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ADAPTATION OF ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS IN ORDER TO INCREASE MOTIVATION AMONG STUDENTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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ADAPTATION OF ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS IN ORDER TO INCREASE MOTIVATION AMONG STUDENTS IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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Abstract: Motivation is a decisive factor when learning a second language such as English. For this reason, this study wanted to measure the motivation of students with respect to English classes by means of a pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire. In between these two questionnaires, an intervention was carried out with adaptations of the activities and materials normally used in English classes with the intention of seeking an increase in students' motivation. In essence, the aim was to observe whether a meaningful learning that is close to the context and environment of the students has an influence on their motivation with respect to this subject and language.

Second language learning, foreign language teaching, motivation, meaningful learning, primary education

Resumen: La motivación es un factor decisivo a la hora de aprender una segunda lengua como es el inglés. Por ello, en este trabajo se ha querido medir la motivación del alumnado respecto a las clases de inglés mediante un pre-test y un post-test. Entre estos dos cuestionarios se ha llevado a cabo una intervención con adaptaciones de las actividades y materiales que normalmente se utilizan en las clases de inglés con la intención de buscar un incremento en la motivación del alumnado. En esencia, se ha querido observar si un aprendizaje significativo y cercano al contexto y entorno del alumnado tiene influencia en la motivación respecto a esta asignatura e idioma.

Aprendizaje de la segunda lengua, enseñanza de la lengua extranjera, motivación, aprendizaje significativo, educación primaria

Laburpena: Motibazioa faktore erabakigarria da ingelesa bezalako bigarren hizkuntza bat ikasteko orduan. Horregatik, lan honetan ikasleek ingeleseko saioekiko duten motibazioa neurtu nahi izan da, aurre-test baten eta post-test baten bidez. Bi galdetegi horien artean, ingeleseko eskoletan erabili ohi diren jarduerak eta materialak egokitu dira, ikasleen motibazioa areagotzeko asmoz. Funtsean, ikusi nahi izan da ikasleen testuinguru eta ingurutik hurbil dagoen ikaskuntza esanguratsu batek eragina duen ikasleek hizkuntza eta irakasgai honekiko duten motibazioan.

Bigarren hizkuntzaren ikaskuntza, atzerriko hizkuntzaren irakaskuntza, motibazioa, ikaskuntza esanguratsua, lehen hezkuntza

1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is a factor that affects second language learning. Furthermore, it has been shown that students who show a strong motivation to learn English usually acquire a higher level of language proficiency than those who are bored and dissatisfied with their English classes. This is because being motivated encourages you to have an open and willing attitude towards the study of the language (Kazarian & Prida Reinaldo, 2014). By encouraging the practical application of knowledge, taking it closer to the learner's context and the deep understanding of the matter, meaningful learning can motivate students by demonstrating the relevance and usefulness of what they are learning (Huneault, 2009).

The following pages consist of an investigation that measures the motivation of the students in the 4th grade of *San Viator Ikastetxea* in the English lessons. The aim of this research is to verify whether a change in the typology of the activities planned in the English lessons may result in an increase in the motivation of the students. To this end, an intervention will be designed and carried out for the purpose of achieving an improvement in their desire to learn a second language. The activities carried out during the didactic unit will be based on meaningful learning in order to be more attractive to students.

This paper will include the following sections. Firstly, a theoretical framework where the influence of motivation in English lessons and how to increase it will be explained objectively. Then, the steps of the methodology of the study will be stated. Afterwards, the results of the study will be presented, first the results of the pre-questionnaire and the post-questionnaire and then a comparison of both of them. This project will be finished with the conclusions and the bibliography.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 LEARNING OF A SECOND LANGUAGE

Learning English is crucial for the future of people today. It has become an indispensable tool in professional, academic and personal life, as it has been established as a language of global communication. For this reason, many schools include English as a compulsory subject in their curriculum (Cook, 2016).

The learning of a second language as English is different from the learning of the mother tongue, as it requires specific techniques and strategies. Accordingly, it is necessary that students strive to learn the language and that they receive a quality education that enables them to reach the required levels of fluency and competence in the language (Osuna, 2011). To this end, teachers must expose students to meaningful experiences that help them to internalise the structures of the language (Ausubel, 1983).

Despite its relevance, learning English presents a number of obstacles for learners, causing many to fail in their attempts to learn it. Common difficulties include pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and listening comprehension. It is therefore essential that learners receive the support they need to overcome these barriers and acquire knowledge effectively (Siripipatthanakul et al., 2023).

Furthermore, it is significant to bear in mind that the aim of learning English is not only to obtain a basic level of knowledge, but also to develop fluent and effective communicative skills in the language. In order to achieve this, it is key that students practise oral and written expression constantly in an environment that promotes its development (Siripipatthanakul et al., 2023).

Several factors may affect the process of acquiring and internalising the systems of the new language. Those factors are diverse and affect each learner differently depending on the individual itself and the surrounding environment. For this reason, a distinction is made between external and internal factors (Sun, 2019). Firstly, with regard to the external ones, the social context of the students, the family influence, social media and the exposure to the language could be highlighted (Ruolin, 2019). In contrast, concerning the internal factors the following ones are worth mentioning: age, personality, self esteem, learning styles and motivation (Osuna, 2011). This last one will be explained in depth below.

2.2 MOTIVATION IN SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Motivation is a key factor in people's lives, influencing their behavior, decisions and achievements. Schunk, Pintrich & Meece (2008) affirm that motivation refers to the force or drive that moves a person to perform an action or achieve a goal. In education, motivation is essential for learning and academic achievement. Students who are motivated are more likely to learn and accomplish better than those who are not (Kitjaroonchai, 2012).

Moreover, motivation is a crucial factor in the second language learning process as it directly influences the student's willingness to learn and their level of engagement in the process. Motivated learners tend to perform better in language learning, feel more committed to their learning, are willing to invest more time and effort in it and are more likely to persevere in the process despite difficulties that may arise (Anjomshoa & Sadighi, 2015). This, at the same time, may increase their interest in the language, their self-confidence and self-esteem, which in turn may lead to greater success in learning (Reeve, 2012).

Conversely, according to Pintrich y Shunk (2006) lack of motivation may result in less effort and dedication on the part of the learner, which in turn may negatively affect their progress as they may not feel involved in the learning process. This can lead to decreased interest in the language, frustration and, ultimately, abandonment of learning.

2.2.1 Types of motivation: Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation

Motivation can be classified into two main types: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. On the one hand, intrinsic motivation refers to motivation that comes from within the individual and focuses on the desire to learn the language for its own benefit (Deci & Ryan, 2008). In other words, personal satisfaction from learning. For example, a person who studies a second language because he/she enjoys learning about other cultures and wants to communicate with people from different backgrounds is intrinsically motivated.

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to the motivation that comes from factors external to the individual, such as rewards or punishments (Kong, 2009). For instance, a person who studies a second language in order to get a job promotion or get a good grade in school is extrinsically motivated.

Both types of motivation can be effective in driving learning, but intrinsic motivation is generally considered more valuable as it promotes deeper and longer lasting learning (Deci & Ryan, 2008). As stated by Ling (2013), when a person feels intrinsically motivated, they tend to be more engaged and dedicated to the task or activity itself, and are more likely to find the assignment satisfying and enjoy the learning process.

Finally, teachers should focus on identifying the type of motivation their students have and to try to foster their intrinsic motivation, although it should be noted that this is not

always easy to achieve (Ling, 2013). Furthermore, it is fundamental that teachers work on creating a positive learning environment and designing activities that allow students to be motivated by their own interest in the task. On the other way round, extrinsic motivation can be a useful tool to encourage learning, especially in situations where students do not see the intrinsic value in the task or activity. However, excessive use of extrinsic motivation can lead to learners feeling dependent on external rewards and decrease their intrinsic interest in the task (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009).

2.2.2 The role of the teacher in motivating learners

The role of teachers is crucial in motivating second language learners. Teachers can have an impact on learners' motivation through a variety of strategies and practices (Pintrich & Schunk, 2006). Firstly, it is important that teachers demonstrate a genuine interest in students' progress and well-being. This can be achieved through a positive and supportive attitude, providing constructive and frequent feedback as well as establishing effective and open communication. In addition, it is relevant that teachers provide resources and tools to enable them to continue learning independently, which can help to maintain their motivation (McLean, 2003).

In addition, teachers should encourage students' active participation and foster creativity and critical thinking (Agudo 2001). Teacher support should focus on adapting activities and teaching techniques to the individual needs of students (Jang, Reeve and Deci, 2010). Moreover, as claimed by Kong (2009), in order to foster motivation for learning, it is necessary that teachers create a supportive and stimulating atmosphere, which provides students with opportunities to learn and to demonstrate their skills and knowledge.

2.2.3 Strategies to motivate learners

There are different strategies and techniques that can be used to motivate learners in the English classroom. Some of them are listed below:

- **Encourage active participation.** Encouraging students to actively participate in class can help keep them motivated and engaged. Asking their opinions and making them feel that their ideas are valuable can help them feel more involved in the learning process (Agudo, 2001).

- **Set clear goals.** Helping students set clear and achievable aims can be an effective way to motivate them. Goals can be both academic and personal and should be realistic and specific (Becerra & McNulty, 2010).

- **Provide constant feedback.** Providing regular feedback to students helps them understand their strengths and weaknesses, and allows them to adjust their behaviour and study strategies accordingly (McLean, 2003).

- **Use technology and multimedia.** Incorporating technology and multimedia into lessons can help keep students involved and motivated. For instance, PowerPoint presentations, educational videos or games can be an effective way to teach (Keengwe et al., 2008).

- **Teach creatively.** Creative and unusual lessons can make students be successful in English classes (Agudo, 2001). Creativity can manifest itself in many ways, such as through the use of interactive activities, group projects or educational games.

- **Make learning relevant.** Helping students understand how classroom content applies to the real world can make learning more relevant and meaningful to them. Practical examples and real-world applications can be an effective way to keep students motivated (Huneault, 2009).

- **Recognise progress and use positive reinforcement.** Recognising achievements and praising students for good work or behaviour can motivate students to continue to work hard and succeed in the future, as well as boost their self-esteem. This can be as simple as offering recognition in class or providing rewards and prizes (Agudo, 2001).

- **Create a positive environment.** Maintaining a positive and welcoming classroom environment can help students feel more comfortable and motivated. This can be achieved by creating clear rules and expectations, demonstrating empathy and respect for students, and creating opportunities for collaboration and teamwork (Jang, Reeve and Deci, 2010).

- **Provide opportunities for choice.** Allowing students to have some control over their learning can increase their motivation. Providing choice in terms of project topics, assignments or activities can make students feel more engaged (Agra et al., 2019).

- **Encourage collaboration and teamwork.** It can be beneficial to provide opportunities to work in groups on projects or activities and promote a collaborative classroom environment (Domingo, 2008).

- **Provide challenges.** Offering challenges and tasks that are appropriate to the ability level of students can help keep them stimulated. Setting challenging but achievable goals can help students see their progress and feel moved to reach their purpose (Huneault, 2009).

2.3 MEANINGFUL LEARNING

Meaningful learning is an educational approach that focuses on deep understanding and practical application of knowledge. Rather than simply memorising information or facts, students who learn meaningfully seek to make connections between what they are learning and what they already know, as well as to apply what they are learning to real-world situations (Ausubel, 1983). Two basic conditions for meaningful learning to take place are, first, that the new knowledge must be linked in a non-arbitrary and non-literal way with knowledge that the learner already has mastered, and second, that the learner must be predisposed and motivated to learn. Moreover, in this way, the knowledge becomes richer, more developed and stable. In this approach to learning, the learner takes an active role, that is, the learner develops and produces their own knowledge (Moreira, 2019).

Meaningful learning is based on constructivist learning theory, which holds that students construct their own knowledge from their prior experiences and their interactions with the world around them (Agra et al., 2019). Students who learn meaningfully are active in the learning process, as mentioned before, which enables them to better understand and retain the information they are learning (Vallori, 2014). Finally, it is worth mentioning that one of the principles on which this type of learning is based is the non-centralisation of the textbook. In this case, it advocates the use of diverse materials, real and rich ones, that bring diversity

to the sessions and that make students and teachers not only rely on the typical textbook (Moreira, 2019).

2.3.1 Comparison: Meaningful learning vs Mechanical learning

Meaningful learning and mechanical learning are two different approaches to the acquisition of contents and skills. In second language learning, the mechanical approach focuses on repetition and memorisation of vocabulary, grammar and phrases without necessarily understanding the structure and use of the language (Agra et al., 2019). That is to say, it focuses on the exact reproduction of information and not on the development of skills or understanding of the wider context in which the information is found. In mechanical learning, information is presented in isolation and the learner is expected to memorise it and reproduce it in a test or task without necessarily understanding how it relates to other concepts or how it applies in practical situations. This approach is often used in traditional education, where students learn through repetition and memorisation of information rather than deep understanding and practical application (Moreira, 2019).

In general, mechanical learning is considered less effective than meaningful learning. Although memorisation and repetition can be useful for second language learning, it is essential to combine this approach with meaningful learning, which focuses on deep understanding and connecting ideas (Moreira, 2019). This involves active participation, hands-on exposure to the language, through conversations and exercises that emphasise real communication, understanding the context and connecting information to other ideas.

2.3.2 Strategies to foster meaningful learning

Different strategies are known to be followed when wanting to carry out meaningful learning in the classroom.

- **Relating new knowledge to what is already known.** By connecting new concepts to prior knowledge and experiences, students can make meaningful connections that help them better retain and apply the information they are learning (Ausubel, 1983).

- **Provide practical examples.** Concrete examples and practical applications can help students understand the relevance of the content they are learning and apply it to real-world situations (Huneault, 2009).

- **Making connections between different areas of knowledge.** By helping students make connections between different areas of knowledge, a deeper and more holistic understanding of the world around them can be fostered (Vallori, 2014).

- **Provide opportunities to apply knowledge.** By providing opportunities to apply knowledge in practical, real-world situations, students can see the usefulness and relevance of what they are learning, which helps them to better retain the information (Agra et al., 2019).

- **Encourage reflection and critical thinking.** By encouraging reflection and critical thinking, students can better understand the connections between different concepts and apply knowledge to new situations and contexts (Chrobak, 2017).

- **Be related to the learner's environment and context.** The matter must be brought closer to the real context and environment of the students so that they can give it a real meaning and see themselves identified and involved in it (Vallori, 2014).

In short, meaningful learning focuses on fostering deep understanding and practical application of knowledge, rather than simply memorising information, by using strategies that help students connect new concepts to prior knowledge, apply knowledge in practical situations and encourage reflection and critical thinking.

2.3.3 Benefits of meaningful learning

Meaningful learning has numerous benefits for students. Firstly, the deep understanding of knowledge. By fostering deep understanding of knowledge, meaningful learning allows students to understand how different concepts are related and how they apply in real-world situations (Vallori, 2014). Relating to that, it also benefits long-term retention. By connecting new concepts to prior knowledge and experiences, students are better able to retain the information they are learning and remember it in the long term (Vallori, 2014). In addition, by helping students make connections between different areas of knowledge,

meaningful learning fosters a more complete and holistic understanding of the world around them (Vallori, 2014).

On the one hand, meaningful learning promotes critical thinking and creativity. By encouraging reflection and critical thinking, it helps students develop problem-solving and creative thinking skills (Chrobak, 2017). On the other hand, by applying knowledge in practical, real-world situations, students can feel more confident and capable in their ability to apply what they have learned, so their confidence and self-efficacy improves (Reeve, 2012). Finally and very relevant to the topic, the relation of meaningful learning with the increase of motivation among students, by encouraging the practical application of knowledge, meaningful learning can motivate students by demonstrating the relevance and usefulness of what they are learning (Huneault, 2009).

In summary, meaningful learning has many benefits for students, including deep understanding of knowledge, long-term retention, motivation, critical thinking and creativity, holistic connections between different areas of knowledge, and confidence and self-efficacy. These benefits can help students be more successful in learning a second language.

2.3.4 Types of meaningful learning

There are different types of meaningful learning. Some of the most important ones are discovery learning, cooperative learning, experiential learning and outdoor education. Firstly, with regard to discovery learning, this type of learning is based on the student learning for themselves through exploration and experimentation. The students discover new ideas and concepts and make connections between what they already know and what they are discovering. This approach to learning is based on the idea that students retain knowledge better when they discover it for themselves rather than simply memorise it. In discovery learning, students are actively involved in the learning process and acquire problem-solving, decision-making and independent learning skills (Ausubel, 1983).

Continuing along this line, experiential learning is an approach in which students learn through direct experience. Learning in real-world situations is encouraged, allowing students to apply their knowledge and develop practical skills. Through these activities, students have the opportunity to discover concepts and principles in a practical and tangible context. This allows them to build deeper and more meaningful knowledge, and helps them to

apply what they have learned in real-life situations. Furthermore, experiential learning can be more engaging and motivating for students, as it allows them to actively participate in their own learning process (Kolb, 2014).

To continue, outdoor learning is an educational approach in which students learn in a natural or outdoor environment, rather than in a conventional classroom. In this approach, natural resources and the environment are used to promote learning, exploration and experimentation. Its benefits include the personal aspects of self-improvement, participation, motivation, creativity and interest, as well as those related to the learning of a specific didactic content. In this way, students adopt a much more active and social stance (Norling and Sandberg, 2015)

Finally, in cooperative learning, students work in groups to achieve a common goal. Teamwork and collaboration are encouraged so that students learn from each other. In addition, cooperative learning fosters positive interdependence, which means that students motivate each other and feel responsible for their own and their peers' learning. Moreover, it also improves their ability to work as part of a team, develops social and emotional skills, increases their confidence and improves their academic performance (Domingo, 2008).

3. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to measure pupils' motivation in English classes and to intervene in the classroom by adapting both the material and the activities in an attempt to increase their enthusiasm and motivation for learning a second language. These adaptations are intended to take into account the motivational strategies explained above. In addition, the principles of the intervention will be based on meaningful learning, trying to avoid a mechanical one.

3.1 Participants

The participants who took part in this study are the 4th grade students of San Viator school in Sopuerta. Sopuerta is a rural village of about 2600 inhabitants surrounded by mountains and other similar small towns. All of the students who took part in this study grew up in this rural environment. In this school there is only one class per grade, so the 19 students who made up the class in which the study is carried out are the only ones in grade 4.

Of the 19 students in the class, 8 are boys and 11 are girls and all of them are between 9-11 years old. Within the classroom there is a diversity of both academic level and personalities, as well as students with special needs, something that is taken into account when carrying out the study.

3.2 English lessons: a brief description.

In relation to English lessons, they use the *Tiger Books* from Macmillan, both Pupils and Activity Book. English classes are based on following the activities proposed by the book and in internalising vocabulary and grammar in a mechanical way, repeating the same types of exercises in all units throughout the course.

With regard to the different skills, reading is always worked on in the following way. Students read the text proposed in the book individually and answer the comprehension questions by writing in their notebooks. Sometimes the teacher reads the text aloud. Concerning the listening, the procedure consists of listening to the audio twice and then filling in the activities in the book. In relation to speaking within *Tiger Books* there is no activity aiming at children having a conversation with their pairs. Students speak out loud individually to answer the teacher's questions. There is usually not much participation as the level of English is low and the exposure of these exercises leads to failure in front of the class.

Therefore, because of the way they usually work in the classroom, kids are used to spending the English lessons listening to the teacher and filling the book. The low level of listening and speaking skills is noticeable because they have not internalised the language in a way that allows them to receive and produce it fluently. However, when it comes to writing, grammar and vocabulary they are quite fast and skillful as they are used to filling in the book in a mechanical way.

3.3 Data collection

3.3.1 Procedure for data collection

The research was carried out in the following way: Two questionnaires were designed to measure students' motivation for English lessons and between the two questionnaires an intervention was carried out. In this way, the aim was to measure whether the questionnaire's

results improved after the intervention. Both questionnaires were validated by the English teacher of the course, who knows both the students' English skills and personal characteristics and needs.

Therefore, the study started with the pre-questionnaire, which was divided into two sections. In the first section, students were asked several questions to measure their motivation to learn English at school. In addition, in the second section they were asked about activities they would like to see implemented in future English lessons. In order to carry out this first questionnaire, the students left the classroom in small groups of 3-4 students and they used computers/tablets. The instructions for answering the questions were explained to the group and they were guided through the test by means of interpretation problems or issues with the computer/tablet. This was done in this way as the students of this grade are not yet able to follow the instructions of this questionnaire with the whole class together, as they do not have enough computer literacy.

Then, as mentioned above, an intervention was designed and carried out. This didactic unit included a complete topic from the academic programme, which in this case was topic 6 from Macmillan's "Tiger" books titled "Countryside". This intervention lasted 4 weeks, that is to say, 13 sessions. In the unit designed, the contents, objectives and competencies that would have been commonly worked on following the book were maintained.

The aim of this intervention was to change the mechanical activities that the book proposes and to integrate meaningful activities that are close to their environment and that allow them to internalise the real meaning of what they learn, in order to make these sessions attractive and exciting for them. This unit is intended to be based on experiential and discovery learning, cooperative learning and outdoor learning. That is why the activities and materials have been adapted to the real environment of the children in which they are more actively involved, thus seeking a link between the theme of the programme and aspects of the children's life and environment. For example, the material of one reading has been adapted and instead of reading the comic proposed by the book, a comic has been designed in which the pupils in the class are the main characters.

Moreover, many of the activities were carried out outside the classroom, where the pupils could interact with their peers and their environment while internalising the subject

matter. For instance, one of the readings of the unit dealt with living beings in the forest, the students went down to the school garden during that session so that when they finished reading, they could look for the animals and plants that we had learnt about in the text and they could see them and learn about them in real life. In addition, the students in the questionnaires expressed that one of their favourite activities in the English classroom was watching videos. Therefore, during this unit, the audio was replaced by videos, so that students could link what they were listening to with images. Furthermore, once the video has been watched, debates will be proposed relating the topic to the reality of the students and experiences or stories that have to do with it will be shared. In this same way, opportunities will be provided for students to communicate in small groups, so that they can collaborate, help and learn from each other. In addition, at all times they will be provided with the language they need to use so that they have it to hand and encourage them to use it. The didactic unit developed and explained session by session can be found in Annexe 3.

Once the intervention was over, a post-questionnaire was carried out, asking again the same questions about their motivation, in the hope that their desire to learn English during this intervention would have been greater. In addition, they were also asked if they liked this way of learning English and what was their favourite activity of the whole didactic unit. In order to do this second questionnaire, the same small group dynamic was used as in the first questionnaire.

3.3.2 Tools for data collection

Two instruments have been used to carry out this research. Both questionnaires have been designed on this platform with google forms that can be answered by accessing the link. The data collected in the forms have been analysed with Excel and so are the different graphs designed".

4. RESULTS

As mentioned in the previous section, two questionnaires were carried out; one prior to the intervention and one at the end of it. The first one was aimed to discover the students' perception of English as a subject and to measure their motivation during these hours. In addition, they were also asked about what activities they would or would not like to do in

future English classes. By contrast, the second section looked for information on whether pupils' motivation had increased during the intervention carried out and sought to know if the activities designed were successful and to their liking. Thus, the results obtained in both questionnaires and the comparison of both are detailed below.

4.1 Results of the pre-questionnaire

The results of the pre-questionnaire are as follows. To begin with, in the first section of the pre-questionnaire, 47% of the students said that they do not feel motivated in the English sessions. In addition, 47% also claimed that they do not have a good time in these classes. To continue, 58% responded that they feel lazy when it is time for English class; therefore, a higher percentage of students answered that they feel lazy when it is time for this subject, even though in the previous questions they answered that they are motivated and that they do have a good time. To follow this aspect, 79% of the class considered English classes to be boring. On the other hand, only 37% of the students said that they find it difficult to learn English. In spite of the above results, 90% affirmed that learning English is useful for them.

Finally, in this first section of the questionnaire, students were asked about their favourite and least favourite activities in English class. Regarding the activities they like to do, these were the answers: 13 said that their favourite part is playing games, 5 answered that they like it when they watch videos and 1 student highlighted the songs. On the other hand, regarding the things they don't like; 5 students mentioned that what they like least is homework, 3 said that the worst thing is exams, 7 answered that they don't like to follow the book and finally 4 students said that the worst thing for them is to be sitting in class without being able to move.

Regarding the second section of the first questionnaire, the results are as follows. On the one hand, 100% of the students answered that they would be happy to spend time outside during English lessons. On the other hand, 95% responded positively to learning about Sopuerta and its surroundings in English. In addition, 90% of the students answered that they would be interested in putting into practice in real life what they had learnt in the English sessions. To conclude this first questionnaire, students were asked to suggest activities they would like to carry out in the next English sessions. The responses were as follows: 6

proposed to have the lessons outside, 5 said it would be nice to do more games, 6 said they would like to design a model and 2 said they would like to watch more videos. To analyse the data from both sections of this first questionnaire, a table showing the percentages can be found in Annexe 1.

Finally, with regard to this first questionnaire, it was also possible to collect qualitative responses. As mentioned above, the questionnaire was carried out in small groups, so that while the students were answering the questions, it was possible to collect comments made by them. Comments such as the following were collected: "We only do writing/grammar exercises", "It is difficult to pay attention all the time because the classes are so boring", "We could do more games to have fun". In addition, there were several students who explained that they consider English to be very important for their future and that is why they said that English is very useful for them: "My family tells me that knowing another language is very important", "If I go to study/live in another country I will need to know English".

4.2 Results of the post-questionnaire

The responses of the post-questionnaire, instead, showed the following information. This questionnaire was carried out the day that the intervention ended. This time only 20% of the students answered that they do not feel motivated in English classes. Likewise, only 15% considered that they do not have a good time in English classes. On the other hand, this time, the percentage of children who feel lazy when it is time for English lessons was down to 26%. To continue, only 16% of pupils thought that English lessons were boring. On the other hand, in this questionnaire, two results remained exactly the same as in the previous one. Firstly, the result that 37% of the students considered English to be difficult is maintained. Secondly, 95% of the class still thought that what they learn in English classes is useful and important. Regarding the second part of the questionnaire, 95% stated that it was a good idea to spend time outside during the lessons of this subject. Furthermore, 90% said that they enjoyed doing activities related to Sopuerta and its surroundings. Finally in this section, 74% enjoyed putting their knowledge of English into practice in the real world.
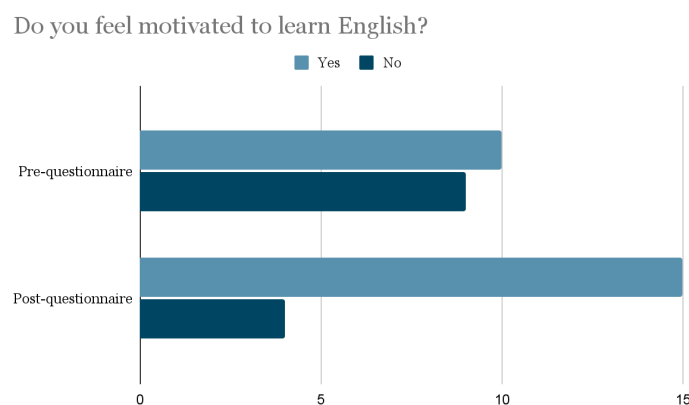
To end this post-questionnaire, they were asked to mention their favourite activity and what they liked least about the didactic unit. On the one hand, regarding the activity they had

most enjoyed doing, the results were as follows. A total of 9 students highlighted the model as their favourite activity, 6 said that they had most enjoyed the activities and games outside and the remaining 4 said that they had liked the exploring activity in one of the sessions. On the other hand, when asked what they liked the least, 12 children said that they could not mention any disappointing activity because they loved everything about the intervention. On the other hand, 4 children said that they did not like having to work so much in groups and 3 children mentioned that some of the activities were difficult to follow. To analyse the data from both sections of this first questionnaire, a table showing the percentages can be found in Annexe 2.

This time it was also possible to collect qualitative data during the questionnaire. One of the most significant comments for the evaluation of this intervention was the following: "During these classes I have learned a lot but as I was having fun I didn't realise I was studying". Another important quote to mention: "This is the first time I feel like learning English". On the other hand, two comments were collected regarding the question of whether or not they feel lazy when they see English as the following subject in the timetable. On the one hand, a pupil answered: "I get happy because I know that something interesting is going to happen". On the other hand, a child said that "Laziness does not depend on the subject, it depends on the time of the day when the subject is".
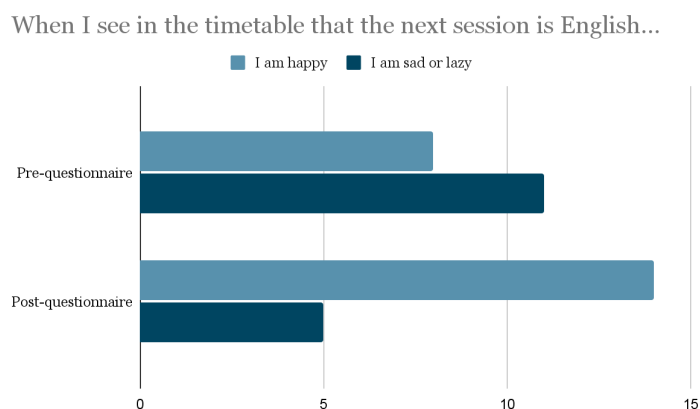
4.3 Comparison between the results of both questionnaires

In the previous section, the results obtained from both questionnaires have been presented individually. As an addition, a comparison of some of the most characteristic and significant results obtained will be made below, in order to show the evolution of the students' answers from the first questionnaire to the second one.
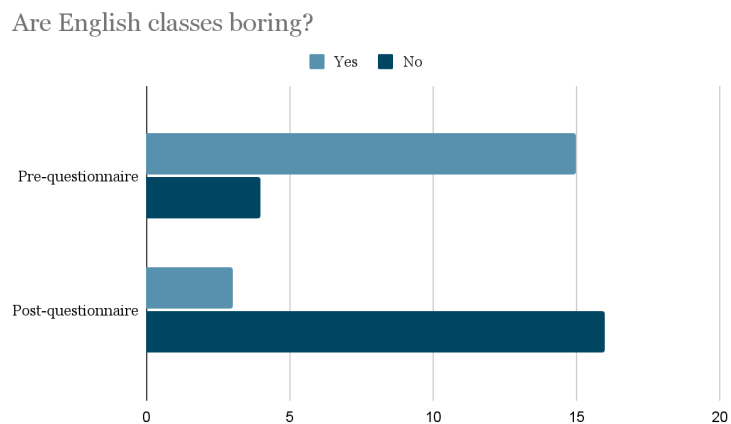
1. Graphic. Do you feel motivated to learn English?

In this first graph it can be seen that in the first questionnaire a total of 10 students claimed to have a positive attitude and to be motivated to learn English. On the other hand, in the second questionnaire, once the intervention with the adaptations was finished, the number increased to a total of 15 students. Therefore, 5 students have changed their perceptions about whether they feel motivated or not in English classes.
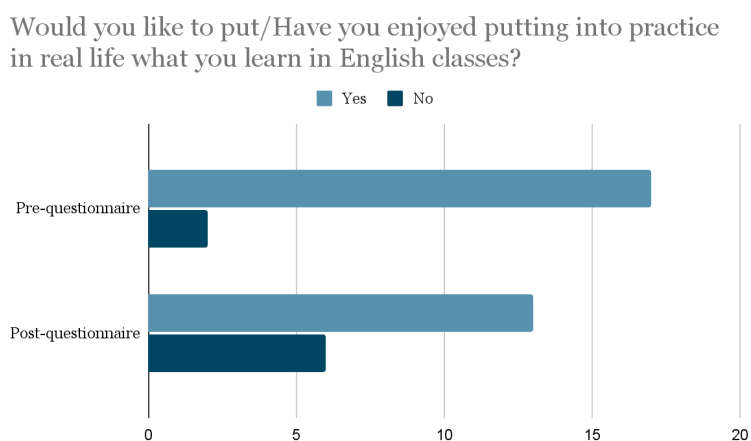

When I see in the timetable that the next session is English…

◼ I am happy ◼ I am sad or lazy

2. Graphic. When I see in the timetable that the next session is English…

The second graph analyses whether students feel happy or lazy when they see that the next lesson on the schedule is English. The first time they were asked a total of 11 students said that they felt lazy when it was time for English. On the other hand, the second time only a sum of 5 students still said that they were lazy. Therefore, 6 students changed their opinion and became happy to see that the next hour is this subject.

Are English classes boring?

◼ Yes ◼ No

3. Graphic. Are English classes boring?

This graph examines the question of whether they find English classes boring or not. A big change can be observed from the first questionnaire to the second one. In the first one, a total of 15 students answered that they were bored in English classes. This mark drops a lot the second time they are asked, since the result of the second questionnaire is only 3 students.

Would you like to put/Have you enjoyed putting into practice in real life what you learn in English classes?

Yes No

4. *Graphic. Would you like to put/Have you enjoyed putting into practice in real life what you learn in English classes?*

Finally, this graph analyses the change in the students' perception of putting into practice what they have learned in English class. In the pre-questionnaire they were asked if they would like to put into practice in real life what they had learned in class, to which 17 students answered yes. On the other hand, once the intervention was over, they were asked if they liked it, to which only a total of 13 answered yes, a decrease of 4 students.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In this research the purpose was to analyse the motivation that students have in conventional English classes and to see if more meaningful learning would be effective in increasing motivation. For this purpose, the motivation of the students was measured with questionnaires, one before the intervention, which analysed how the students felt in the common English classes following the book, and another questionnaire at the end of the didactic unit. The focus of the intervention was on fostering meaningful and relevant learning, closer to the students' environment and context. The aim was to create a more motivating learning environment that would awaken students' interest and involvement in the process of acquiring English.

In the end of the study, a number of noteworthy conclusions have been reached. First, it has been confirmed that motivation plays a fundamental role in the process of learning a second language, such as English. Motivation acts as a decisive factor influencing the level of engagement, active participation and academic performance of students. The results obtained after the implementation of the intervention were positive and encouraging. The data collected through the second questionnaire revealed that students showed increased motivation compared to the results of the first one. This finding suggests that the pedagogical approach based on meaningful activities and materials had a relevant impact on their level of motivation towards learning English. These results would support the idea that a meaningful learning close to the learners' context positively influences their motivation. The adaptation of the activities and didactic materials allowed the students to perceive a greater relevance and applicability of English in their daily lives, which contributed to generate a greater interest and commitment to the subject.

Additionally, it is worth analysing the discrepancy between the results of the students who indicated that they wanted to practise the language in a real context and then said that they did not enjoy it as much as they had planned. This can have several explanations and reasons. For instance, it is possible that the students who expressed a desire to practise in a real context had specific expectations about how that practice would take place. If the intervention did not meet those expectations or if the actual practice did not match what they imagined, it is understandable that they did not thoroughly enjoy the experience. In addition, practice in a real-world setting may present additional challenges compared to classroom based activities. Students might have faced difficulties in communicating or understanding real situations, which could have affected their perception of the experience.

To address this discrepancy, future research could focus on further exploring students' expectations and experiences of practice in a real-world context. This could involve collecting qualitative data, such as interviews or reflective journals, to gain a deeper understanding of how students perceive and evaluate these experiences. Furthermore, it would be valuable to investigate where specifically students experienced a lack of enjoyment in practice in a real-world context. This could help identify areas for improvement in designing interventions and selecting activities that promote both student interest and satisfaction.

Despite the positive results obtained in this study, it is nonetheless valuable to recognize some limitations that may have affected the findings. These limitations provide opportunities for future research and improvements in the design of educational interventions. To begin with, the time period in which the intervention was conducted may have been relatively short, as the intervention only lasted 1 month. It would therefore be interesting for future research to explore the effects of a long-term intervention to assess whether changes in motivation are sustained over time and whether there are long-term effects on academic achievement. On the other hand, it is possible that the sample size used in this study was limited and not representative of the general population of English language learners. A larger and more diverse sample might provide more generalizable results and allow for a better understanding of the factors that influence student motivation.

In summary, the conclusions obtained in this study are relevant both for teaching practice and for research in the field of second language teaching. The findings highlight the importance of considering motivation as an essential element in the design of English language teaching strategies. This work has shown that adapting teaching activities and materials to promote meaningful and contextualised learning has a positive impact on the motivation of English language learners. These results support the importance of developing pedagogical approaches that foster students' motivation and engagement, which in turn can influence their academic performance and their ability to acquire communicative skills in a second language.

6. ETHICAL PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND DATA PROTECTION

The whole process of the research and intervention is agreed with the school. Before starting the internship period where this project was carried out, a meeting with the school principal and the head of studies was requested. In this meeting the procedure and the aim of the research was explained to them and they were also given a written and signed letter from the university tutor asking for permission. Then, when it came to carrying out the intervention sessions, all adaptations were agreed upon by the English teacher of the course. With regard to data protection, the questionnaires were completely anonymous and did not require any personal data from the students, only their opinion on the subject of English. Therefore, the head teacher decided that it was not necessary to ask for written permission from the families.

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