between integrative motivation and an integrative orientation” (2001: 2). The latter makes reference to the students’ interest toward the L2 community, that is, the students’ goal. The former, however, “is a complex of attitudinal, goal-directed, and motivational variables”, i.e., those factors that influence students’ behavior and predicts L2 acquisition.

Then, what is interesting about Gardner’s theory is his conceptualization of the *integrative motive*, made up of three basic components: *integrativeness*, *attitudes toward the learning situation* and *motivation*. Gardner (2001: 5) termed his theoretical motivation construct as “integrativeness”, and conceptualizes it as follows:

Integrativeness reflects a genuine interest in learning the second language in order to come closer to the other language community. At one level, this

implies an openness to, and respect for other cultural groups and ways of life. In the extreme, this might involve complete identification with the community (and possibly even withdrawal from one's original group) but more commonly it might well involve integration within both communities.

Thus, this process of affective identification with the L2 community reflects as well a desire to learn the language, a desire that is weighed depending on the student's attitudes toward the learning situation. This variable considers the learner's enjoyment of the learning context: teacher, course materials, classmates, teaching methods, and so forth. In any situation, Gardner explains, "some individuals will express more positive attitudes than other, and it is these differences in attitudes toward the learning situation that are the focus of the model" (2001: 6). The third variable, *motivation*, is explained as the "driving force in any situation" (Gardner 2001: 6). It is made up of three components: the motivational intensity, the desire to learn the L2 and the attitudes toward learning the language. As a result, in Gardner's Socio-psychological theory, *integrativeness* and *attitudes toward the learning situation* back *motivation*, the most important factor to enhance students' necessary behavior to acquire the L2. Gardner's socio-psychological construct is shown in Figure 1.

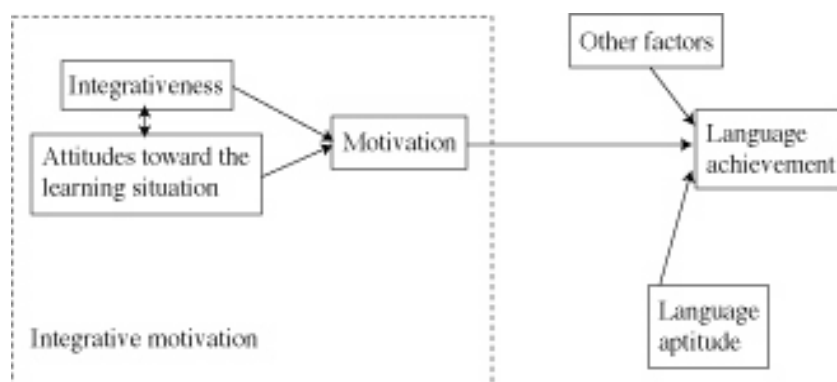


Figure 1. Gardner's construct of Integrative Motivation.

Parallel to this socio-psychological approach to L2 learning motivation, another major theory has developed from the 90s. A very influential article was written by Crookes and Schmidt in 1991 in which they argued for a more dynamic view of motivation. Thus, they asserted that Gardner's model left aside other important aspects of motivation since it did not take into consideration properly the L2 instructional situation. This shift toward an *educational approach* involves a view of motivation more cognitive in nature since it focuses amply on student's immediate learning context -where most L2 learning occurs- to find the sources of motivation among them.

In line with this idea, Dörnyei developed his own framework of L2 motivation in 1994, for which he specifically focused on motivation from an instructional perspective. He considered L2 motivation to be “a complex, multi-dimensional construct” (2003: 19) and, as a result, his model is conceptualized in terms of three levels in which the different components are integrated: *language level*, *learner level* and *learning situation level*. The *language level* encompasses aspects of the L2, including the culture, the community, and the values and benefits associated with it. The *learner level* refers to those individual characteristics that the student brings to the classroom, such as self-confidence, anxiety, L2 competence, etc. The *learning situation level* is concerned with intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors related to three main areas within a classroom context, which are *course-specific components* (course satisfaction, interest, expectancy of success, etc); *teacher-specific components* (teaching method, teacher personality, etc); and *group-specific components* (such as classmates’ cohesiveness, classroom goal structure, etc).

In this line, Dörnyei (2003), following Crookes and Schmidt (2001), calls for an education-centered approach taking into account the classroom context, identifying and analyzing classroom specific motivational conditions. Accordingly, Ushida concludes that “this model can be a useful framework not only for researchers and teachers to identify motivational sources but also to develop motivational strategies” (2005: 55).

As reviewed, recent research in motivation in L2 acquisition has pointed to those components that influence L2 students’ motivation as a way to find effective techniques to actively engage students in L2 learning to reach language competence. Traditionally, and given the time pressure in classroom contexts, teachers have not paid the necessary attention to strengthen motivation among students. In this respect, Dörnyei asserts that “teachers are supposed to teach the curriculum rather than motivate learners, and the fact that the former cannot happen without the latter is often ignored” (2003: 27). Accordingly, most of the investigations conducted have concluded that teachers play an essential role in enhancing and fostering students’ motivation, as it is stated by Bernaus (1989: 20): “motivation affects students’ foreign language acquisition, and show that the foreign language teacher’s personality and his/her way of teaching affects students’ motivation”. Undoubtedly, the body of literature concerning L2 motivation agrees on the crucial part of the teacher in this process but researchers also advised that students have different characteristics and therefore motivational techniques may influence every student in a diverse manner.

Thus, the current reality calls for teachers whose responsibilities involve taking the roles of initiator, mentor, ideal model, motivator, facilitator, supporter, etc. Besides, it is essential to create a motivating atmosphere of mutual understanding and active encouragement in which, as Pennington suggests, learners feel free to experiment and take risk (in Zhao & Lai, 2005: 11). Likewise, increasing students' self-motivating capacity is another essential requirement for learners to find the necessary inspiration to achieve one's goal, an attitude that teachers should cultivate in students.

In this similar vein, Watkins (2005: 96) states that "it is important [...] to provide useful models of learning techniques in order to help them become more efficient and effective when they study independently". Therefore, it is determining that the teacher provides the students with learning abilities and leadership notions as a way to build their confidence, autonomy and independence since, as Ushioda (in Yulin, 2005: 27) states, "autonomous language learners are considered motivated learners".

3. THE INTEGRATION OF THEATRE INTO ELT

In the previous block, the main concepts and theories related to motivation in teaching EFL have been defined. Given that the purpose of this study consists of analyzing the relationship between motivation, theatre and English teaching, the present block will focus on contextualizing the role of theatre in education, taking as a reference the teaching of EFL.

The idea of introducing theatre in the classroom setting is not new. In fact, theatre and teaching have gone hand in hand for years, as they share some of their foundational constructs. Theatre in schools was introduced to develop different abilities in students such as acting skills, improvisation techniques, expressivity, communicative competence or confidence, but many other gains have been found out. Dramatization in teaching does not strive to produce plays or train professional actors; drama in schools is regarded as a means and not an end.

When dealing with theatre in education, as Villajos states, "we should talk about programmes rather than just *plays*" (2017: 8) as the performers, being the students in this case, participate in the whole process of the production itself. Building up the story and the characters, setting the scene or holding a discussion after the performance are some of the activities in which students take part. The objective is involving them in the different steps of the performance and making them be an active part of the learning process. The bulk of all these elements together with the richness of all the learning styles applied will provide a truly

significant learning experience, both for the students and for the teachers involved (Báez Merino, 2009: 73).

Adolescence is characterized for being that period of notable changes and intense search for identity, in which the social circle becomes relevant. Additionally, it is usually an age packed with insecurities and confusion, in which certain relational behaviors that depend on the socialization process are set. Therefore, from the point of view of Díaz (2006: 437), the development of social skills at this stage is of vital importance, since adolescents are more flexible in learning new social behaviors than adults.

In this vein, theater, apart from being a powerful educational tool, can also be an effective weapon against social inequality. Social theater is a genre that was born looking for a change in society and to transform its reality and opportunities. It is aimed at guiding the possibilities of drama creation (imagination, body and verbal expression, creativity, concentration or breathing, to name but a few) towards an objective of communication and strengthening of communities and their individuals. In this genre, theater is explored as a meeting place being at the service of people and not the other way around, so the experience of the process is more important than the result itself.

In addition, acting involves an elaboration of characters and the creation and narration of stories through which, according to Báez Merino, students learn to work in a group and discover the path to self-knowledge and cultural understanding. It is also an excellent way of expressing oneself and a great manner to deal with extreme shyness, lack of coordination, insecurity or fear (2009: 74).

3.1.Potential and limitations of theatre in EFL.

Teaching English as a second language in an effective and assertive way is a demanding challenge that requires teachers to use dynamic and interactive activities to achieve significant results. Establishing an appealing atmosphere to fully develop communicative skills through stimulating activities is the main aim in any second language lesson, since a language is acquired more easily if the teaching methods are engaging. An alternative to accomplish this goal is, indeed, theatre. As reported by Fleming, using acting techniques in the classroom “is fun and entertaining and can therefore provide motivation to learn. It can provide varied opportunities for different uses of language and because it engages feelings it can provide a rich experience of language for the participants” (2006: 97).

Numerous are the gains associated to theatre as a teaching and learning instrument. As it has been pointed out above, it allows the students to be kinetically and emotionally involved in learning in a deeper manner and provides them with a sense of ownership over their learning since it allows them to be the central focus, leaving aside the role of the educator. The teacher acquires a more important role as the teacher becomes “a designer, planner, moderator, facilitator, coach, co-learner and supporter of students’ learning” (Lee, 2005: 238). In such a way, it is the teacher’s role to act as a mediator and facilitator to help students to effectively develop their cognitive skills and relate their own learning to the classroom learning experiences, empowering them in this process.

Dramatization has proved to have a positive influence on the learning of English, specifically on oral skills, since it involves the various channels or learning styles such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic, promoting cooperative and collaborative work. It has also been emphasized that the use of theater promotes language and vocabulary development as well as reading and writing fluency as expressing and understanding are the essence of theatre (Gualdrón & Castillo, 2018: 213).

According to research findings, theatre brings together many varied interrelated activities in its process favoring student to learn in all ranges and combinations of styles: active, reflective, theoretical and pragmatic (Baez Merino, 2009: 72). It also stimulates the imagination, fosters critical thinking and makes use of multiple intelligences. Furthermore, dramatic techniques act as a bridge between linguistic competence, social and citizenship competence and cultural and artistic competence (Motos, 2009: 8).

An increase in students’ motivation with the integration of acting techniques in the learning environment has been one of the most mentioned findings by teachers and scholars and one aspect that has received much attention. Pérez Fernández (2009) conducted a significant study to examine and quantify the impact of integrating theatre on pupils’ motivation and to relate it to issues such as behavior, learning outcomes, school attendance and truancy. The study found that the resulting motivation from using theatre was more related to a commitment to learning than to a task completion. Moreover, theatre-supported classrooms were felt by students to be very directed at the learning process. Further, all students and instructors involved in the study reported that drama had a motivational impact on the learning processes of engagement, group work, writing and editing, and presentation.

Nevertheless, there are also some limitations when using theatre in the classroom context that should be taken into account. Fleming (2006: 101) lists some of the challenges comprised in a theatre-based methodology. According to this author, drama involves changing established routines into approaches which are more unpredictable and open-ended. Problems of discipline with younger learners due to the enthusiasm produced by engaging in drama as well as problems of embarrassment and inhibition with older students are possibilities that should be taken into consideration. The author also admits that, although drama has been found out to enhance a high degree of motivation in students, sometimes it can be dull and fail to inspire. Finally, when using drama for SLL, the fluency and command of the language of the students can be a limitation.

Consequently, despite the great deal of advantages that theatre can bring to learners and teachers, if it is not properly integrated into the methodology and adequately adopted, they will not benefit from it. Because of that, teachers have to decide which techniques are more appropriate and effectively integrate them depending on their students' characteristics and learning objectives since, as Lee (2005: 239) clearly states, "it is not the tool that makes learning successful; it is the people".

4. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This block revolves, firstly, around the description of the procedure and methodology followed to carry out this study. The next sections present the objectives of this investigation, the participants in the study and the school in which it has been implemented, the material and instruments used, to finish with the data analysis process.

4.1. Description of Procedure and Methodology

An action research methodology has been carried out in this study. This is a type of educational research, commonly employed by teachers and educational professionals as a way to analyze more critically and substantially, and ultimately make better, their teaching practice. In relation to the choice of method, Martínez Miguélez (2000: 32) states the following:

The research method is entirely determined by the nature of the object or phenomenon that is going to be studied [...] For this reason, its strategies, techniques, instruments and procedures will be completely in tune with the nature of the specific problem.²

Assuming these words, given that the phenomenon to be studied in this case is the lack of motivation in a group of students in particular, a didactic unit has been put into practice with a theatre-driven methodology with the aim of analyzing how the emotions that arise when learning through acting techniques improves students' motivation towards the language, in an attempt to draw conclusions and reflect on them.

In doing so, according to Schön (in Martínez Miguélez, 2000: 32), the teacher would become a teacher-researcher as long as the following objectives are achieved, which are likewise set as a goal to be achieved in this investigation:

- To train and develop a reflective teacher in action and in the daily life of the classroom.
- To link the theory to the practice of the teacher in order to find solutions to educational problems.
- To reduce the gap between those who produce knowledge and those who apply it.
- To promote the teacher as subject and object of the production of practical knowledge derived from their classroom experiences.
- To develop an image of the teacher more attuned to their reality and their practice.

4.2.Objectives.

This study offers a theoretical framework on one of the aspects that most negatively affect learning English: lack of motivation, which brings about negative attitudes in the classroom and low participation. As a possible solution, it presents the implementation of a didactic unit based on theatre in which all the contents are worked through acting techniques in an attempt to monitor if this type of learning experience positively influences students' motivation for effective L2 acquisition. Accordingly, the general objectives of this paper are presented in what follows:

- Analyzing motivation, participation and negative emotions in learning English.

² Proposed translation. Originally: "El método de investigación está enteramente determinado por la naturaleza del objeto del objeto o fenómeno que se va a estudiar [...] Por esto, sus estrategias, técnicas, instrumentos y procedimientos estarán en plena sintonía con la naturaleza del problema específico" (Martínez Miguélez, 2000: 32)

- Motivating to create real, significant and continuous learning experiences over time, where the need for natural exposure to the target language is prioritized and in which the student is an active participant.
- Promoting the integration of theatre in English learning to allow the students to enjoy learning through socialization and autonomy.
- Checking that students' increased motivation due to the integration of theatre results in effective language acquisition.

To consider that the objectives established for this investigation have been achieved and apart from being able to answer these general questions raised, the essential condition is that the majority of the students reach the desired knowledge and academic objectives. Otherwise, the didactic unit based on theatre designed for this investigation will have failed.

4.3.Sample: School context and Participants

The investigation will be carried out in IES Monte Miravete. This school lies at the limit of the Region of Murcia, within a distance of 15 km to the heart of the city, an area known as *Vega del Segura*. With an eminently agricultural occupation and a mid-low socioeconomic level, the municipality counts on an increasing population of 11.000 inhabitants approximately. The immigration in the area has risen in the last few years, coming from Morocco, Ecuador and other Eastern countries such as Romania and Ukraine.

The school is situated at the core of the municipality, so most of the students live within walking distance to the school. It is also next to all the available amenities in the area: the library, the auditorium and sports grounds. These characteristics are essential since, given the nearby situation of the school, students and parents take an active part in school life by helping to organize workshops, extracurricular activities and festivals. Moreover, the school also benefits from activities and outings planned by the diverse departments to these facilities.

As for the characteristics of our school, it has an average size with 650 students enrolled and with an educational offer ranging from secondary education to upper secondary education and vocational certificates, as well as varied after-school activities, including English lessons, different sports, music lessons and the reading club.

For the present study, 17 students whose ages range from 12 to 14 took part. This is a group of students in Year 1 of Secondary Education. Their nationalities are diverse: 6 of them come from Morocco, 5 come from South America, 2 students are from Ukraine and 4 students have Spanish origin. This makes them share a global awareness and understanding of other cultures.

Regarding their level of English, most of them (65%) have a low command of the language in relation with the level expected. As for the rest, 12% of students have a high command since they have been attending extracurricular English lessons, and 23% of students have an average command. Together with this, it is also important to mention that, among our students, there are two students with special educational needs: a hearing impaired boy and a girl diagnosed with dyslexia. All in all, these characteristics have had a great impact on the methodology, being attention to diversity one of the main aspects that must be considered.

During the research, it was considered that the specific characteristics of this group might condition the investigation both positively and negatively. On the one hand, having such a small number of students would make it easier to develop certain activities of a dynamic nature, which would be more difficult to control if the number of students were larger. At the same time, it would also be possible to manage the difficulties that might arise more easily. On the other hand, the disruptive character of the students together with their low level of the English language could threaten the implementation of the didactic unit.

4.4. Material and Instruments

This block informs about the materials and instruments used during the implementation of the didactic unit. This section is not aimed at analyzing the results obtained after their employment, but to present them and comment on the elaboration and the rationale behind each of them. To make it easier, the instruments and material used have been grouped into two categories: those aimed at students and those aimed at evaluating the teaching practice.

4.4.1. Material and instruments aimed at students

The instruments aimed at the students are conceived and elaborated with two main purposes: on the one hand, to extract and identify the ideas of the students. On the other hand, that students become aware of their own level of knowledge as well as their process of learning. To do this, a student's diary and a questionnaire have been employed.

4.4.1.1. Student's diary

The objective of this instrument is for students to analyze their own learning process since they describe, argument and interpret what they have done in each session. The student's diary helps them gain more confidence in their skills and make them able to reflect on the product and the process of learning, assume greater responsibilities in the teaching-learning process and become more critical and reflective (Andreu-Andrés, 2009: 1). It also builds students' confidence and makes the evaluation process easier as students can find their gaps and achievements. Students' reflection over their own learning favors their autonomy and metacognition.

After the end of each session, students were given a few minutes to reflect on some aspects of the theatre-based methodology implemented such as the effectiveness, the functionality and the engagement, the relationship with their peers and teacher or the difficulties encountered. Students' responses on their diaries are helpful to make adjustments in the teaching process if necessary. Table 1 shows the student's diary with open-ended questions that they have to complete at the end of each session.

 Session No. _____		
Remember	A useful expression that you have learn today:	
	Some important words you have learnt today:	
Think	What activity did you like more? Why?	
	Are the activities useful to practice the language?	
	How was today's class environment?	
	Did you have any difficulty today?	
	What would you change from today's session?	

Table 1. Student's diary

4.4.1.2. Student's motivation questionnaire

Students were administered the same questionnaire both at the beginning of the investigation, before starting the didactic unit, and at the end of the unit to see the effects of theatre-based methodology on students' motivation towards language learning. A close-ended questionnaire was designed, adapting Schmidt, Boraje and Kassabgy's questionnaire on language learning motivation (1996: 65).

Due to the level and characteristics of the students, the questionnaire suggested in Schmidt et al. (1996: 65) was adapted and adjusted. 10 questions were selected encompassing different factors: questions 1, 2 and 3 revolve around intrinsic and extrinsic motivation; questions 6, 7, 9 and 10 ground on preferences for instructional activities; and questions 4, 5 and 8 are based on students' preference in learning strategies. The questionnaire had to be answered on a scale of one to three (1. Agree/ 2. Neutral /3. Disagree). The questionnaires were completed anonymously both times. Table 2 shows the questionnaire on language learning motivation.

This survey is confidential and anonymous.

Read each of the following statements and decide how much you agree or disagree with them.

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I enjoy learning English.			
Learning English is a challenge that I like.			
The main reason I need to learn English is to pass examinations.			
I think theatre is a good way to learn new things.			
I prefer learning English through traditional methods.			
Group activities and pair work in English class are a waste of time.			
I prefer an English class in which there are lots of activities that allow me to do things instead of just listening.			
I prefer to sit and listen and don't like being forced to speak in class.			

In an English class, I prefer activities and materials similar to real life.			
In a class like this, I prefer activities and materials that really challenge me so that I can learn more.			

Table 2. Motivation questionnaire

4.4.2. *Material and instruments aimed at evaluating the teaching practice*

The teaching practice is one of the keystones for the quality of education. Evaluating the teaching practice allows teachers to “rethink if what is done at school is on the right track. It is a substantial part of the teaching-learning process and makes it possible to obtain information on pedagogical practices to improve them”³ (Simari and Torneiro, 2009: 1). Under this perspective, the evaluation of the teaching process will allow teachers to reflect on their performance in the classroom, assess their professional development and progress in their effectiveness.

This process should not be carried out exclusively by the teacher who self-evaluates, but other members of the educational community can also participate, such as co-workers, parents, students, as well as external agents. However, in this case, due to time constraints during the investigation, the instruments used to evaluate the teaching practice are the teacher’s self-evaluation form and teacher’s diary. These instruments are listed and briefly explained in what follows.

4.4.2.1. *Teacher’s self-evaluation form*

This form consists of several sections revolving around the most basic and elementary questions about the teaching practice. Some of these sections are, for example, the level and treatment of the contents, the result of the tasks, students’ attainment of the set objectives, the relationship with the students and the effectiveness of measures to cater for diversity. The last section is intended to formulate suggestions to improve the teaching practice in the future.

Although this form could be expanded, a simple model that includes the most elementary and relevant issues has been preferred since the teacher's diary will act as a complement. Table 3 in appendix 2 shows the teacher’s self-evaluation form.

³ Proposed translation. In the original: “repensar si lo que se hace en la escuela va por buen camino. Ella es una parte sustantiva del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje y posibilita obtener información sobre las prácticas pedagógicas para mejorarlas” (Simari and Torneiro, 2009: 1)

4.4.2.2. Teacher's diary

For this investigation, a teacher's diary has been used to record data in order to identify existing problems in the classroom at different levels and try to formulate different solutions, whose evolution and result will also be analyzed in the diary. Following Porlán and Martín (1991: 39) "the first descriptions, more general, should lead to a more analytical view as long as the different events and situations recorded in the diary are categorized and classified" ⁴so that the diary will evolve "to cease to be exclusively a written record of the reflective process, to progressively become the organizing axis of an authentic professional investigation"⁵ (Porlán and Martín, 1991: 64)

In line with this idea, the teacher's diary used in this investigation has been mainly aimed at collecting information from the different tasks worked through the sessions. Table 2 in appendix 2 shows the teacher's diary. It consists of four columns: the first of these columns presents a brief explanation of the activity, the second and third columns are used to write positive and negative issues that may arise during the implementation of the tasks and activities, and a last column for observations. The registry of these aspects will be as exhaustive as possible to carry out remedial teaching and make the necessary adjustments in our teaching practice.

4.5. Activities, tasks and project.

In the unit designed for this investigation, a communicative approach has been followed. This methodology emphasizes that the ability to communicate in the target language is the ultimate goal of language learning. Communicative tasks are characterized by trying to produce meaningful and realistic communication. In consequence, greater emphasis will be placed on skills, lessons are more learner-centered, and there is more use of authentic materials.

In this line, the sessions designed gradually move from comprehensible input to comprehensible output. That is, at the beginning of the unit, more time is devoted to students'

⁴ Proposed translation. Originally: "las primeras descripciones, de un mayor nivel de generalidad, deben conducir a una visión más analítica a medida que se van categorizando y clasificando los distintos acontecimientos y situaciones recogidas en el diario" (Porlán and Martín, 1991: 39).

⁵ Proposed translation. Originally: "para dejar de ser exclusivamente un registro escrito del proceso reflexivo, para convertirse progresivamente en el eje organizador de una auténtica investigación profesional" (Porlán and Martín, 1991: 64).

exposure to the language, whereas as the unit moves forward, the level and amount of students' production increases. Similarly, this same pattern is found in each session: students receive input at the beginning of lessons to move towards a more productive phase at the end where learners engage in communicative activities to practice the content that has been presented previously.

Each of the sessions designed for this study follows a sequence with different phases, namely connection, activation, demonstration and consolidation. A brief explanation of each of the different phases is offered in what follows:

- The *connection phase* consists of finding out what students know or think about a given topic. The objective of this first step is that students connect with the learning environment and get engaged in the class. It also serves to give learners a big picture of the lesson helping them to set goals and objectives for the lesson. Varied activities for are used for this connection phase, such as watching videos, guessing looking at pictures, songs, etc.
- In the *activation phase*, new contents are introduced to our learners by either presenting it in a way that is engaging and memorable or by providing discovery activities that encourage students to research, experiment, explore and analyze. The objective is, therefore, to let students engage with the new content themselves.
- In the *demonstration phase*, the teacher guides students to integrate the new content into their own existing knowledge. The objective is for learners to develop their skills and linguistic knowledge by experimenting in a safe and supportive environment, making mistakes, getting feedback and building competences.
- During the *consolidation phase*, students review everything they have learnt and how far they have come. The goal is to prepare learners to transfer the learning to their lives, so it is the part where students start to make connections to the contents and what they may do with them outside the classroom.
- The session finishes with the *closing phase* in which students are left some minutes to reflect on how they have felt, how they have organized themselves, if they think they have been heard and to express doubts and suggestions. They will use their *student's diary* to reflect on these issues.

The following eight charts render explicit each session that form the didactic unit designed to conduct this research. Each chart represents a session in which the following elements are outlined: learning objective(s) and instruments, description of the different activities within each session, measures to cater for diversity, materials, resources, groupings and classroom layout, and evaluation of the teaching and learning.

SESSION 1: READING + VOCABULARY		
Learning objectives The student...		Instruments
Understands specific and general information in an article about different people going on adventures.		Direct observation
Discriminates different sounds in English.		Direct observation
Can describe things in nature.		Direct observation
Contents		
Lexis	Language structure and function	Phonetics
Vocabulary related to nature (island, ocean, mountain, river, waterfall, etc)	Descriptive structures (present simple)	Words containing the sounds /æ/, /ɑ:/ and /ʌ/
PROCEDURE		
1. Warming up (10'): teacher introduces the new unit and the learning objectives. Several pictures of people going on adventures are shown for students to connect with the unit and start making predictions. 2. Presentation (10'): a short text is read where vocabulary appears in context. Teacher checks that students understand the words. 3. Practice (15'): Students stand up forming a circle. Each student has one sticker with one drawing and the word. One student clap other student's hand and says the word the student has. The student that receives the clap, repeats the word of the other student and claps the hand of a third student saying his/her word at the same time. This process is repeated and speed is encouraged. The rationale behind this activity is for students to practice pronunciation, retention by means of repetition and implementing a kinesthetic learning style. 4. Production (20'): Taboo game. Students are divided in two teams and they are given a set of cards. They have to describe the word given (those related to nature) without saying some terms.		
Attention to diversity		
Extension, reinforcement and graded in difficulty activities. Group work and peer tutoring. Open-ended activities.		
Materials and resources	Groupings and classroom layout	
Internet resources, visual resources, student cards, phonetic chart	Groupings: individually, big group and whole-class.	
Evaluation of the teaching	Evaluation of the learning	
Direct observation, analysis students' performances (teacher's diary) and Self-evaluation form.	Direct observation	

SESSION 2: GRAMMAR		
Learning objectives The student...		Instruments
Can express past actions.		Direct observation
Contents		
Lexis	Language structure and function	Phonetics
Action verbs (climb, travel, dive, jump, etc)	Finished actions structures (past simple)	-ed realizations.
PROCEDURE		
1. Warming up (10'): teacher presents the learning objectives. Students watch a YouTube video of an ultrarunner talking about her past experience running the race Marathon des Sables. Students copy all the verbs they hear. 2. Presentation (10'): Teacher explains affirmative and negative past simple structures. 3. Practice (20'): Miming activity. Students are given a set of words. One student mimes an action in the nature. The other students guess. 4. Production (15'): Improvisation game. Students are given some verbs (e.g watch, explore, climb, etc). They talk about things they did or did not do last summer.		
Attention to diversity		
Extension, reinforcement and graded in difficulty activities. Group work and peer tutoring. Open-ended activities.		
Materials and resources	Groupings and classroom layout	
Youtube video, internet resources, worksheets, visual resources, student cards, phonetic chart	Groupings: individually, pairs, big group and whole-class.	
Evaluation of the teaching	Evaluation of the learning	
Direct observation, analysis students' performances (teacher's diary) and Self-evaluation form.	Direct observation	

SESSION 3: READING		
Learning objectives The student...		Instruments
Understands general and specific information in a theatre play.		Direct observation
Contents		
Lexis	Language structure and function	Phonetics
Vocabulary related to fictional stories (pirate, boat, treasure, etc)	Finished actions structures (past simple)	-ed realizations.
PROCEDURE		
1. Warming up (10'): teacher introduces the learning objective of the session. Teacher introduces the play students are going to read. 2. Presentation (10'): a scene of the play "Treasure Island" is read out loud (see appendix 1). Each student is given one character of the play. Emphasis is placed on rhythm and intonation. 3. Practice (15'): Teacher checks that students have understood the story. For that, she uses several objects brought to class that appear in the scene (e.g. spyglass, pirate hat, etc) and asks for their importance in the scene. Vocabulary is also worked in this activity. 4. Production (25'): Controlled acting time. The scene that has been read is represented in class. Half of the class will start representing the scene, when the teacher says "STOP", the other part of the class continues with the scene. They have to use the objects that appear in the scene and they are allowed to read their lines. Emphasis is placed on students' movement around the stage.		
Attention to diversity		
Extension, reinforcement and graded in difficulty activities. Group work and peer tutoring. Open-ended activities.		
Materials and resources	Groupings and classroom layout	
"Treasure Island" play (see appendix 1), objects.	Groupings: individually, big group and whole-class.	
Evaluation of the teaching	Evaluation of the learning	
Direct observation, analysis students' performances (teacher's diary) and Self-evaluation form.	Direct observation and Oral presentation.	

SESSION 4: LISTENING		
Learning objectives The student...		Instruments
Understands general and specific information in scene of a theatre play entitled “Treasure Island”		Direct observation
Contents		
Lexis	Language structure and function	Phonetics
Vocabulary related to fictional stories (pirate, boat, spyglass, etc)	Finished actions structures (past simple)	-ed realizations.
PROCEDURE		
1. Warming up (10’): teacher introduces the learning objective of the session. One picture related to the scene of the play they are going to listen to is shown for students to connect with the session and start making predictions about what they think it is going to happen. 2. Presentation (12’): Students listen to the next scene of the play “Treasure Island” (see appendix 1). Teacher asks for comprehension and students share their ideas. 3. Practice (12’): A worksheet with the script is given to students. There are gaps that students have to fill in while they listen to the audio for the second time. 4. Production (20’): Students are divided in 2 groups. Characters of the scene are distributed, so that the same character will be represented by 2 different students belonging to each group. The first group will read the scene, without moving. The second group will listen to it and act it at the same time, without speaking. Groups will change roles.		
Attention to diversity		
Extension, reinforcement and graded in difficulty activities. Group work and peer tutoring. Open-ended activities.		
Materials and resources	Groupings and classroom layout	
worksheets, checklists, visual resources, phonetic chart	Groupings: individually, big group and whole-class.	
Evaluation of the teaching	Evaluation of the learning	
Direct observation, analysis students’ performances (teacher’s diary) and Self-evaluation form.	Direct observation and Oral presentation.	

SESSION 5: SPEAKING		
Learning objectives The student...		Instruments
Can ask and answer questions about past events.		Oral presentation
Contents		
Lexis	Language structure and function	Phonetics
Action verbs (climb, travel, dive, jump, etc); state verbs (have, like, live, etc)	Finished events structures (past simple affirmative, negative and interrogative)	-ed realizations.
PROCEDURE		
1. Warming up (5'): teacher presents the learning objective of the session. 2. Presentation (15'): Students watch an interview to a famous character. They answer to some questions to check for comprehension. 3. Practice (10'): Students are given a worksheet for them to complete patterns of past simple interrogative forms related to the interview they have watched (e.g _____ you _____ a big family?). 4. Production (25'): In pairs, students choose a character of the play "Treasure Island". They prepare an interview asking him/her about their past life events. They also think about what the character would answer. Each pair acts the interview out.		
Attention to diversity		
Extension, reinforcement and graded in difficulty activities. Group work and peer tutoring. Open-ended activities.		
Materials and resources	Groupings and classroom layout	
Vimeo video, internet resources, worksheets, phonetic chart	Groupings: individually, pairs, big group and whole-class.	
Evaluation of the teaching	Evaluation of the learning	
Direct observation, analysis students' performances (teacher's diary) and Self-evaluation form.	Direct observation and Oral presentation.	

SESSION 6: WRITING		
Learning objectives The student...		Instruments
Write a short theatre scene about the ending of the “Treasure Island”		Portfolio
Contents		
Lexis	Language structure and function	Phonetics
Vocabulary related to fictional stories (pirate, spyglass, island, etc)	Finished actions structures (past simple)	-ed realizations.
PROCEDURE		
1. Warming up (5’): teacher introduces the learning objective of the session. 2. Presentation (10’): teacher shows the elements to write drama in a PPT presentation. 3. Practice (25’): In groups of 4, students plan and write their own ending for the story “Treasure Island” 4. Production (15’): In groups, students act their ending out in front of the class. The best ending is chosen.		
Attention to diversity		
Extension, reinforcement and graded in difficulty activities. Group work and peer tutoring. Open-ended activities.		
Materials and resources	Groupings and classroom layout	
Internet resources, worksheets, checklists, visual resources.	Groupings: groups of four and whole-class.	
Evaluation of the teaching	Evaluation of the learning	
Direct observation, analysis students’ performances (teacher’s diary) and Self-evaluation form.	Direct observation, Portfolio	

SESSIONS 7: PROJECT PREPARATION		
Learning objectives The student...		Instruments
Adapt and prepare the scenes of the play “Treasure Island” for the performance		Direct observation
Contents		
Lexis	Language structure and function	Phonetics
Vocabulary related to fictional stories (e.g. spyglass, pirate, island, etc)	Finished actions structures (past simple)	-ed realizations
PROCEDURE		
1. Warming up (10’): teacher introduces the learning objective for the session. The group is divided into three subgroups. 2. Planning (45’): Students work on their preparation of the scene. Each subgroup of student is given one scene out of the three we have been working throughout the unit. They have to adapt the scene, set the scene, design the costume and act the scene out in the next session. The teacher monitors the students’ work.		
Attention to diversity		
Extension, reinforcement and graded in difficulty activities. Group work and peer tutoring. Open-ended activities.		
Materials and resources	Groupings and classroom layout	
internet resources, checklists, visual resources, phonetic chart	Groupings: big group.	
Evaluation of the teaching	Evaluation of the learning	
Direct observation, analysis students’ performances (teacher’s diary) and Self-evaluation form.	Direct observation and Oral presentation.	

SESSION 8: PROJECT PRESENTATION		
Learning objectives The student...		Instruments
Performs the scene of the play entitled. “Treasure Island”		Oral presentation
Contents		
Lexis	Language structure and function	Phonetics
Vocabulary related to fictional stories (e.g., spyglass, pirate, island, etc)	Past events structures (past simple)	-ed realizations
PROCEDURE		
1. Warming up (10’): teacher introduces the learning objective of the session. A song is played to motivate students and set the mood. 2. Production (35’): on stage! The different groups act their scene out in the assembly hall. Other groups in the school are invited to the play. 3. Closing (10’): reflections and suggestions in group. Students fill in the self-evaluation form.		
Attention to diversity		
Extension, reinforcement and graded in difficulty activities. Group work and peer tutoring. Open-ended activities.		
Materials and resources	Groupings and classroom layout	
Youtube videos, internet resources, worksheets, self-evaluation form.	Groupings: big group and whole-class.	
Evaluation of the teaching	Evaluation of the learning	
Direct observation, analysis students’ performances (teacher’s diary) and Self-evaluation form.	Direct observation and Oral presentation.	

4.6.Data Collection

To carry out this study, a quantitative and qualitative approach has been followed since it is aimed at examining both numerical and non-numerical data in order to understand opinions, experiences or emotional reactions that appear during second language instruction. Two methods to collect data have been applied: diaries and questionnaires. Specifically, the students' diaries were used to collect qualitative information, while the motivation questionnaire was used to gather quantitative data.

Before starting teaching the didactic unit designed for this study, participants were administered a questionnaire related to their motivation towards the language. The theatre-based sessions were implemented for a total of two weeks (8 sessions), as part of the existing syllabus. At the end of the unit, students were passed the same questionnaire on motivation. Data was collected and registered (see appendix 2).

As for the qualitative data, at the end of each session, during the *closing phase*, students were given some minutes to reflect and write their perceptions in their diaries. This data was collected in a daily basis. The same procedure was followed regarding the teacher's diary. Observations and reflections were registered during and after each session. The teacher's self-evaluation form was completed at the end of the didactic unit.

4.7.Data Analysis

The main objective of this study was to investigate how the integration of a theatre-based methodology motivates students to learn English as a foreign language. The advantages identified in the investigation include students' course satisfaction, greater engagement, increased collaboration and better attention to diversity. What these aspects have in common is that they sustain students' motivation to learn a L2. For a better understanding, the findings have been divided into different categories responding to students' perceptions when learning English through theatre.

- *The theatre-based approach to learning motivates students.*

The changes in L2 learning theories, pedagogical designs and teaching methods have been accelerated in the past years with the purpose to expand the classroom walls to the outside

world. The role of teachers in this respect has been paramount, since it is just through the combination of effective resources and pedagogical theories when the learning experience is enhanced and ensured.

It has been observed that students experience an ample range of emotions while learning through theatre, and these emotions exert a positive influence on all the activities performed by students in the learning environment.

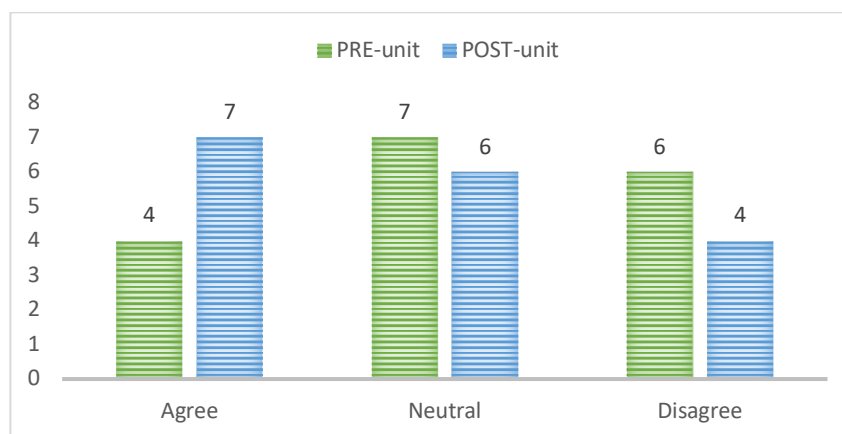


Figure 1. Students' questionnaire. Q1 "I enjoy learning English"

The integration of theatre proved to be a motivating factor for students since it was perceived as a completely new system of learning never experienced in any other subject before. Hence, 41.2% of the participants enjoyed learning English after experiencing learning through a theatre-based approach, showing an increase of 17.6% in relation to the pre-unit questionnaire, as can be seen in figure 1. Furthermore, according to the information gathered from students' diaries, they stated to be motivated when using these acting techniques since they encouraged them to develop their creativity as well as helped to create a collaborative work environment in which students feel comfortable to accomplish different task with their classmates.

The results of the investigation show that those activities that go out of the traditional schedule of a classroom and move away from what students are used to, are considered by them as appealing and interesting. Consequently, students feel more motivated to learn with a theatre-supported approach than with traditional methods.

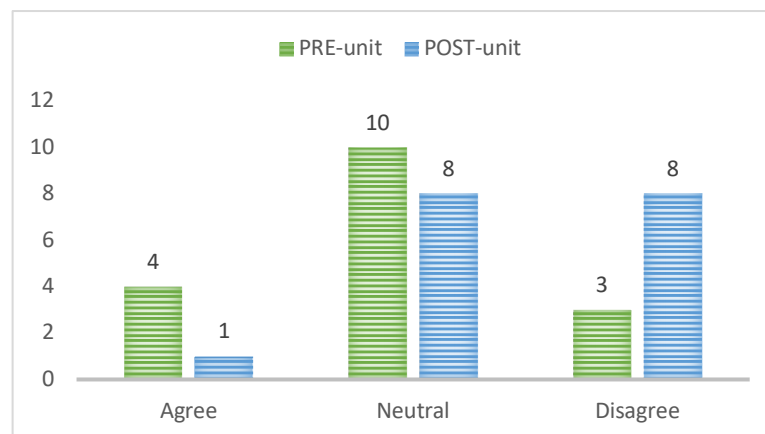


Figure 2. Students' questionnaire. Q5: "I prefer learning English through traditional methods".

As figure 2 shows, students are satisfied and feel more motivated when experiencing a different method for learning a foreign language. 47% of this group of students prefer to attend a lesson using acting techniques rather than adopting a traditional method. These students point at creativity, interest and motivation as the elements that theatre-based activities provides them with in contrast to a more conventional methodology. In addition, one student has reported that she “can practice more English in these [theatre-based] lessons than in traditional lessons” (S7⁶, Student’s diary data, 11.05.2022). Consequently, students developed more fluency in the language and helped to increment their motivation and positive attitudes toward both the language task and the language itself. In this line and according to Dörnyei⁷ (2003: 18), learner’s interest and satisfaction are important motivational components related to the learning situation. Thus, sustaining students’ interest and satisfaction to learn English as L2 is the best way to successfully motivate students to accomplish their goal.

○ *The social experience involved in a theatre-driven approach motivates students*

Over the last decades, much of the theories about L2 instruction have been directed at developing a language methodology involving a more communicative approach with the objective to make learners use actively the language. In this line, Ellis (2005) lists among his principles of instructed language learning that L2 learners need to be provided with massive amounts of L2 input as well as with ample opportunities for output for successful acquisition (2005: 216). Nevertheless, getting students to speak in a foreign language is a difficult matter

⁶ Student No.7

⁷ Dörnyei’s *Framework of L2 motivation*.

of L2 instruction for a number of reasons: shyness, lack of command, lack of opportunities, lack of conversational partners, etc. Hence, students may demotivate and their attitudes toward language learning may become negative.

However, the introduction of theatre into the classroom context has opened up a wide range of possibilities for language learning. During the investigation, it has been found out that introducing acting-based activities improve communication between students, being favorable to develop collaborative learning by facilitating the organization of group activities and then maximizing their opportunities to interact. Students' perceptions on the usefulness of group work have also changed after experiencing the theatre-supported approach, as figure 3 displays.

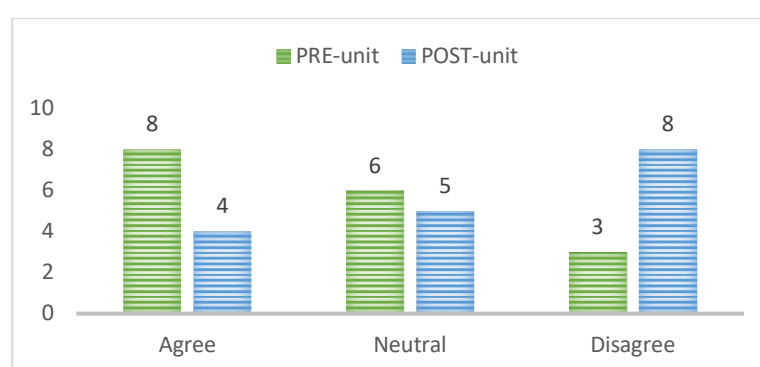


Figure 3. Students' questionnaire. Q6: "Group activities and pair work are a waste of time".

Similarly, the data collected from students' diaries show that the affective responses occurring in the course of learning do not result only from experiencing theatre-based activities and the setting, but also from the communication among students in it. Likewise, during the course of the investigation, it was observed and recorded in the teacher's diary that during the phases of design, planning, production and assembly of the project, students maximized their opportunity to practice and negotiate meaning in the target language. Thus, it was perceived that using acting techniques serves as a mediating tool to reinforce the development of students' self-confidence and security when producing language, increasing their motivation for its interactive and innovative character. This environment of interaction and teamwork undoubtedly contributed to achieving the learning objectives (Teacher's diary data, 19.05.2022).

- ***The authentic environment created by theatre motivates students***

Many language instructors face the difficulty of having to create the appropriate environment in which students feel the need to use the FL, sometimes unsuccessfully. Nonetheless, it has been noted that integrating theatre in the classroom allowed students to have contact with the real world and this positively influences their L2 learning. This is due to the effort made by learners in order to produce a play for a real audience at the end of the didactic unit, which turns this resource into an authentic and meaningful tool to foster communication in the foreign language (Teacher's diary data, 20.05.2022). This same perception was retrieved from the data collected from students' questionnaire, as they show an increased preference for materials and activities that are similar to real life in an English class after having experience the theatre-based didactic unit:

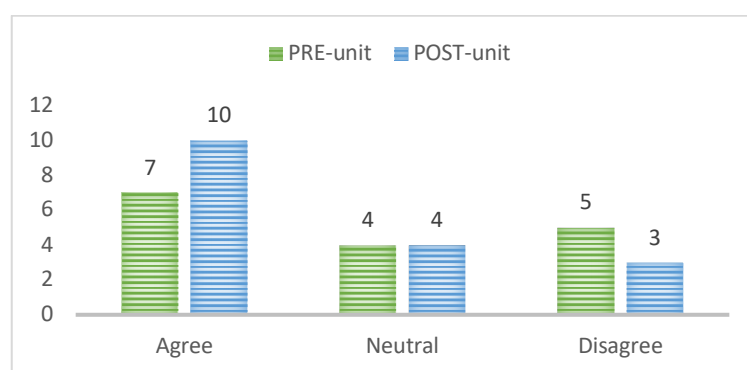


Figure 4. Students' questionnaire. Q9: "In an English class, I prefer activities and material similar to real life".

In a similar vein, one participant in the research derived “a sense of fulfillment from acting for another group of students” (S2, student's diary data, 20.05.2022). Thus, it was found out that students' motivation to produce language increased when they were provided with an authentic audience and an authentic purpose.

- ***Personalization of the learning experience with a theatre-based instruction motivates students***

The integration of theatre also gives an answer to the discussion on how students can exercise their individual choice and meet their needs within the educational system, since it allows learners a more personalized learning experience. Selecting the appropriate

methodology provides students with the opportunity to gain greater control over their learning and overcome specific barriers to acquire greater knowledge of the target language.

During the course of the investigation, it has been observed a huge difference in students' attitudes between traditional and theatre-supported language lessons. In traditional classrooms, the students may not feel comfortable to speak individually in front of their class, or may not feel inclined to participate in a given speaking activity. This fact may demotivate them and their attitudes toward language courses may develop into refusal. The difference in students' perceptions in relation to speaking in class can be seen in figure 5:

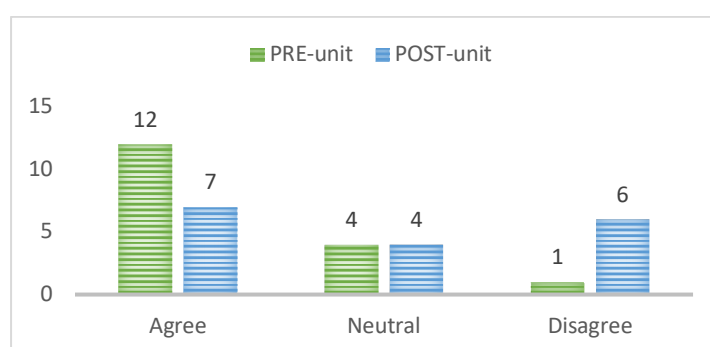


Figure 5. Students' questionnaire. Q8: "I prefer to sit and listen and don't being forced to speak in class"

Ample information was obtained both from the questionnaire and from students' diaries about how they perceived lesson activities and their involvement in class. Some students described their participation during the implementation of this unit as "good", "positive", "usually high", "having a good disposition", etc. Nevertheless, they also state that this is not always the case, especially in those activities in which they have a more passive role. Figure 6 reflects this data, as it shows a change in students' attitude towards having a more active role in language lessons. Thus, giving all students the opportunity to become more autonomous learners has a motivational impact as they can adapt learning to their own needs and interests.

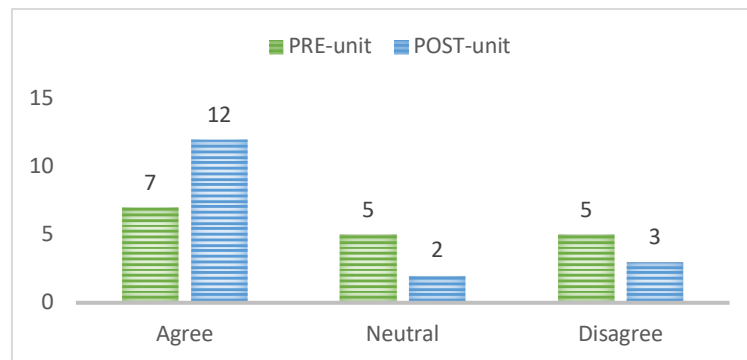


Figure 6. Students' questionnaire. Q7: "I prefer an English class in which there are lots of activities to do things instead of listening".

After all, the use of these tools not only creates a less stressful and more personalized environment which increases students' motivation toward the English language, but it also stimulates the production and reception of language amplifying the opportunities to learn.

○ ***Impact of students' theatre-supported motivation on learning and attainment***

Emotions and motivation have been a vital field of study for L2 acquisition theoreticians. The hypothesis from what most investigations started was whether the development of a positive or negative attitude toward the target language and its community would facilitate or, on the contrary, hinder the acquisition of the language. Nowadays, ample evidence demonstrates that "the learner's enthusiasm, commitment and persistence are key determinant of success or failure" (Dörnyei, 2003: 5).

Accordingly, most of the students participating in the research noticed progress and improvement in their speaking skill and persisted in having positive feelings about their advances in oral presentations. They had also shown interest to perform the proposed activities of writing their own final scene for the play and improved in their written language skills. The teacher likewise noted in the diaries that there was a noticeable increase in the learners' vocabulary development, since students were actively asked to put the target words into practice and make meaningful sentences.

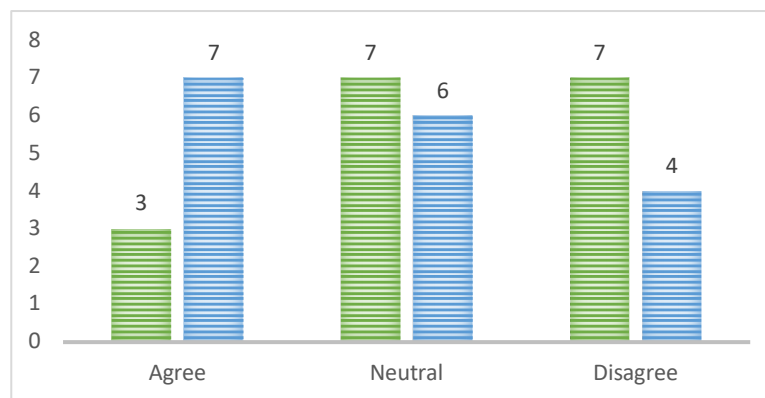


Figure 7. Students' questionnaire. Q10: "In a class like this, I prefer activities and materials that really challenge me so that I can learn more".

Students' effort to learn the language was tested in the questionnaire administered to participants, finding a more positive correlation between subjects' learning effort after implementing a theatre-based approach than with traditional methods, as can be seen in figure 7. As outlined above, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) included effort as one of the basic components of motivation, and Gardner (2001) encompassed effort, together with time and persistence, within the ingredients needed to learn a second language. Accordingly, those students who were motivated by the use of ICT and therefore exerted themselves in the tasks were more successful in acquiring the L2.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

This study targeted at analyzing how using theatre in the teaching-learning process influences students' motivation toward learning English as a foreign language. Results have evidenced that students prefer a theatre-supported methodology instead of the traditional approach since they consider that learning becomes more appealing and interesting. Learning English through acting techniques has also been stated to be positively related to course satisfaction and activity engagement, two elements that enhance students' motivation for language learning. Both the social experience and the authentic environment involved in the integration of theatre proved to be motivational factors for learning English as a result of the negotiable nature of students' interactions and the opportunity for students to produce output with an authentic purpose. Likewise, personalization of the learning experience brought about by theatre-driven methodology was a predictor of increased motivation since students prefer to participate and play the leading role in their learning.

Accordingly, the findings obtained in this investigation seems to be congruent in that the integration of theatre into the language classroom evidences students' positive reaction and increasing motivation to learn the target language, which, in the end, entails a significant benefit to acquire the language.

Undoubtedly, we are witnessing a very important revolution in the field of education. Integrating effective and diverse methodologies into the learning context has opened a wide range of possibilities, being an incomparable tool of freedom, equality and ideas. Nevertheless, the potential of a theatre-based methodology largely depends on the teaching practice. That is how the teachers' role has been modified over the last years: the knowledge society has urged instructors to adopt a critical and flexible attitude in their educational activity, being prone to constant self-learning and permanent updating. Teachers have to establish a new relationship with students, acting as facilitators, learning guides and advisers to help them work with the new resources, and leaving aside their role as absolute source of knowledge. Thus, it is essential that teachers' teaching process focus on helping students to develop desire to learn a foreign language by making use of different practices and ways of learning.

Therefore, the pedagogical implications obtained from this study involves that the incorporation of a theatre-based methodology in the language classroom has to be done with the appropriate design and implementation to guarantee optimal use by learners. It is a requirement that instructors take students' motivation as an essential component of any activity that leads students to the successful acquisition of the language.

6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The investigation and development of this paper leads to consider new issues which may contribute to complete this field of research. Once that the motivating effect of theatre on language learners has been demonstrated, it would be interesting to prove how much time does this effect last in students. That is to say, to check whether students' motivation has undergone some changes months after this methodology has stopped to be used for language learning. On the other hand, further research could be designed to figure out what language skills benefit more from theatre integration and what specific acting techniques helps to enhance each skill. Likewise, it would be useful to analyze the motivating effects of specific acting techniques on second language students in a further study.

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APPENDIX 1. Materials

Scene of “Treasure Island” (adapted from Bryant, n.d.)

Scene 16a

The treasure site. ALLARDYCE, and other SKELETONS, are standing, as if hanging, each pointing with one arm. These could be scattered around auditorium walkways. GUNN is hiding behind a shrub. SILVER, CAP’N, JIM, JOB, MORGAN, MERRY, HARRY, and ALAN walk lining up. MORGAN is holding the map. JIM is at the back, tied up around his waist; SILVER holds the other end of the rope. All are looking a bit tired and lost.

JOB What does the treasure map say again?

MORGAN Skeleton island, east-south-east and by east.

HARRY Well, we’ve come that far at least.

MORGAN Tall tree.

MERRY There are enough of those about here.

MORGAN Spy-glass shoulder, bearing a point to the north of nor’ nor’ east.

SILVER I’d take that to be this place.

JOB Still a mighty large area to be searching.

MORGAN Ten feet. X marks the spot. But the X is too big to be much good, now that we’re so close.

ALAN, who has moved further ahead, cries out.

ALAN Over there! Someone on the hill!

HARRY So there is. The wretched doctor, perhaps.

DICK He’s dead. Long dead. Why, he’s nothing more than a skeleton. *(Cuffs ALAN.)* You sounded like you was bein’ attacked.

The group inch closer and inspect ALLARDYCE.

JOB That ain’t a natural way for a body to lie. He’s been left out here.

JOB By thunder! This is one of the six he killed. Allardyce. You remember Allardyce, Morgan?

MORGAN Aye, he owed me money, he did. I never got that back.

ALAN *(fearfully)* Six men Flint killed to protect this treasure. And six men are we.

MERRY We’ve got nothing to fear from Flint. I saw him dead with my own eyes.

JOB Aye, his body’s down below, but if ever a spirit walked, it was Flint’s.

SILVER Come, lads. Poor Allardyce was left out here to point the way forwards, and forwards we shall go.

The group follows the direction that ALLARDYCE points, and then the direction each subsequent SKELETON points.

GUNN (*singing ghostily*) Fifteen men on a dead man's chest, yo ho ho and a cappuccino. Drink and the devil have done for the rest, yo ho ho and a cappuccino. (*Continues singing until his discovery.*)

All except SILVER react in terror to the singing, in their own ways.

MERRY It's Flint!

MORGAN They was his last words he ever spoke.

DICK (*muttering a prayer*) Lord, I know I've been a sinner, but please take me to thy kingdom...

SILVER Shipmates, I'm here to get that treasure, and I'll not be beat by man or spirit. I never was afraid of Flint in his life, and by the powers, I'll face him dead.

JOB Stop, Silver! Don't you cross a spirit.

SILVER Spirit? Well, maybe. But hold on a minute – there's an echo. Now, no man has ever seen a spirit with a shadow, so why would its voice have an echo?

JOB, MORGAN, MERRY, HARRY, and ALAN look at one another, wholly convinced.

MORGAN Well, that's so. You've a head on your shoulders, Long John Silver. And come to think of it, it didn't sound like Flint's voice. It sounded more like...

JOB By the powers! Ben Gunn!

JOB draws back the scenery to reveal BEN GUNN in his hiding place. GUNN continues singing ghostily, even as he turns to see ALL looking at him. With a final, disappointed 'Ooooooh', he stops. There is a pause while all assess the situation. Then, at the same time, SILVER, JOB, MORGAN, ALAN, MERRY, and DICK fall on GUNN, who jumps up and manages to evade capture. There is a brief chase.

MERRY Get back here, you wretch!

GUNN Still going after the treasure, boys? (*ghoulishly*) Well, Ben Gunn did his level best to warn you away from your fool's mission. You only have what's coming to you.

GUNN exits. With cries of rage, MERRY and JOB start after GUNN.

Scene 16b

MORGAN Leave it. It doesn't matter.

DICK Dead or alive, nobody minds Ben Gunn.

SILVER Stop! we're here! There's the tall tree. Now for that last part of the instructions. Ten feet. Now, take some rope and count ten feet.

JOB, MORGAN, DICK, and ALAN each walk to a separate corner of the stage. They turn towards each other and begin counting steps inwards. By 'Ten!', they have reached a central, forming an 'X' with their ropes. They can also start from each corner of the house, passing the rope through the audience; final treasure location could be in the auditorium as well.

JOB, MORGAN, DICK, ALAN: One! Two! Three! Four! Five! Six! Seven! Eight! Nine! Ten!

ALL X marks the spot!

DICK Pass me a shovel.

MERRY and HARRY join the other four, carrying shovels and other digging implements. All six begin frantically digging. ALAN taps a shovel tentatively against the floor, as if he's hit something.

ALAN I think I've hit something!

JOB, MORGAN, HARRY, and ALAN drop their shovels and bend down to pick up crates marked 'FLINT'S BOOTY'. Some of these are hidden further afield in the audience, so they spread out to retrieve them. Others look into their boxes with a growing sense of disappointment.

HARRY Empty. Empty.

JOB Every one of these boxes, empty.

DICK What's going on here?

ALAN This must be a trick. The real treasure is buried deeper.

JOB, MORGAN, MERRY, DICK, and HARRY start digging again.

MERRY Don't worry, lads!

All turn to look at MERRY hopefully.

MERRY *(holding up a single gold coin, which he's found among the empty boxes)* I've found a two guinea piece. *(In sudden rage, he throws it at SILVER.)* Two guineas! That's the treasure I've come all this way for, is it?

SILVER Dig away, boys. Perhaps you'll find it down there.

MERRY Mates, do you hear that? *(Points accusingly at SILVER)* I tell you, that man there knew the treasure was gone.

JOB, MORGAN, HARRY, and ALAN stand to look accusingly at SILVER.

JOB It's written on his face.

All move in slow-motion.

HARRY and ALAN draw their muskets and aim at SILVER. SILVER draws two muskets and shoots HARRY and ALAN one after the other. They collapse.

APPENDIX 2. Data collection instruments

Table 1. Results of the questionnaire administered to students before and after the teaching

Questions*:	Students' answers**					
	PRE-UNIT			POST-UNIT		
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
I enjoy learning English.	4	7	6	7	6	4
Learning English is a challenge that I like.	3	5	9	6	3	8
The main reason I need to learn English is to pass examinations.	10	5	2	7	5	5
I think theatre is a good way to learn new things.	3	8	5	7	7	3
I prefer learning English through traditional methods.	4	10	3	1	8	8
Group activities and pair work in English class are a waste of time.	8	6	3	4	5	8
I prefer an English class in which there are lots of activities that allow me to do things instead of just listening.	7	5	5	12	2	3
I prefer to sit and listen and don't like being forced to speak in class.	12	4	1	7	4	6
In an English class, I prefer activities and materials similar to real life.	7	4	5	10	4	3
In a class like this, I prefer activities and materials that really challenge me so that I can learn more.	3	7	7	7	6	4

unit.

*Questions adapted from Schmidt et al. (1996)

**Shown in number of students (out of 17 students that responded to the questionnaires).

Table 2. Teacher's diary.

SESSION/ DATE	ACTIVITY	POSITIVE ASPECTS	NEGATIVE ASPECTS	COMMENTS
1 09.05.2022	Vocabulary presentation	Half of the group participate actively. The other half do not disrupt.	Most of them show no interest. They should already know many of the words we are revising	Alicia and Cristina participate in the activity. They usually show no interest in any activity.
	Vocabulary practice	Ss ⁸ like the movement of the activity. They are engaged. Ss remember the words. Ss achieve the objective with this activity.	3 students are late. I have to explain the activity several times, disrupting it. Ss show reluctance at the very beginning.	Although carrying the activity out has been difficult at the beginning, it was a success. Ss seem to be engaged in the process.
	Production: taboo game	The competitive nature of the activity makes students get involved. Ss have fun.	Teams argue several times. I need to stop the game twice. I need to translate for them some of the words in the cards.	Sheila and Carlos do not want to speak in front of the class at the beginning. Sheila brings herself to do it finally. Carlos does not.
2 11.05.2022	Grammar presentation	Ss get past simple structure although it takes more time than expected.	Ss do not know the meaning of very common verbs. It is difficult for them to understand some sentences.	Students' interest is as usual in this type of more theoretical activity.
	Practice: miming activity	Ss like the kinesthetic nature of this activity. High involvement in the activity.	Lack of variety in the actions they have to mime.	I created 12 cards. Once they have done them all, interest in the activity decreases. More variety in the cards next time.
	Production: improvisation	Ss are able to put the vocabulary into practice.	Low participation of students.	This activity has not worked properly. After all the movement required for the previous activity, getting students sat

⁸ Ss stands for *students*.

				again to create full sentences was perceived as boring for them.
3 12.05.2022	Presentation: reading the scene of the play	Students like the idea of having one character of the story.	They show no interest at the beginning of the story. Three students refuse to read in class.	As a way to get Ss into the story, I encouraged them to imitate pirates' voices. They completely changed their mood and interest towards the activity.
	Practice: checking comprehension	Higher participation than usual in this type of activity.	Students do not respect everyone's turn to speak.	Using objects makes students connect more with the story and the activity. I have noticed a higher participation than in similar activities without using any objects.
	Production: controlled acting time.	This activity has been very well received by the students from the beginning. They are getting used to acting in front of their classmates.	Fluency and naturality was poor because they were reading and acting at the same time. But it was expected somehow.	This activity has caught their attention from the very beginning and they have been very engaged.
4 13.05.2022	Presentation: listening the next scene of the play	The minutes before listening allowed to connect with the previous scene and for students to guess and predict what they are going to listen to are very useful to develop this skill.	Most students show demotivation before listening, they say they never understand anything.	This skill needs to be worked more in class. I gave them tips to lower their anxiety filter. It seems they work.
	Practice: gap filling	-	Lack of respect to others' turn to speak. Low interest towards this activity. Difficulty to understand what they listened	I can notice the difference in students' participation and behavior with the different activities. This activity completely failed in its objective.
	Production: reading and acting.	This activity works much better than the previous one. Good feelings at the end of the activity.	Students are afraid at the beginning; they do not move or act. They feel shy and tense.	This activity would work better if students are used to it.

			The second group acts it out in a less rigid way.	
5 16.05.2022	Presentation: interview watching	The audiovisual nature of the activity engages the students.	4 students are late. I have to play the interview and explain the activity once more.	I need to keep an interview with the group's counselor to try to avoid students being late at school.
	Practice: patterns	Ss ask a lot of questions. It seems this activity has made them think.	Some students fail to write the pattern correctly. They keep forgetting writing the auxiliary "did" to make questions.	Past simple interrogative pattern needs to be worked further. Some students keep forgetting the auxiliary.
	Production: interviewing a character	Lucía, Adrián and J. Carlos have been very involved in the elaboration of the interview. They usually show a high demotivation towards class work.	Some interviews are very short and simple for the level expected.	More time needs to be devoted to this part of the lesson. Not all pairs have time to act their interview in front of the class.
6 18.05.2022	Presentation: how to write a play	Ss easily understand how to write a play.	I need more time than usual to make Ss pay attention and be quiet.	Throughout the unit, they have become familiarized with the structure to write a drama play.
	Practice: writing their own ending	The stories they have created are very creative and imaginative. Ss create new characters in their endings.	One of the writings is very poor for the level expected. Two plays are quite similar in the evolution of the story, students accuse each other with plagiarism.	Some students refuse to do this activity with the partners I chose for them primarily. I let them create the groups themselves this time.
	Production: acting their ending out	-More confidence on stage than before.	Not enough time for the acting of all the plays. 10 minutes needs to be taken from the next class.	The arrangement of these three activities has worked better than a more traditional approach to writing. The students have showed more effort in their production.
7 19.05.2022	Planning: preparing their scene in groups	Ss seem to feel comfortable in their groups. They understood what they have to do and got engaged in the activity.	Misunderstandings in group 2. Mariano and Adrián are not able to work together.	Ss have practiced the language more than normal in this activity. Except for the problems in group 2 between these 2 students, the groups are

				working correctly and achieving the objectives.
8 20.05.2022	Production: on stage!	All students come to class today. Ss are very excited. One of the groups have prepared costumes for their scene. They also bring makeup. One group asks some teachers to be part of their cast. They agree.	One of the groups has not prepared their scene as good as the other groups. Some students did not know their lines by heart and had to read them.	Ana Lucía has told me she woke up very early this morning to study her lines. She was excited. Ss had talked about their performance to many other groups at school.
	Closing: reflections.	They liked having an audience. Confidence and spontaneity. They admit they felt embarrassed and nervous at the beginning, but they have enjoyed performing for other groups.	Ss complain about the little time allotted in class to prepare the performance. Two students show little interest in the play.	Sense of fulfilment in students. Except for two students, all of them have achieved the learning objectives for this unit.

Table 3. Teacher's self-evaluation form.

TEACHER UNIT EVALUATION FORM

YEAR/CLASS: *E1B/2021-2022.* UNIT TAUGHT: *Unit 8 "Life is an adventure"*

TEACHING MATERIALS USED: *Theatre-based unit. The play worked during this unit is titled "Treasure Island" written by R. L. Stevenson. PPT presentations were also used. Contents materials were uploaded to Google Classroom. Students' book "Dynamic" (Oxford Ed.)*

SECTION 1: Teaching Plan

- What activities did I leave out /add? Why?

No activities were left out since the lessons were carefully planned for an investigation. Nevertheless, the time devoted for some production activities was scarce (see teacher's diary).

- Did I change my original plan of how I was going to cover this unit? If so, why?

I had been teaching this group for months before I devised the unit for the investigation. Therefore, it was planned knowing what tasks and activities would probably work. Nevertheless, more time was needed for some activities and for the final project.

- Did anything take much more or less time than I originally thought? Do I know why?

In those activities devoted for the presentation of contents (grammar, vocabulary, how to write a drama play, etc), more time than expected was needed. The theoretical nature of these activities makes students be less attentive.

- Were measures for diversity well implemented?

Most activities were graded in difficulty and open-ended so that students could produce the language they can.

SECTION 2: Success of the unit

1. Strong points / good results

-Higher motivation towards the language and the language learning environment.

- Good results in relation to the group work.

-Authentic purpose and real audience.

-Students having an active role and taking responsibility of their learning.

-Higher achievement of learning objectives.

2. Weak point / unsatisfactory results

-Lack of attendance and lateness.

-Disruptive behaviour.

SECTION 3: Students' response

- What did the students think of the unit? (What I have observed in class)

Students enjoyed learning through theatre since it is appealing and interesting. They have felt more engaged than usual in the activities and tasks planned for each session. Group work has turned out positive although some students were reluctant at the beginning of the unit. Besides, the opportunity for students to produce output with an authentic purpose and for a real audience made them strive to do it better.

SECTION 4: Final comments and conclusions

- Changes to make when teaching this unit next time; measures to be taken in the near future; revision work needed; etc.

-More time allotted for production activities.

-More variety in the cards created for the games (taboo, mime, etc).

-More time allotted for final project.

-Let students create their own groups to work.

APPENDIX 3. Final project.
Pictures of the performance.





