

A key element to english learning and use

The first step in learning a language is to understand the basic structure of the language. This involves learning the alphabet, the sounds of the language, and the basic grammar rules. Once these basics are mastered, the learner can move on to more complex structures and vocabulary.

One of the most important aspects of language learning is practice. The more a learner practices, the more they will learn. This can be done through reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It is also important to use the language in real-life situations, such as in a classroom or in a conversation with a native speaker.

Another key element to language learning is motivation. The learner must be motivated to learn and to use the language. This can be achieved through a variety of methods, such as setting goals, finding a study partner, and using the language in a way that is interesting and enjoyable.

Finally, it is important to be patient and persistent. Learning a language is a long process, and it is not always easy. However, with the right approach and a lot of practice, anyone can learn a new language and use it effectively.

Learning a language is a complex process that involves many different factors. One of the most important factors is the learner's motivation. If a learner is motivated to learn, they will be more likely to practice and to use the language in real-life situations. This will lead to a faster and more effective learning process.

Another important factor is the learner's environment. If a learner is surrounded by people who speak the language, they will have more opportunities to practice and to use the language. This will also lead to a faster and more effective learning process.

Finally, it is important to have a good teacher or tutor. A good teacher will be able to provide the learner with the necessary structure and support to learn the language effectively. They will also be able to provide the learner with feedback and encouragement, which are essential for a successful learning experience.

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Abstract

This research aimed to Improve students motivation for learning English as a foreign language, in a Technical school setting, surveying verbal communication production in a Technical Secondary School, in which students felt unable to speak English due to their lack of motivation and fear to be blurted in front of others. This action research project attempted to develop a communicative experience by exposing students to a new environment and activities in which they could raise motivation through the creation and performance of sketches to communicate in English as a foreign language. It involved an action plan project in which students and teachers created, planned, wrote, rehearsed and dramatized their own sketches in the classroom in an enjoyable environment for learning while enhancing studying and working cooperatively in an autonomous way.

Key words: research, motivation, verbal communication, autonomous way, foreing language.

Palabras clave: investigación, motivación, comunicación verbal, manera autónoma, lengua extranjera.

Resumen

Esta investigación apunta a mejorar la motivación de los estudiantes hacia el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera, en un colegio técnico, indagando sobre la producción de la comunicación verbal, en el cual los estudiantes se sentían incapaces de hablar el inglés debido a la falta de motivación y el temor a quedar mal frente a otros. Este proyecto de investigación-acción trató de desarrollar una experiencia comunicativa, mediante la exposición de los estudiantes a nuevas actividades y ambientes, en los cuales ellos podrían incrementar su nivel de motivación a través de la creación y actuación en obras de teatro pequeñas, donde se comunicaban en inglés, como lengua extranjera.

Improving students' motivation for learning English, as a foreign language in a technical school setting, is one of the most difficult challenges a teacher of languages has to face. Most town students in Boyacá have low motivation and interest for language learning; so, they show negative attitudes for learning and using English in oral as well as in written form. In addition, technical schools curriculum is not normally designed based on the concept of an integrated syllabus, but its subjects are classified in different levels of importance, that is to say, there are subjects such as: Mathematics, Computers, Drawing, etc, which are placed in the first level of priority, and there are others which are seen as secondary or optional, that is the case of English, which is not considered a felt need in a technical school setting. Since Technical schools train students to handle the new technologies, tools and equipment necessary to reach the vocational aims and goals stated in the School PEI¹, they don't stress integral and humanistic formation. So, a greater emphasis is given to the knowledge areas and skills, dealing with technical training in comparison with the humanistic field. That is the main reason why English, in most schools of this kind, is not a priority; so, students look at it as a subject of a low quality or unpractical need in their lives.

Students don't like to learn English because they frequently are exposed to methodologies which are not motivating, enjoyable or fruitful. The most common method used by the majority of teachers has to do with oral repetition of pattern drills and memorization of grammatical rules. This method is not only unsuccessful but it normally falls into boredom.

The strongest motivation deals basically with the students' desire of getting passing marks rather than learning the target language.

Motivation is the essence of learning. There is no learning if motivation is absent and nobody facilitates the teaching or learning successfully if there is no motivation. Learning is possible only if there is a will or a need to get it. A desire or a need to learn is the result of the effort which learners put into learning a Second Language. Brown (1994, p. 37) says motivation **"is the importance of people deciding for themselves what do think or feel"**. In the present school environment of most technical schools, it is evident and well known that the low level of motivation is one of the main causes to get unsuccessful results in the learning of most disciplines and specially English as a foreign language. Most common reasons are given by teachers' attitude, unsuitable methods and wrong treatment given to the syllabus, in which English is seen as a subject of the second level. The role of the teacher is not suitable as it is supposed to be, due to his/her highly interest on transmitting knowledge, asking for meaningless tasks, evaluating for marking and so on; so, methods are not being promoted to foster language learning efficiently. Commonly teachers are not aware of the importance of motivating students to use, to enjoy and to develop the communicative competence autonomously in the foreign language. They do not often provide conditions to stimulate a successful learning. Their main role consists on developing faithfully the official syllabus using unprofitable methods and assigning tasks and activities, which do not necessarily lead to reach the desirable goals. Teachers' task should consist

on encouraging students to learn successfully by creating and providing a pleasant setting. However, this ideal expectation cannot be fulfilled unless some changes can replace this environment in schools. On the other hand, a successful learning depends on the grade of interest that people have for the target language. Unfortunately, not even all teachers are using the most effective and motivating methods in the teaching of a foreign language. Teachers normally have relied on traditional methods in which the repetition of patterns and the study of grammar are more important than communication in the target language. Besides, students still depend on a great deal on the teacher's authority, wishes and decisions.

Additionally, syllabi have been designed by teachers who follow pedagogies which have, unconsciously, put aside students' needs and interests. Subjects are not even studied as an integrated whole in which all its parts contribute equally to the whole formation of students. As a result, students believe that English is very difficult and unnecessary in their students' lives; so, there is a tendency to believe that this language is useless in their future professions or occupations. However, oral communication is the starting point to accomplish a whole formation in the foreign language learning process and the technical formation which leads the school project. This research project was designed in response to this need and the following research question was addressed:

To what extent is the design and performance of sketches in the classroom a motivational factor to improve English language use?

The answer to this question will be given through the development of this project, which was applied to a group of eighth graders in a technical High school setting in Monquirá.

Before starting to develop the project, a lot of reading was done on some experiences, testimonies and theories concerning the areas

of interest such as motivation, behavior, adolescence, role playing, sketches and drama. Extensive research has been conducted by scholars, teachers and educators in the attempt to understand the effect of conditions and suitable environment on the learning of a foreign language; but a few ones have experimented with sketches or role-play performed in the classroom as a motivating way to teach and learn it.

Among these materials I dare to comment the theoretical bases for developing an analysis of the Role Playing and the relationship between the ninth grade teenager's motivations. It is necessary to have in mind that the language is a primordial capacity of the human being; it serves to interpret, create and interact with the world because we are in contact to reality through language use, and through the senses. This is why; role playing and drama have such an important role in forcing the students to communicate.

Drama can generate a need to speak by centering the attention of the learner solving problems (Maley, 1992). These exercises are commonly used for improving the production and reception skills. The students make discussions, debates, role playing, simulations, and games; prepare talks and dramatize them. Thus, the learners' role turns into an active participation, where interaction helps to improve the communicative skills in the foreign language.

Drama requires that teachers and learners have an ambitious view and assume a sincere responsibility with their knowledge and improvement the foreign language and they must have in mind, drama demands enthusiasm on its participants and drama requires of a planning and structuring to create a learning situation. To use drama as a learning tool it is necessary to use a selective method.

To define drama as doing and being, means to join the exterior daily activities with the

sentimental, emotional and social aspects, thus, the individual explores that reality; imagining, creating, and making perceptions when he has contact with it.

Work on self-needs to free spontaneous impulses for responding to imaginative stimuli, for concentrating attention, and for using personal experience. Work on the role stresses a full understanding of the world of the character within the play so that he can communicate by a system of physical actions. They also concluded that drama can be accepted as being a useful way of encouraging young learners to communicate with each other in a second language and there it is important and highly recommend to have drama as a part of the whole school curriculum and not just an isolated activity that take places occasionally in the foreign language classroom.

A dramatic performance is called art. The art deals with the writing and production of plays or any situation or series of events having vivid, emotional or conflicting interest or results, being them, in dialogue or verse way, involving conflict or contrast; this branch of literature is nominated drama. Drama activities can develop an understanding of the customs and social conventions of people both in other countries and in different areas of their own: they can improve pupils' story-telling skills, and encourage the use of the imagination as children are much more ready to take on a role and act without feeling self-conscious. Drama, then, can do much to develop the confidence, social skills and general language ability of young children. However, occasional difficulties may arise when drama is used in the curriculum. Some people believe that drama is only the presentation of a play, usually at the end of the year. In educational terms, Drama is not applied as a useful learning and teaching technique that is used in the classroom. It is possible that on certain limited occasions the finished product may be so interesting that the production merits being seen by an audience larger than merely that class or group that devised it.

The performance of drama for communicative purposes in its first stages is accompanied by some techniques that can be used beneficially to interact and communicate in the language classroom, like mime and movements. Mime means communication through movements and gestures usually without words or sound effects. An essential advantage of using mimic to teach foreign language to youngsters is that they can enjoy responding to an instruction in the second language without having to say anything themselves. Mime can be used to explore emotions, actions, characters and situations.

Charlyn Wessels (1987, p. 7) states "Drama is doing, drama is being, drama is such a normal thing", It is something that we all engage in daily, when faced with difficult and happy situations, where you sometimes **pretend** behaviors you don't feel . Finally our life is a drama.

Lessons based on drama, such as dramatized plays and extension activities, improvisations, situational role plays, and video can be added to the existing repertoire of spoken communication activities. Drama has a role to play in the success of all group activities, because the use of drama games and warm-ups can contribute significantly to group dynamics and communicative improvement. Drama games do not have rigid rules, its main purpose is to relax the learners, sharpen their concentration, and stimulate their imagination and desire to talk. Besides the desire to communicate in oral form, students feel the need to plan the action in written form. Wayne Amtzis (1993) says that there are three stages to present a story ordinarily described as "*the beginning, the Middle, and the End*". First, establish the context (the problem to solve), secondly, develop the action and clarify the conflict, and thirdly, resolve the action and conflict and finally, assess the understanding and communicative abilities of the students. Three kinds of writing assignments can be used to clarify the students understanding of the

stories, they are: charts, lists, and maps to establish comprehension; journals to explore motivation and conflict; letters and narratives to finalize understanding of motivation, conflict, and theme. In class the students kept a chart and running account of the action, a list of character traits for key figures, and maps of the conflicts identified in the story. Action charts and character and conflict maps should be used to focus the students' attention on details relevant to the unfolding of the story. As character traits both determine and are determined by action to clarify the students understanding of both: action and motivation, the students should put themselves in the situation on the protagonist and consider how they would act. Teacher can ask the class to write journal entries for the main character, reviewing the action of that day and expressing, where appropriate, his thoughts, feelings, hopes, and fears. One way to begin is to describe an event that has occurred and then to reflect upon it as the protagonist might have, considering his desires and his hopes and fears. If desires, feelings, fears, emotions are the present in the process, motivation is also present as the drive that moves the action and interaction of students to produce language.

Motivation is one of the most important aspects in language learning. It permits to develop different, pleasant, great and amazing activities in English classes. The individual achieving of aims, the person scales according to the needs and wishes affect the level of motivation. Motivation is a temporal state, with combination of thought and action. Sometimes, quizzes are presented for learning and not for fulfilling a teacher's requisite. This is intrinsic motivation because the students learn to overcome a need, for interest, curiosity; facing and looking for challenges according to their personal interest and therefore they try to do their best showing dedication, and persistence.

Brown (1994), talks about effective and cognitive principles in language learning. It was found that one of the strongest constraints faced

by teachers and learners of English has to do with the lack of "intrinsic motivation" because students do not find relevance of learning English or a real reason to use it. That is to say, English is not functional and productive for them. Students feel the school is boring and unnecessary for living. Therefore, two important tasks must be taken in mind by the teacher: the first one is to help the students to get motivated about their own learning process and the second is to help them to be aware of the importance of learning to learn.

Learning has to do with change of behavior. Skinner (1958, p. 75) believed that "the study of behavior must rest on what organisms do and do not do, and that is all one need pay attention to". He developed the concept of operant conditioning. In his 1954 article "The Science of Learning and the Art of teaching", he illustrated how human behavior can be shaped rapidly and without aversive threat through the use of positive reinforcement.

If eight graders got aware of the importance of English in their education process through positive reinforcement, during the performance of sketches, they may be successful in oral communication, because human behavior is a product of the stimulus-response interaction. All complex forms of behavior, including reasoning, habit, and emotional reactions are composed of simple stimulus-response in events, which can be seen and measured.

Then, all change of human behavior deals with motivation and learning. Applying this concept to the present particular case, it can be said that by using an appropriate motivation and method, students can enjoy adequately their English as a foreign process because they are able to express their problems, feelings and needs in given situations of their own environment.

To motivate pupils involves awakening in them a spontaneous interest in and curiosity for the subject being taught. We have to admit that a

failure to accomplish this imposes a severe limitation on the learning process. This imperious need of the learner –of learning for its own sake– was called primary motivation by Teresa Huerta (1979). In this type of motivation the interest comes from the learner himself and not from outside the learner. To get this type of response from pupils should be a must for all teachers; it cannot but lead to successful learning” if the teacher can make the pupils feel that they want to learn, that they are interested, that the subject they are studying is exciting, teachers can be sure that they will learn as much as possible within their capabilities. Their learning will become a dynamic process in which the knowledge imparted will tend to grow indefinitely. Primary motivation is obviously an ideal to be pursued, but in secondary school teaching, the circumstances of both students and teachers make it necessary to consider other factors as a means of arousing the students’ attention. It refers to secondary motivation, which is the feeling of the learner that he must learn in order to pass a test, to avoid punishment, or to please his parents and teachers. This secondary motivation is very essential when teaching children between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, the great majority of whom are not mature enough to respond to any other type of stimulus. Hence the necessity of strict control by the teacher of his pupils’ learning behavior means “to assess from moment to moment the progress of each individual in the class, and how to manage the classroom activity so that the fastest and most able learners are not depressed by being held back, while the slowest learners are not depressed by being left behind” (Strevens 1974, p. 79).

Nothing is more disappointing for a child that feeling ignored, neglected, carelessly or arbitrarily evaluated, or to feel that his work is not important or of interest to the teacher. For this reason, you can believe that this extrinsic motivation is as valuable as primary motivation, because it fosters the youngsters respect and consideration for their elders as well as a

legitimate competitive drive. Through my experience as a secondary-school teacher in different towns of Boyacá, I have noticed that only a minority of students can be motivated to learn a foreign language. This is due partly to the pupil’s immaturity, partly to their socioeconomic background, partly to deficiencies in the educational system, but mainly to the lack of clearly defined and relevant aims for secondary-school language learning. It is imperative to give the students clear and detailed information about the aims of their learning along with sensible arguments to demonstrate that these aims are relevant to their needs. The teacher must persuade his/her class that this knowledge will be useful for them in the future, perhaps students can look for strategies that involves them in use of English derived from what the student knows of science and the functioning of his own language in an association with what he has learned of English, integrating other colleagues concerning the methodology for teaching technological issues. It is not easy to motivate a secondary school student, even extrinsically, under present conditions. The most crucial problem is the lack of relevant programs and aims for secondary school teaching, however, it is possible, though not easy, to find and select materials and adapt them to meet the needs of the secondary student.

On the other hand, some traditional English teachers appeal, by all means, to have not the intrinsic but extrinsic motivation in their students, which does not guarantee “long term learning”. Brown (1940: 40) gives account of this when he states that “the consequence of such extrinsic motivation is that schools all too often teach students to play the “game” of pleasing teachers and authorities rather than developing an internalized thirst for knowledge an experience”. Then, extrinsic motivation is not enough an ingredient for successful learning. The researcher is convinced that it is necessary to choose specific classroom techniques that stimulate intrinsic motivation to ensure English language learning.

Bearing in mind that this project is strongly related to feelings and emotions as a means to get intrinsic motivation in the students, some theories techniques are considered: "Techniques are the specific activities manifested in the classroom that are consistent with a method and therefore in harmony with an approach as well" (Brown 1994, p. 48). Sketches planning and production need appropriate selection of techniques according to the action plan of this project.

The following steps were activities developed during the development of the project: **Brainstorming** is a special form of preparation of the process towards the production of sketches. Each student contributes with his previous knowledge and background. **Sharing** consists on participating ideas to each other and supporting points of view. **Agreement** deals with getting a consensus about a topic or main ideas to plan a sketch. **Decision making** comes after the students get an agreement about topic, main ideas, and after analyzing which are the most convenient ones, they take decision about what to do. Next step is **writing**. After a previous agreement and plan, the students write their own dialogues within the framework of a sketch. **Reading** is a stage after they have written their dialogues. They read them loudly for comprehension and interaction. **Rehearsing** is the step that is done many times until the sketch is ready to be performed. Many corrections occur here, such as comprehension review, pronunciation and style. **Performing** in front of an audience is the last step of this action plan, as a technique in this process.

This action research project is framed under a kind of investigation which seeks action or change and it requires responsibility of the people involved who are interested in promoting changes. It is important to value the results of the strategies, which have been tested. Action research means: 1. Exploration and reflection, 2. Planning, 3. Action and observation and 4. Evaluation. (Castillo et al, 2001, Freeman, 1996).

The first stage, exploration and reflection, was the starting point of the work. It was done through one interview to teachers with 6 open questions which inquired about the learning process, the language level, achievements, methodologies, problems in the process and suggestions to improve the work. and a language test to evaluate the level of the students which consisted of two items: A written description of a familiar topic without using the dictionary and a prepared oral report on real life situations, one interview to students to find out the level of motivation of students towards the foreign language.

The general conclusion was that there was low motivation in the students towards successful learning, because of inappropriate methodologies used by teachers and wrong exploitation of school syllabus. Besides, the interviews showed most students preferred to learn the language through conversations and action activities, while drama was considered as the most attractive activity to be developed in class.

The language test showed that most students (69%) had problems in expressing even simple ideas with correct structure. Although 30% was able to express ideas that were understood because the teacher made the effort of interpreting them. A group (4.1%) was not able to answer in any way.

Based on the results above, the researcher decided to move out to the second step of the project: Designing an action plan based on sketches (drama was the first choice of students). This plan started the new cycle of the research based on an intervention in which students and teachers created, planned, wrote, rehearsed and dramatized their own sketches in the classroom and outside it. It aimed at not only reaching a successful learning of the target language through a higher motivation, but also at enhancing studying and working cooperatively in an autonomous way. Motivation should be then the area to increase and improve.

Action plan

The proposed action plan deals with its foundations on theory of learning, motivation, methodology and new conceptions on language teaching as well. In regards to the theory of language, it deals with the acquisition of language through exposure to it and the creation of a suitable environment to learn it. Most of the activities and tasks are designed to raise interest and motivation, with a variety of learning styles and strategies, having in mind the cognitive, affective and linguistic domains.

The cognitive principles refer mainly to mental and intellectual foundations where learners have the opportunity to analyze the language by themselves based on the input given within their own setting. Affective principles are related to the feeling, acting, and mode of thinking of the human beings. When learner believes in his/her own ability to accomplish the task, he/she is able to do the task taking risks and learn language in a meaningful way. Linguistic principles deal with the language learning in the classroom facilitating and interfering effects on the production and comprehension of a new language.

Sketch and role-playing can be affected by the teen's fear to be mocked, being one of the greatest obstacles to integrate and interact, by causing a feeling of insecurity. It is frequently observed how attitudes and behavior are limited by these kinds of circumstances that make them feel shy and embarrassed.

The students' fear to interact and perform in the foreign language generates disadvantages in the learning process, since some students would rather work alone and all by themselves. They would prefer to be passive listeners and to keep away of participating in these kind of public activities, written production and to encourage students to face challenges to solve problems. The activity proposes looked for solving these problems by working in an environment of cooperation and reflection to achieve a change.

Instructional component

Five workshops were planned to develop the project. The topics to work were selected based on Students' likes. They agreed to work on the following themes: A Matrimony, At the Hotel, Lack of love, Unfaithful, Drug Addiction. Although the topics were somehow difficult to handle by Foreign Language learners, the students were given the opportunity to decide about them. They were also given the chance to decide, about their contents and groups organization. This initial sense of respect and confidence given by the researcher looked for creating a positive and motivational environment to carry out the work.

Each workshop was planned based on the following pedagogical guidelines:

- All workshops had a linguistic goal: aiming at improving both written and oral production.
- All workshops had a procedure which included the following steps:

Brainstorming has to do with Sharing ideas and selection of the most relevant to the topic.

Sharing promotes discussion on the important and supporting ideas.

Agreement on the Selection of final ideas, characters, setting and plot.

Decision making involves planning and organization of the sketches according to priorities.

Writing is an important exercise to develop the first draft of sketches, correction and error analysis.

Reading deals with comprehension practice, interaction and memorization of dialogues.

Rehearsing is an important stage for peer and teacher's correction.

Performing is the preparation for the representation of the sketches in front of an audience.

Evaluation promotes a reflection and adjustment of work for future experiences.

Application

The research was applied satisfactorily after much effort to overcome difficulties to sensitize the group of adolescents due to their reluctance and lack of interest towards the proposed activity.

A workshop was designed and applied to sensitize and engage the students in the development of this project, in order to raise their interest and make them express their feelings respect to EFL. They were presented a strategy to follow with a high percentage of acceptability and commitment. Students were considered to accept errors while writing, to follow a process of consciousness in strengths and weaknesses. This first part was led mainly by the teacher.

In spite of the low level of motivation, students started considering to deep into the new way of work. New things are motivation due to curiosity; so, they began as if it was like a game with the hope of finding new skills for writing. It means that teacher's explanations were productive and skillful. This carried out to the achievement of goal. The combination of skills between affective, cognitive and motor was well assembled to determine the continuation of the process.

Special interest was given to the relationship between strategies determined by the teacher and the results from the students based on evidences given on reports. While the teacher noticed a lack of motivation in the student, she also observed intervenient attitudes as an

important link to start reaching academic attraction. Their change of behavior depends on teacher's skills to plan and involve them in the activity. So, this aspect reflects the starting point of low motivation to the English: teachers with imperative attitudes, without any specific purpose for showing the importance of learning a second language as an effective way of communication, isolating the subject to the nonsense into the curriculum.

By this antecedent, the researcher created strategies to overcome the problem. They were effective since the fact that students were involved in the process with effective given results as it is shown in the development of the project through the students own words, spelling and expressions in their journals.

A el principio la clase era autonoma... me aborria... cambieron de profesora... nos hizo la clase divertida... aprendimos vocalisacion...

From the analysis of the students' papers, the researcher could establish the following categories:

1. Task engagement
2. Students' writing skills
3. Students' personal behavior
4. Student's goal setting
5. Students' interaction
6. Students' oral skills.

The insight coming out from the categories is that the project evolved around behavior and interaction. Task engagement, change of behavior, and writing skills improvement are the predominant features of the work. Students' journals showed that the initial rejection towards the foreign language turned into a sense of acceptance mainly because of its communicative nature.

In terms of writing improvement, students showed that they didn't like writing because most of the writing exercises in classes were not meaningful to them. Once they were able to participate in the selection of topics, they felt more comfortable expressing their ideas and trying to put them into words. They were also able to accept that writing is a process and it needs to follow steps, in this case: initial proposal in Spanish, then a translation into English, correction, and finally edition.

Students were motivated by Role Play writing and performance. Role Plays were focused on the respect of values. By taking this way of motivation, according to the student's report, and reinforced by the explanation of strategies, the starting point was based on doing more than saying. This means that students were lit up when seeing the teacher performing positive attitudes concerning the respect and expression of dignity in student's reflections.

By means of those values, the students found the way English might be learned. They found it easier because they felt free to express whatever they want to say or write. They also considered English not as a nonsense subject but as a useful one, to improve in communication even in their native language.

They were conscious of all the activities the teacher applied. This means that activities were innovative considering that the first workshops were focused on sensitivity. They liked activities that dealt with participation and collaboration, in other words, a "Cooperative learning". This cooperative learning was achieved by the allowing of a free agency to select groups and the way they wanted to talk.

Sketches were a great pick because they were motivated to practice pronunciation by facing and articulation. In other words, those activities were meaningful to improve the speaking skill. It is important to consider that one of the most difficult skills to be improved is speaking because rules block speaking. By feeling free

to express, students were launched to do it, forgetting everything could stop them in their performance in oral and writing discourse.

It is necessary to clarify that the research goal does not have to see with getting a great proficiency in those abilities but to awake the interest in starting to accept the subject as an important fact in their lives. This carried out the fact that it was also essential in their curriculum. Students started getting aware of the importance of English not just in their environment but around the globe. They began to feel the necessity of getting in contact with other cultures, kindred and tongues. This means that English as part of the curriculum is not just as a simple subject isolated and nonsense but the connection with the rest of subjects to clarify their position in their future performance and the role they have to play in their tepid society. Also students were considered as humans not as part of disposable entities.

They were closed up to technology and felt also the importance of being in contact with cameras, microphones and series of technological kits as a way to free their stress and scare to talk, not even in the foreign language but also in their own native language.

The work reflects a need to low level of structural learning and allows a free construction of knowledge by accepting error performance in speaking and writing skills. Besides, it is good to emphasize that the researcher was tolerant towards the students' weaknesses not only on speaking and writing performance but in their behavior.

The students were allowed to do a first draft of the sketches in Spanish and later, they were asked to write them in English all by themselves what ended up in sketches in Spanglish. Afterwards, the sketches were fixed with the help of the teacher. The researcher does not consider as an important need to analyze the structural aspects because this is not relevant

in the research goal. However, it may become an open door to other research. However they show the process of conveying meaning starting from a very communicative activity in the native language.

Students in 8th grade of a Technical High School refused English, due to lack of motivation. The researcher wanted first, to help students to get motivated in their own learning process and second to help them to be aware of the importance of learning to learn; but, It was observed that students were reluctant to do it mainly because of negative attitudes such as: disorganization, laziness, idleness, lack of discipline, difficult interaction among classmates as evidenced by the researcher's notes during the development of the project.

Teacher decided to clean up the room as a sensitivity strategy to help students, to acquire learning through a change of behavior. Burrus F. Skinner (1994) believed that **"the study of behavior must rest on what organisms do and do not do, and that is all one need pay attention to"**. He developed the concept of operant conditioning and concentrated the observation and manipulation of behavior and used of positive reinforcement. Learners disagreed with English in the curriculum, however they were able to negotiate some aspects with the teacher such as: free expression in their writings, freedom to choose work groups, friendly interaction patterns-teacher-students, students-students, teacher-parents, and parents-students, responsibility, sincere communication, respect, values, to be taken into account in this new stage of their learning English as a foreign Language. Thus, if eight graders were aware that to study English through the use of sketches, and motivating reinforcement, they would produce successful oral communication, because human behavior is a product of the stimulus-response interaction and those behaviors are modifiable. Then, all change of human behavior deals with learning. Applying this concept to the present particular case, it can be said that using an

appropriate motivation (Positive reinforcement) and method, students can enjoy English as a foreign language expressing their problems, feelings while working given situations of their environment.

This Project was developed with twenty nine students (boys and girls), whose ages were between twelve and sixteen years. Having in mind, that when adolescents develop their identity and self-concept, they formulate a series of postulates about themselves, as "I am attractive", "I am intelligent", "I am famous", this stage between childhood and adulthood has been defined as adolescence; this stage allows a mental and body transformation. The personal identity and the sexual, social, physical aspects are given; those permit the development and maturity of the human being. The adolescent suffers a growing up in no time reflecting new attitudes, behaviors, likes, ideas about the world, and their mental images. Then, adolescents are more concerned on living new personal experiences, it is important to allow them to express freely their desires, dreams, believes and anxieties, proper of their age, rather than asking for strict academic tasks, which constitute most of the time compulsory activities to satisfy institutions or familiar expectations rather than learners' needs. Besides most of them, come from rural areas, because they need to support their academic fees, they have to work in their free time to help their parents economically. Most of their families are illiterate and a high percentage has low literacy level in their mother tongue. Learners had not had any chance to learn English outside the classroom. The opportunities to use or practice this language outside the classroom were scare. They began English learning in the fifth grade. Most of the students did not have access to mass media, so contact with the English language was scarce.

This academic and social situation is not always addressed by educational communities which do not devote time to analyzing behavioral attitudes that affect the normal development

of school work. The use of authoritarian methods that do not allow interaction between students and teachers, work based on topics contained on syllabi designed by teachers, only as a component of the official curriculum but without taking into account student's interests and needs, reflected the weak link between pure instruction and real life.

This was the reason why students exhibited such a low level of motivation towards the learning not only of the foreign language but also in most of the areas excepting Physical Education and Computers Science which have that practical nature source of intrinsic motivation in students of all levels and ages. To contribute to solve this problem partially (lack of motivation), it was necessary to use a new strategy in which the roles of learners, of teachers and materials should be changed to fit the needs of a young population which needed to express feelings and emotions by means of a conceptual pedagogy.

In this new approach, learners became participant in the development of the classes and, were engaged in activities that required the involvement and commitment of students to accept and respect others' ideas such as brainstorming, classifying, describing and planning to produce and perform sketches. Then, in the next stage students became actors and protagonists of their own projects. In this way, students were motivated to produce English as a foreign language autonomously, and to develop values and good modals to interact among themselves. The main role of the teacher was to facilitate opportunities to develop the process of discussing, sharing ideas, planning and organizing projects to write, correcting mistakes in a deductive way, (error analysis) explaining and applying four column writing technique, rehearse and act short sketches in the classroom within an environment, which included technological resources such as: tape recorders, cassettes, photocopies, costumes and stage decoration.

Oral and corporal expression played an important role in the development of the work, since gestures, facial expressions, body language, sight, and verbal and non-verbal language because the body transmits what student wanted to say and what they wanted to mean.

Materials selected and sometimes created by students enhanced motivation, facilitated the creation of sketches, raised imagination and creativity, and students worked in a cooperative way. In the project, the teacher was a guide, a facilitator and a supervisor, observing every detail of the process because her reflections were the source of change of each activity.

Sketches were the means that motivated students to express their ideas and social situations most of the time a mirror of their own real life experiences and problems (See students journals) furthermore, the sketch allowed the learners to experiment their mental capacity to face new problems, to improve their own concentration by the application of new knowledge and so, their imagination, creativity and analysis manifested in a real life task.

Some of the obstacles found were the teen's fear to be mocked and the subsequent lack of motivation to integrate and interact. It is frequently observed how attitudes and behavior are limited by these kinds of circumstances that make them feel shy and embarrassed. However, the long process of planning, organizing, rehearsing and performing, compared to a 20 minutes long classroom activity, gives students the chance to develop feelings of confidence, self esteem, and security and in some cases that emotion that others' approval and acceptance produce on young learners. Besides, the students' fear to interact and perform in the foreign language generates disadvantages in the learning process, since some students would rather work alone and all by themselves. They would prefer to be passive listeners and to keep away of

participating in these kind of public activities. The sketch and role playing exert a significant function for losing the fear; since, it presents real interaction possibilities with others, the student improves the corporal, oral, gesticulatory and linguistic skills by exchanging ideas, and participating in the organization of the performance.

Conclusions

1. If techniques are different kinds of classroom activities like drills, dialogs (for the *Audio-lingual method*), role-plays, simulations (for the *Communicative Approach*), sentence completion, cloze, procedure, match, communicative activities (for the *communicative approach*), etc. then, the sketch and role playing activities need to be carried out in groups because the students share their knowledge, ideas, thoughts, abilities and permit to interact with others, to make associations with the exterior world, because learning, and social and cognitive development work together. Besides, through interaction their members get to be more tolerant and receptive of others' ideas. Students become leaders or guides for the others; most of cases, the best teacher is a student who helps their classmates to solve the problem. It is one of the most relevant aspects that the sketch and role-playing stress: the interaction with the foreign language and social environment, thus, techniques must go to the hand in the process of English Learning.
2. It is generally understood that learning a foreign language necessarily involves knowing, age, the culture of the target language along with them. Conversely it is rarely thought that the adolescence, behavior of the learner plays any significant role in the process. However understanding the behavior of young people, is the first step towards increasing motivation.
3. The lack of motivation towards Learning English was found in students of eight grades in a technical school setting, was more the result of the non-existence of adequate materials and methodologies than because of deeply felt convictions that activities such as role play and sketches can become a hindrance in the student's acquisition of the target language.
4. For a long time motivation has been accepted as a major player in the process of education, and involving the students' background in the teaching process is a generally accepted motivational technique. There is no reason why, then, autonomous learning background should be kept specifically out of the learning agenda.
5. Students were motivated by their innate drives to explore, to change their behavior, stimulated by a new good strategy, no because they were manipulated by authority's teachers, who enforced rules. They needed to make their own decisions on feelings, desires, what to express, what to learn and how to do it, but, they also need to be guided and negotiated with a teacher-friend, without transcended threats of grammatical punishment.
6. The Action plan applied to Students, in which students and teachers created, planned, wrote, rehearsed and dramatized their own sketches in the classroom, helped them, not only reaching a successful learning of the target language, but also enhancing studying and working cooperatively in an autonomous way. This cooperative learning was achieved by the allowing of a free agency to select groups and the way they wanted to talk.
7. Students were motivated by means of making of Role Playing, whose topics were focused on the respect of values. This means that students were lit up when seeing the teacher performing positive attitudes

concerning the respect and expression of dignity in student's reflections. By means of those values, the students found the way English might be learned. They found it easier because they felt free to express whatever they want to say or write. They also considered the English not as a nonsense subject but useful to improve in communication even in their native language because the importance of English is not just in their environment but around the world.

Pedagogical implications

Studies of this type stress the importance of reflecting on the roles that both students and teachers play in the learning and teaching processes of the foreign language. Teachers need to reflect on the relation between classroom practice and learners' feelings and interests.

Teachers also need to be aware of the fact that the learning of a language is not complete without the motivation and participation of the learner. The students, in turn, need to be conscious that learning does not depend on teacher's instruction but on their own involvement in meaningful tasks.

Further research

The research confirmed the relationship between motivation and learning. The present work did not attempt to make the students proficient in FL use. However, in the field of foreign languages learning it is necessary to address the aspect of developing and improving the four skills, mainly speaking and writing by including activities which can go beyond the work based just on fluency and turning it little by little into more systematic work on accuracy.

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¹ Proyecto Educativo Institucional.