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Motivation in the classroom to develop English Speaking skills

Motivación en el aula para desarrollar habilidades de habla en inglés

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Abstract


This research aims to show the magnitude of importance that motivation can have in the learning process of English. For this reason, various elements that may alter student's motivation are mentioned, making use of a questionnaire as an initiation process that were given to students from the second level of English of the Pontifical Catholic University of Ambato. The main factors of the research shows the importance of student's interests, teachers role, daily habits, along with others. Eventually, some recommendations for improving student's motivation to develop English speaking skills are proposed for future growth.

Keywords: motivation, factors, english speaking skills, students' interests

Resumen

Esta investigación pretende mostrar la magnitud de la importancia que puede tener la motivación en el proceso de aprendizaje del inglés. Por tal motivo, se mencionan diversos elementos que pueden alterar la motivación de los estudiantes, haciendo uso de un cuestionario como proceso de iniciación que se entregó a estudiantes del segundo nivel de inglés de la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Ambato. Los principales factores de la investigación muestran la importancia de los intereses de los estudiantes, el papel de los profesores, los hábitos diarios, entre otros. Finalmente, se proponen algunas recomendaciones para mejorar la motivación de los estudiantes para desarrollar habilidades de habla inglesa para su crecimiento futuro.

Palabras clave: motivación, factores, habilidad para hablar inglés, intereses de los estudiantes

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout the years, English has developed and increased its role around the world. Becoming essential for every learner's understanding and interpretation. Nonetheless, how English is being handled in Ecuador is not sufficient and is stated according to Education First by El Universo: "Ecuador, the worst country in Latin America in English proficiency, according to the report" (Universo, 2019); where Ecuador is sustained in the group of "low level of proficiency in English" simultaneously with other Latin American countries such as Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico; the remaining countries are at a higher level of proficiency in the language.

Also, motivation is an important factor to acquire a foreign language successfully. Hence, developing students' motivation is essential in the process of learning a high level of English proficiency. Motivation plays an important part in today's L2 learning process especially for University students in Ecuador. According to (Putri, 2016) motivation makes a person want to learn. So, without it, he or she will definitely fail to make the required effort, making it considerable to be used in the classroom.

The outcome is unacceptable specifically in the city of Ambato that has been classified with a "very low level of English proficiency" compared with other cities in Ecuador. Therefore, by interpreting these results, three statements are determined:

- English is an important language
- English is introduced in all University levels, yet motivation for learners to speak is being done incorrectly.
- Motivation can facilitate students speaking skills in classrooms

Concerning the first statement, it is essential to know that English is mandatory in Educational schools all over Ecuador due to its importance and presence worldwide. As a result, all Universities have implemented mandatory English levels to be approved in order to finish a career, but even with this improvement the learners lack motivation for speaking.

Regarding the second statement, it can be established that it is to a certain degree true based on the poor results shown in the report of (Universo, 2019); in which Ecuador is ranked in position 81 worldwide with a 46,57% of English proficiency making Ecuador the worst Latinamerican country with the mentioned results, having countries as Netherlands in first place with 70,27%, Sweden in second place with 68,74% and Norway in third place with 67,93% occupying the first three places of best levels of English proficiency in the world.

Meanwhile, the city of Ambato has a 47,45% of English proficiency, one of the worst in the entire country of Ecuador. Also, to mention Quito has 51,13% and Cuenca 50,31% which are among the provinces with the highest levels of English proficiency in Ecuador. Therefore, the city of Ambato is in need to improve the motivation of students when learning and speaking a foreign language in order to improve their capabilities.

With reference to the third statement, it is mentioned that motivation plays a crucial role in the learning process of speaking skills in English. Motivation determines whether to become a thriving student or not. When the students have the assurance and the feeling of being motivated to learn they will properly interact and engage in learning and impact their performance. (Devana & Afifah, 2020)

There must be a discrepancy while teaching English specifically for Pontifical Catholic University students in the city of Ambato that may elucidate variations between the hours learned of English and the students' low extent of motivation to speak. As a consequence, this investigation will

center on the different characteristics that may influence students' motivation to speak English and to find a relation between the learners' English level and their motivation.

Literature review

Motivation and English speaking

Motivation is a condition inside us that desires a change influenced by the satisfaction of accomplishing essential growth (Souders, 2019). Also, during the process of second language learning it can be stated that a learner can be productive with the correct motivation. These claims are supported by numerous studies showing the importance of promoting and preserving motivation while learning English (Alizadeh, 2016).

According to Gardner (1985) and cited by (Alizadeh, 2016) motivation is the fusion of attempt plus desire to acquire the objective of learning English including the beneficial perspectives with regard to learning. Based on the thoughts of Hui-Ju Liu & Chien-Wei Chen, (2015) cited by (Hussain, 2020) adding similar points of view that motivation is extremely important ahead with language competence in determining another languages success.

Crookes and Schmidt (1991) recognized motivation as learners' positioning with reference to the aim of learning English, highlighting that motivation is in fact crucial to learn inside of the classroom, whether teachers inforce a well structured classroom in order to make it easier for learners to follow and make them feel encouraged to keep up with each class. Therefore, a positive and effective motivation is essential for improving English speaking skills. (Hussain, 2020)

Astuti (2012) expressed that motivation is a psychological factor that may influence students' process of speaking English and the result of learning. Therefore, if the students demonstrate having a high level of motivation they will be able to improve their speech performance. In this sense, students' motivation makes the learning process clearer and interactive, involving them to speak in English persistently (Menggo, 2016).

Described by (Stevick, 1976), the integratively motivated student will not be considered prone to engage in receptive acquisition and thereby encouraging students through motivation and a well structured class to interact with others showing interest and desire will help students achieve a high proficiency in speaking skills. Thus, it requires a meaningful interaction with sufficient motivation from students to accomplish a natural communication. (Krashen, 1981).

As a consequence, motivation is an important factor that encourages learners to exceed their educational objectives. Nevertheless, the factors that may improve the level of motivation among the learners are likely to be different in various cultures depending on their social needs.

Theories of Motivation

Deci and Ryan's (1985) theory, came up with two basic variations establishing that motivation can be classified into the distinct motives that arise, which are: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the willingness of the student to learn (not forced) what is believed to be important for them. Also, intrinsic motivation gives the student a necessary push to learn without having compensations due to the needs of each individual.

Legault (2016) stated that:

Intrinsic motivation is a natural human tendency –in other words, people will actively strive toward doing the things they find interesting or enjoyable. Moreover, intrinsic motivation can turn

out to be integrative if the learner is able to connect with the culture of the classroom and instrumental if the learner has their own wish to acquire new speaking skills. (2016)

As claimed by (Higgins, 2000, 2006) cited by (Thompson & Jaque, 2017) people gain value from the normal habits that they undergo when the activity supports their aim, interests, or mood. Extrinsic motivation is established on the outcomes that can be rewards to overcome the activities proposed in classrooms. Both integrated and instrumental motivations are used in this category, which is not a suggested way of use since it could have a negative impact on students where they are pushed to learn expecting the reward they could receive.

Importance of Motivation in English speaking

For students, English language speaking is demanded at all levels of the education system. Knowing English correctly is crucial for Ecuadorian students at University levels in order to attain academic success as well as being competitive for job offers. Through motivation, students expect to achieve their goals which in this case is to speak English properly and with that case Teachers are expected to motivate students to achieve goals to communicate and maintain high expectations when speaking a foreign language. Moreover, Ecuadorian University level students consider to successfully fulfill their goals if academic success is accomplished (including English language speaking) (Yue, Zhao, Meng, Qian, & Wu , 2022)

In terms of Dornyei (1998) if students are put under stress it may influence their motivation, which is specified as an important fact for students to use speaking skills properly and it is one big factor that affects language learners' success. It is well known that the more motivated students are, the more successful they would be at English speaking (Wakgari, 2022)

Language learning and speaking

In the process of learning and speaking a language, the teacher has the main role. Apart from imparting the learners with a set of tools, the teacher also gives them the practice necessary for a better English speaking form. Furthermore, as mentioned by Tan (1979): "communication means to send and receive a message between a listener and a speaker in oral communication". Therefore, a student can be considered a successful communicator once he or she is able to understand correctly and express their points of view from what was heard. (Lumettu & Runtuwene, 2018)

Speaking techniques

Dörnyei (2001) mentions that to gather information from learners it's good to use some perspectives such as: interviews, group discussions and questionnaires with sentence completion items. These are only some ideas in order to create a harmonious place where students can feel motivated to speak. In Universities it's useful to have a good amount of technological sources to implement in the classroom since students are now used to having these resources daily and making it suitable for the students' learning process of speaking. Also, using topics that are more relevant to the learners' everyday experiences and background that are connected into one purpose which is to make tasks more varied and motivate students to speak freely. (Horvat, 2012)

Teaching speaking techniques is not an easy job for teachers at the level of Universities expectancy. Speaking is a productive skill mostly expressed with the motivation of students performance while interacting. In fact, the students have problems at the moment of a conversation, especially in their speaking skills. For this reason, it is important to point out the importance of a well designed class by the teacher in order to avoid students' lack of motivation. Moreover, to have creative, and affective students through integrated skills and

reach the main goal of every learner which is to be proficient at the momento of speaking.
(Ardiansyah, 2020)

METHODOLOGY

The present research gathered important data by means of a questionnaire. This study has been done based on a mixed approach combining quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire consisted of elicit information on subjects such as age, sex and mother tongue with also a range of questions focused to explore students' motivations towards English speaking skills in the Pontifical Catholic University of Ambato.

Participants

This research was carried out among a group of 20 students (male and female) who formed part of the seventh level of English of the Pontifical Catholic University of Ambato and the ages ranged from 15 to 22 years. The level was selected since it is one of the most problematic levels for students. It takes them from an B2 to a B2 level of CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). Due to this, there is an extensive difference in skills of each student but also in their motivation. In this level a key factor is students motivation for learning and speaking English adequately.

Group A

This sample consists of 11 students, 5 male and 6 female with different aspects. This group has difficulties understanding for what is new for them moving on to a highler level of English and with mostly lack of motivation. This fact is represented with 80% of the students that passed the level and 20% that are repeating due to its complexity which has become a challenge to overcome.

Group B

This group consist of 9 students, 4 male and 5 female that have different cultures and ideologies. It can be included that 10% of the students have repeated a level while 90% haven't. Mainly speaking, this group has higher expectancies of motivation to pass a level than the first group.

Data collection

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire is the main tool used as measurement in this research. A questionnaire is the main form of collecting quantitative relevant information. A questionnaire approves quantitative data to be gathered in a proper way so the information is proper and logical for investigation.
(Roopa & Rani, 2012)

Personal information questions about three different aspects were used:

- Biological characteristics: age, sex, and mother tongue.
- Questions linked to the role of motivation in student's English speaking skills.

The questionnaire used in the research was taken face to face so that the researcher could take notes on what was being said. Identifying the "why" and "how" of the students lack of motivation gathered through the observation process making it also a qualitative approach of information.

It consisted of open-ended questions sharing participants thoughts, beliefs, motivations and feelings which can enable an understanding of the meaning that students ascribe to their experiences. (Sutton & Austin, 2015)

Mixed methods approach was used and it is a combination between both qualitative and quantitative research data, techniques and methods within a single research framework. Implementing this approach can increase the validity of the research while collecting and evaluating data. (Kabir, 2016)

RESULTS

First Variable: Personal Information

The average age of the participants in this research is 18.5 years, which means that regardless the number of students that formerly repeated a level, the average age is appropriate for the seventh level of English at the Pontifical Catholic University of Ambato (18- 19 years). Concerning sex, there were a total of 20 students, 9 male (45%) and 11 female (55%).

The students were introduced into 2 classrooms (Group A and Group B) in which the results presented were formed: in Group A, 20% had repeated a level, but in Group B, only 10% had repeated a level.

Figure 1

Group A – Group B

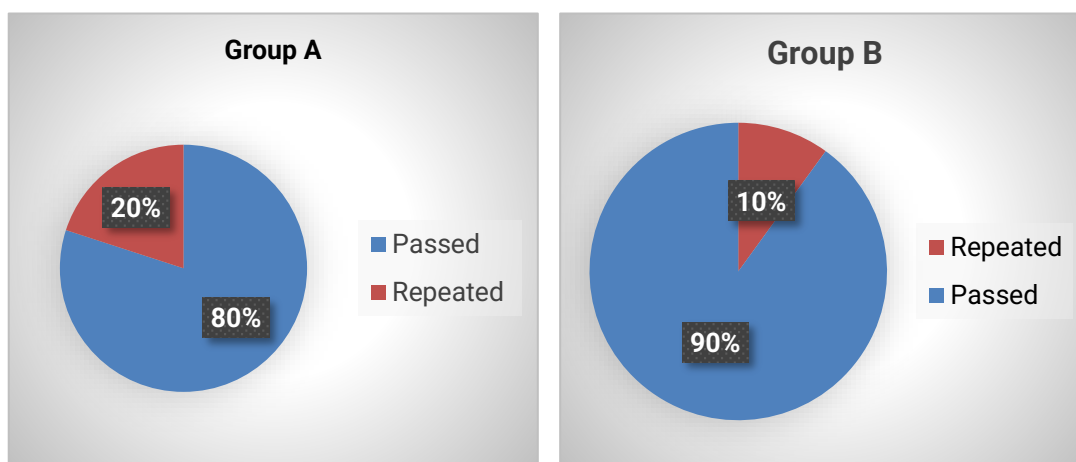


Figure 1 and 2 show the difference between the two groups. It can be indicated that Group B has a higher level of motivation in English than Group A, demonstrating a greater expectancy to pass the level. The main observation after reviewing these results is that the differences in the two groups of students could be introduced in the language teaching in order to create a class more adapted to motivate students speaking skills.

Second Variable: Students’ Interests

This group of questions is imperative to expressing students’ motivation towards English speaking. The most important fact to know is whether students like English or not in order to contemplate the students who admit to like English and are motivated to learn different speaking

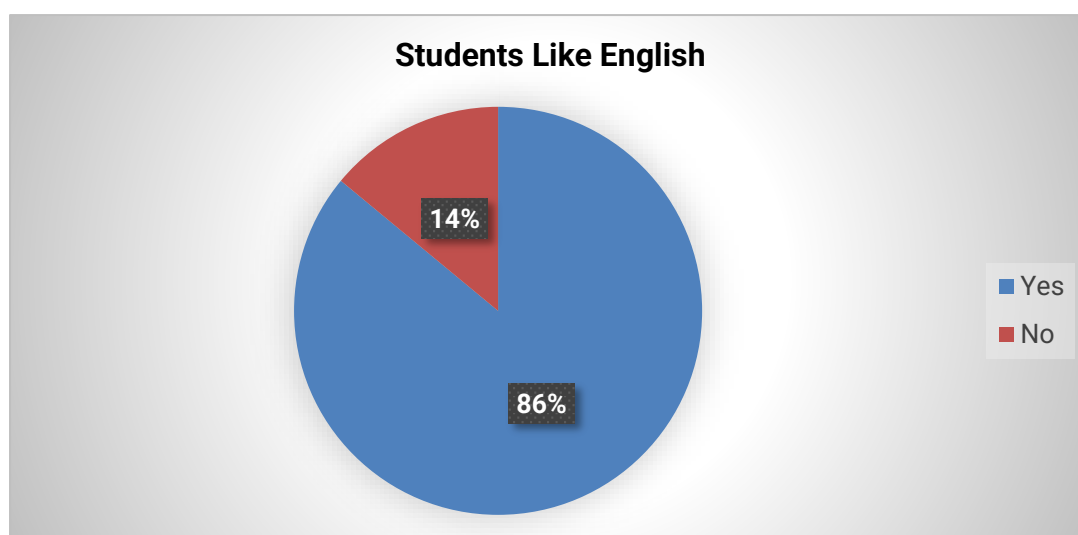
skills to improve their speech performance. In this investigation, 84% of the students liked English, and the remainder (16%) did not.

Therefore, it can be mentioned that students regularly like English in general but not as a subject to be seen at school. This interpretation is made due to the fact it is used for different reasons as in real life situations for communication purposes such as travel and hobbies. Regarding the negative aspects for students is to notice the difficulty of the language and lack of motivation to complete the learning process.

In general, it is important to point out that 100% of students intend to pass the level and improve their english speaking skills because they are sure of its importance and the better opportunities that it will grant them in the future.

Figure 2

Students like English



CONCLUSION AND A METHODOLOGICAL PROPOSAL

The most important results of the research were diagnosed by a mixed approach of quantitative and qualitative results. There was an in – depth study to find out what are the factors that affect students motivation in the seventh level of english in the Pontifical Catholic University of Ambato

It was identified that students know of the main importance that English will have in their futures, consequently, students have set it as their primary objective not only to learn it but also to have better speaking abilities to communicate adequately for better jobs, to be able to travel abroad and meet new people, and live in an English speaking country. All students that formed part of this research want to improve their english speaking skills and have clear that self motivation is also important for them to achieve this goal.

In addition, the role of the English language in students' lives is important since english is present in nearly in every aspect of a sport or hobby, and for this reason, it sets an important role in the students' lives. Despite of this, the teacher's role in the students' motivation to learn is widely important, this is likely the factor that was related to students' motivation in the classroom. The students' answers indicated that, they preferred teachers with a high English level or native

teachers. Nevertheless, students feel motivated when teachers have a good pronunciation and making fun and participative lessons.

Generally, other factors such as the importance of games and diversity in the materials used in class are important to consider for students interaction and motivation to participate. Primarily, every student like the use of technological devices and new ineractive applications in order to enlarge their motivation and english speaking skills in the classroom. Additionally, an appropriate amount of motivational intensity to develop learning strategies can increase student´interest and improve personal attitudes towards English speaking. (Cong, Sida, & Haijing, 2022)

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