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Views on Motivation and Autonomy in ELT

Selected Papers from the XXXVII FAAPI Conference

Edited by
Liliana Anglada
and
Darío Luis Banegas



Anglada, Liliana Beatriz

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XXXVII FAAPI Conference

Edited by Liliana Anglada and Darío Luis Banegas

Reviewer: Anne Jordan

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In memory of
Daniel Fernández and
Ana María Armendáriz

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From the editors

In this digital publication we have included twenty-one articles, five of them authored by the key-note speakers at the XXXVII FAAPI CONFERENCE and the other sixteen authored by some of the many presenters who shared their teaching experience and research work with the audience at the same conference. The selection of the latter was the result of two screening processes. The first assessment determined what papers and workshops were worth presenting face-to-face to an audience of informed ELT teachers and the selection was based the topic covered and the theoretical grounding of the proposal. The selection of the papers submitted for publication was based on two main criteria. More specifically, to be included in this publication the papers needed to focus on topics pertaining to motivation or autonomy in ELT, or both, and they needed to serve as examples of what EFL teacher-researchers are currently engaged in at the educational institutions where they teach.

The number of articles went from an initial 44 to a final total of 16. The large number of proposals is indicative of– among other things – the professionalization of the field of English Language Teaching in Argentina. We were forced to leave out some of the articles in order to produce a publication with the rank of a “collection of essays” or “selected papers,” as we decided to call it. This publication – in the form of a book of selected papers, as opposed to the typical conference proceedings – is meant to be a reflection of the growth and development of ELT as a professional field.

If, by the “professionalization” of our field, we understand the individual and collective growth of teachers in terms of their commitment to life-long learning and the search for truth and knowledge, we believe that the papers collected in this publication constitute examples of that professionalization. We believe that the teachers who are willing to share their perceptions and the results of their work by participating in meetings like the annual FAAPI meeting, and who aim at publishing their views and concerns are living up to the responsibility and dedication that society expects from them.

As for the five papers contributed by the plenary and semiplenary speakers at this year’s FAAPI conference, we have little to say except that they address the leading themes of the conference, i.e. autonomy and motivation, from various perspectives and provide the authors’ informed views –views grounded in theory and research– about teaching-learning practices and the participants involved in them.

In terms of the organization of the rest of the papers, we decided not to group them under subheadings because the great variety of topics covered would have meant creating an artificial division. The themes autonomy and motivation already function as the unifying thread that runs through all of the works, and the title of each paper should suffice as a guideline for the reader and as a key into the specificity of each paper.

Readers will find varied explorations which evidence the different research methods Argentinian teachers, trainers, and researchers resort to in order to look into their own teaching practices and interests. Most of the papers in this selection testify research on motivation and autonomy in teacher education programmes and university courses not necessarily connected with English Language Teaching. These concerns range from areas such as curriculum change (e.g. Paper 6) to information and communication technologies (e.g. Paper 9), pronunciation (e.g. Paper 10), feedback (e.g. Paper 11), ongoing professional development (e.g. Paper 14), academic writing (e.g. Paper 15), discourse analysis (e.g. Paper 19), and systemic functional grammar (e.g. Paper 20) among others.

Having briefly commented on the rationale for the organization and design of this volume, we would like to close with a word of thanks to all of the contributors --both those who have been published here and those whose work was not selected— because all of the papers and presentations show true commitment, dedication and steadfastness to our profession. And finally, we would like to encourage the readers and all EFL teachers and student-teachers who think they have something to share to start thinking about the possibility of writing their views so that our professional field can continue to develop.

Liliana and Darío

Disclaimer:

The editors do not take responsibility for the views expressed or the data included in the papers in this electronic publication. The editors have tried to take care of typing and punctuation problems but have not always been able to amend problems at the levels of word choice and sentence structure. In other words, they have done their best not to alter the meaning of the original text.

From FAAPI President

It is with great pleasure and pride that I am writing the introductory lines for this finely edited and remarkably coherent collection of papers.

I am writing these words for 'Views on motivation and autonomy: Selected papers from the XXXVII FAAPI Conference.' We were summoned for this annual meeting bearing in mind that we would have the chance of listening to great specialists in the international arena, fostering exchange among peers, get abreast of new trends in education and EFL.

I would like to mention what FAAPI is, since this is a contribution made from within it. Our organization was the brainchild of a group of teachers from different provinces, who could see that working together, in a collaborative fashion was good for the profession.

Inspired by common goals, they met in Córdoba in 1971 and created FAPI (*Federación Argentina de Profesores de Inglés*), as it was then called. Teachers from other provinces began to flock to Córdoba each year to discuss issues related to the teaching profession: we were concerned with being better practitioners; communication was by snail-mail; our newsletter was made with a stencil duplicator!

From the very beginning, to be a member of an Association (and, then of FAAPI) is to hold a degree of teacher of English granted by national, provincial or private universities and institutes of higher education accredited by the National Ministry of Education.

Time elapsed since 1971, and now in 2012, we have a 41-year-old powerful nationwide organization, called FAAPI (*Federación Argentina de Asociaciones de Profesores de Inglés*), with legal status, recognized in the whole country and abroad, with more than 20 Associations in full swing and others in the process of creation or re-creation. We are members of IATEFL, and have strong links with national and international institutions and organizations, e.g. the British Council, the USA Embassy, to mention just a few, that work toward EFL, education, professional development, international opportunities and scholarships for teachers, conferences, resources, etc.

FAAPI has played a significant role in the ELT arena in Argentina, as it works towards professional development and lifelong education. It has created a community of teachers and scholars, who share a common goal: the improvement of teaching and learning of English by practice and

research.

Well, even from a cursory glance at the titles of the pieces of work contributed from colleagues from all over the country and abroad, one senses the bone of the topic, the outline of the map, landmarks for the reader.

I believe that the title of FAAPI 2012 **Engaging, inspiring, empowering: Research on Motivation and Autonomy in ELT** is an almost uncharted territory, albeit very important for the learning process. Well, this alluring title has influenced many teachers to contribute their expertise to this publication.

Interesting points to be considered are: how do we stay engaged, inspired, empowered in our job as teachers? And what is more, how do we engage, inspire, empower our students, leading them to autonomy? Through our own beliefs about these concepts? From our attitude in the classroom? From a sound theoretical framework on the issue? From attention to students' needs? From the explicit inclusion of these topics in Initial Teacher Education curricula? From the learning materials, be it the traditional textbook or the use of ICTs?

Now, I invite you to turn the pages: an account of plenaries, semi-plenaries and papers will catch your interest and attention. Enjoy and learn from them!

Prof. Cristina Emilia Mayol

FAAPI President

People involved in FAAPI 2012

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1

Motivation and L2 learning: Towards a holistic analysis

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Introduction

In this paper I propose to discuss two different but related questions: (1) Do we need special theories of motivation to account for processes of motivation involved in L2 learning (as opposed to other areas of conscious and intentional human learning)? (2) How do L2 learning motivation processes fit within a person's overall system of motivations, goals and priorities? These two questions are related in the sense that the answer to (2) depends to some extent on what our theoretical position is in relation to (1). In discussing these questions, I will draw on arguments that I have developed in greater depth in Ushioda 2011 and 2012.

What makes L2 motivation distinctive?

I will begin by reviewing the position that L2 learning represents a special domain of human activity requiring distinctive theories and concepts of motivation. This position was essentially the starting-point for research on L2 motivation some fifty years ago, led by the pioneering work of Gardner and Lambert (1959, 1972) in Canada. While acknowledging the motivational importance of general instructional variables such as the teacher or teaching methods (Gardner, 1985, p. 5), Gardner and Lambert directed research attention primarily to social-psychological factors, such as cultural and ethnolinguistic attitudes. Their argument was that learning to speak another language entailed qualitatively different processes of motivation from learning other subjects of study such as history or mathematics. This is because 'students are not asked simply to learn about the language' but are required to 'take it in, as it were, and make it part of their behavioural repertoire', adopting forms of expression that represent 'integral parts of another culture' (Gardner, 1985, p. 6). Consequently, students' attitudes to and sense of identification with this other culture and its people were hypothesized to have a significant influence on their motivation and success as L2 learners. This hypothesis became crystallized in the concept of *integrative* orientation 'reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group' (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 132), and, in its strong form, a desire to identify with and integrate into their community. This social-psychological concept was contrasted with more pragmatic *instrumental* forms of motivation, such as learning the L2 in order to meet a course requirement or enhance one's career prospects. Research evidence over the years has consistently highlighted the role of cultural attitudes and integrative orientation as significant dimensions of L2 motivation (for a meta-analysis of studies, see

Masgoret & Gardner, 2003), underlining the distinctive social, psychological, behavioural and cultural complexities implicated in motivation when the object of learning is another language.

Since the turn of the millennium, these complexities distinctive to L2 motivation continue to shape theorizing in the field, though the explanatory frameworks have evolved beyond Gardner and Lambert's original social-psychological paradigm. A significant catalyst of change in this regard has been the rise of English as a global language and international lingua franca cutting across geographical, cultural and community boundaries (Crystal, 2003), and thus rendering problematic (or even 'untenable', Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2006) the concept of an integrative orientation towards a specific target language community. Moreover, with increased mobility, migration and advances in communication technologies in the globalised world, there is now considerable fluidity and flexibility of movement as people traverse various cultures and communities physically or virtually, while often retaining a firm (physical or virtual) foothold in their own local communities (for further discussion, see Ushioda, forthcoming).

In effect, the idea that motivation for learning English is determined by attitudes to English speakers and the degree of identification with their culture and community becomes difficult to sustain in today's globalised society. Since membership of this globalised society is in principle open to all, current thinking is that the attitudinal and identification processes shaping L2 motivation might be explained better in terms of people's sense of desired identity as international or global citizens able to traverse and engage with various cultures and communities, socially or professionally. Thus, while cultural and ethnolinguistic attitudes may still be implicated at some level, L2 motivation is now being re-theorized as a process of internal identification with an aspired personal identity or future self-image as an L2 speaker, rather than as primarily a process of identification with an external reference group or target language community (see the collection of studies in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). The most influential model in this regard is Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System, which includes two key self-related constructs: an *ideal L2 self*, representing an ideal and personally desired future self-image as an L2 speaker; and an *ought-to L2 self*, representing a less internalized future self-image desired for us by others, such as teachers, parents or society at large.

The L2 Motivational Self System thus represents a theoretical reframing of the distinctive social, psychological, cultural and behavioural complexities implicated in L2 learning motivation, and highlights the potentially transformative self or identity goals that may underpin such motivation. As van Lier (2007) explains, when people learn a new language, they engage in forging new identities and new ways of expressing and negotiating their identities through new words and in new worlds. As I have discussed elsewhere (Ushioda, 2011; see also Ushioda, forthcoming), the extent to which individuals feel comfortable with developing these new identities and expanding their sense of self may connect profoundly with their motivation for language learning. In short, one might argue that, compared with other domains of learning in formal education in particular, language learning entails a unique 'investment' of self (see Norton, 2000) and a potentially transformative sense of self-expression and identity development which have a significant bearing on motivation, and significant implications for how we theorize this motivation.

L2 motivation and learning motivation in general

Yet, from the perspective of those engaged in language learning, is it likely that they will regard processes of motivation relating to this learning activity as somehow qualitatively different from processes of motivation relating to other learning activities? Whether theorized in terms of social-psychological attitudes and orientations or in terms of transformative self and identity goals, these distinctive characteristics of L2 motivation may not necessarily be salient aspects of how L2 motivation is experienced or conceptualized by particular learners. Rather, their perspective on motivation may relate more to their day-to-day learning experiences in the classroom and across different subjects of study, whether in the foreign language lesson or in their science, history or mathematics lessons. This more immediate focus on ongoing learning experiences may be especially true for those who have yet to develop a clear sense of purpose for studying a foreign language, as may often be the case in compulsory mainstream education.

In short, once we begin to consider motivation from the experiential perspective of the person engaged in the business of L2 learning, it becomes evident that we need to broaden our theoretical focus beyond features of motivation distinctive to language learning. Indeed, it would seem surprising if more generic concepts of motivation that apply to all areas of conscious and intentional human learning did not apply also to language learning. In essence, this was the theoretical position adopted by those who sought to critique and expand the long-dominant social-psychological analysis of L2 motivation in the early 1990s (e.g. Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). This theoretical expansion led to the adoption of well-established motivation concepts from mainstream educational psychology to inform the analysis of L2 motivation. Such concepts included, for example: need for achievement (i.e. strength of desire for success and accomplishment); self-efficacy (i.e. beliefs in one's ability to perform a task); attributions (i.e. internal explanations for performance outcomes); or intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (i.e. engaging in an activity as a pleasurable end in itself or as a means to some separate outcome) (for an overview of relevant research, see Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

The integration of these more generic motivation concepts brought with it a sharper focus on immediate classroom-related factors and experiences and associated learner cognitions and behaviours, counterbalancing the social-psychological perspective on more distal cultural attitudes and integrative or instrumental goals. In Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) recent L2 Motivational Self System, such motivation concepts relating to the immediate learning environment are subsumed under the *L2 Learning Experience* dimension of the model, which is conceptualized at a separate level from the future-oriented *ideal L2 self* and *ought-to L2 self* components.

Towards a holistic analysis

In short, we might say that the features of L2 motivation that make it distinctive (compared to motivation in other learning domains) relate more to future personal goals and developmental trajectories, requiring specific theoretical accounts employing concepts such as integrative orientations, bicultural identities (e.g. Lamb, 2004) or ideal L2 selves. On the other hand, we might say that processes of motivation relating to ongoing experiences in the L2 classroom share much in

common with processes of motivation in other learning domains, and can be accounted for by more general theories and concepts of motivation.

On balance, this would seem like a simplified yet fair representation of how motivation theories and concepts specific to L2 learning on the one hand, and those generic to human learning on the other, have been distributed in analyses of L2 motivation. However, this distribution would suggest a lack of theoretical integration between L2 learners' current experiences (explained largely in terms of general motivation concepts) and future goals and purposes (explained largely in terms of motivation concepts specific to L2 learning). Yet from the perspective of those engaged in L2 learning, there is obviously continuity of experience between ongoing motivational processes and developing motivational trajectories, even if interests, goals and priorities may change and evolve, as circumstances and experiences change and evolve. Moreover, when students make choices about courses of study or educational and career pathways, does it seem probable that their motivation to pursue language studies or not is somehow independent of their motivation and decision-making as a whole? Clearly, from the L2 learner's perspective (as opposed to the narrowly defined perspective of the L2 motivation theorist), the processes of motivation associated with L2 learning are experienced alongside and in interaction with processes of motivation associated with other learning activities and pursuits in life.

To achieve a more integrated theoretical analysis of L2 motivation, we need therefore to consider how L2 motivation fits within a person's overall system of motivations, experiences, goals and priorities. As I have discussed elsewhere (Ushioda, 2009, 2012), this entails a shift in conceptual focus from abstract 'L2 learners' to a more holistic perspective on real 'persons' who are engaged in learning a language, who bring particular goals, identities, histories, and personalities, and who are located in particular temporal, social and physical contexts. This 'person-in-context' perspective (Ushioda, 2009) contrasts sharply with the abstract notion of the L2 learner, conceptualized as a theoretical bundle of variables representing certain motivation types or tendencies (e.g. the integratively motivated L2 learner or the extrinsically motivated L2 learner).

Among other things, this conceptual shift in focus has significant implications for classroom practice, or more specifically, it has significant implications for how L2 motivation theory may usefully inform practice. To date, theory and research on L2 motivation have tended to yield generalizable models and strategies for dealing with certain types of learner behaviour or attitude, and have thus tended to promote a view of motivation as essentially controlled by the teacher through various techniques and strategies, such as, for example, Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998) 'ten commandments' for motivating language learners. As I have argued elsewhere (Ushioda, 2011), this generalized approach to motivating L2 learners offers little to help teachers deal with the complex and uniquely individual people in their classrooms who are not just 'L2 learners' and who may not see themselves primarily in these terms, even when in the language classroom. Our concerns as L2 motivation theorists, and as teachers, must rather be to consider more holistically how to understand and engage their motivation as individual 'persons' who are involved in learning a language.

Concluding remarks

I began this discussion by posing two questions: (1) Do we need special theories of motivation to account for processes of motivation involved in L2 learning (as opposed to other areas of conscious and intentional human learning)? (2) How do L2 learning motivation processes fit within a person's overall system of motivations, goals and priorities? Within the confines of this paper, I have been able to address the first of these questions to some degree, and have considered the relative roles of motivation concepts specific to L2 learning and those generic to human learning in theoretical accounts of L2 motivation. As for the second question, I have really done little more than explain why this question is important and what this more holistic perspective on L2 motivation means for how theory may inform classroom practice. Developing a theoretical account of how L2 motivation is integrated within a person's overall motivational system remains largely uncharted territory, and one that invites research exploration in the future.

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2

Two concepts of autonomy in language learning and their consequences for research

David Little

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Introduction

In this article I present two distinct though related concepts of autonomy in language learning and describe in general terms the kinds of research they invite. The first concept contrasts autonomous with teacher-directed learners and focuses on the development of the individual learner's capacity to manage his or her own learning. The second concept is rooted in the belief that the most successful language learning outcomes are likely to be achieved when the target language is the communicative and metacognitive medium through which, individually and collaboratively, learners plan, execute, monitor and evaluate their own learning. Much of the research stimulated by the first concept seems to me of dubious value since it tells us rather little about language learning; whereas the implementation of the second concept comes to meet the social turn in theories of second language acquisition and is capable of generating the kinds of data needed to test, revise and substantiate those theories.

Autonomy in language learning: how it all began

The term 'autonomy' was introduced to the world of foreign language teaching and learning by Henri Holec's *Autonomy and foreign language learning*, a report commissioned by the Council of Europe and first published in 1979 (cited here as Holec, 1981). According to Holec (1981, p. 3), an autonomous learner is 'capable of taking charge of his own learning', which means 'determining the objectives; defining the contents and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedure of acquisition properly speaking (rhythm, time, place, etc.); evaluating what has been acquired'. According to this definition, learner autonomy is a radical form of self-instruction.

This view of learner autonomy has its origins in the Council of Europe's adult education projects of the 1970s, which were underpinned by two convictions: that adult education should develop skills of lifelong learning while meeting learners' immediate needs; and that learners themselves have much to contribute as agents of their own learning. This ethos is summarised in *Organization, content and methods of adult education*, a report on the Council of Europe's adult education project of the same name, prepared by Henri Janne and published in 1977; its essence is captured in one sentence (quoted by Holec [1981, p. 1]): 'From the idea of man "product of his society", one moves to the idea of man "producer of his society"' (Janne, 1977, p. 15).

For Holec the concept of learner autonomy has consequences not only for the way in which learning is organised but also for the kind of knowledge that is acquired. If learners themselves determine the goals and content of learning, 'objective, universal knowledge is [...] replaced by subjective, individual knowledge': 'the learner is no longer faced with an "independent" reality [...], to which he cannot but give way, but with a reality which he himself constructs and dominates' (1981, p. 21). Holec's use here of the verb 'construct' evidently refers to explicit procedures rather than implicit processes, to learner initiative, choice and control rather than the unconscious and involuntary workings of cognition. But elsewhere in his report he notes the view of language learning that was beginning to emerge from empirical research at the end of the 1970s: 'an active, creative operation by means of which the learner converts into acquired knowledge information provided for him in an organized manner (teaching) or in non-organized form ("natural" untreated information)' (1981: 23). Individual, organisational and cognitive in its orientation, Holec's understanding of learner autonomy thus appears to sit comfortably with constructivist theories of learning.

According to Holec, the ability to take charge of one's own learning is 'not inborn but must be acquired either by "natural" means or (as most often happens) by formal learning, i.e. in a systematic, deliberate way' (1981, p. 3). This leads him to identify two quite distinct objectives for language teaching: to help learners to achieve their linguistic and communicative goals on the one hand and to become autonomous in their learning on the other. He notes: 'This raises the problem of how far the methods adopted to achieve the first objective and to achieve the second objective are compatible' (1981, p. 23). He envisages, for example, that 'programmed instruction' might help learners to 'acquire a knowledge of a language' but 'would nevertheless place [them] in a position of dependence and irresponsibility such as would immediately conflict with [their] aim of achieving autonomy' (1981, p. 23).

For Holec, the teacher's task is always to promote learning of the target language; when learner autonomy is part of the overall learning objective, she acquires a second task, to help learners make the transition from teacher-directed to self-directed learning. As a consequence, the learner's control of the learning process remains conceptually external to his or her developing proficiency in the target language: Holec's concept of learner autonomy does not include a theory of language learning. Separating the development of learner autonomy from the development of target language proficiency in this way has encouraged numerous attempts to measure learners' autonomy independently of their language learning achievement; and the desire to measure autonomy is responsible for attempts to define it as an amalgam of traits – cognitive, metacognitive, affective, social, and so on. Such research seems to me of questionable value unless it finds ways of explicitly linking learners' autonomy to independent assessment of language learning outcomes.

At the end of the 1970s Holec's notion of 'a learning structure in which control over the learning can be exercised by the learner' (1981, p.7) coincided with the need to respond to the challenges and potential of emerging technologies and helped to stimulate a rapid growth of interest in self-access and self-instructional language learning. Universities and other institutions that converted language laboratories into self-access facilities quickly discovered, however, that the great majority of their learners had little idea how to take charge of their learning. It was necessary to develop counselling or advisory services to help them learn how to learn. Pioneering work was done in

this domain by Holec and his colleagues at the Centre de Recherches et d'Applications en Langues (CRAPEL) at the Université de Nancy II, and research on language advising continues to flourish. It is true to say, however, that most of this research focuses on advising learners in their mother tongue how to manage the learning of their chosen foreign language (another consequence, perhaps, of the separation between the development of learner autonomy and the development of target language proficiency); and although evaluative accounts of advisory schemes are of interest to those concerned with the development and management of self-access learning programmes, they too tend to tell us rather little about language learning as such.

If the development of learner autonomy entails a movement from teacher-direction to learner-direction, the question naturally arises: How can we know when learners are ready to embark on that process? This is responsible for the notion of 'readiness for autonomy', typically investigated using questionnaires, sometimes supplemented by individual or focus-group interviews. Such investigation necessarily engages with learners' beliefs about learner autonomy, which may be hostile or dismissive and are sometimes thought to be sufficient reason for abandoning the attempt to make them more autonomous. Here the notion of autonomy as a more general social and political right sometimes enters the picture, prompting the argument that learners' right to autonomy should include the right to refuse to become autonomous learners. But once the focus on autonomy *in learning* is lost, the concept of autonomy has little to offer language teachers and applied linguistics researchers.

Learner autonomy in the foreign language classroom

As we have seen, Holec's (1979) report was a contribution to the Council of Europe's work in adult education, informed by the ethos captured in Henri Janne's (1977) report and concerned to find ways of developing lifelong learning skills while responding to individual learner needs. Holec's concept of learner autonomy focuses on the learner's control of a process that is individual and cognitive; and the move from teacher-directed to learner-directed learning implies that learner autonomy increasingly leaves the classroom behind. But already in the early 1980s teachers and researchers were beginning to explore the implications of the concept of learner autonomy for language learning at school. The paradigm case, decisive for the development of my own thinking, was the work of Leni Dam (for a summary, see Dam, 1995).

Dam's approach shares a number of features with Holec's: she requires her learners to set their own goals, choose their own learning activities and materials, monitor the learning process, and evaluate learning outcomes. She does this, however, not because she wants to develop skills of self-management for their own sake, but because she believes that self-direction produces the most effective learning. All learning is a matter of accommodating new knowledge to what is already known (Dam, 1995, p. 2–3); but only I can know what I already know, and only you can know what you already know. By setting their own goals and selecting their own learning activities and materials, learners cannot help but tap into their 'old' knowledge. Also, by insisting that her learners become the agents of their own learning, Dam is seeking to counteract the 'tired-of-school attitude' so often displayed by young teenagers (Dam, 1995, p. 2): putting them in charge of their learning from the very beginning is the obvious way of exploiting their intrinsic motivation. Support for this approach to the

problem of learner motivation can be found in the self-determination theory of Edward Deci and Robert Ryan (summarized in Deci 1996), who argue that self-motivation depends on satisfying three interacting needs: for autonomy (setting one's own agenda, 'feeling free and volitional in one's actions'; Deci 1996, p. 2), competence (achieving one's goals effectively), and relatedness (the feeling of being 'connected with others in the midst of being effective and autonomous'; Deci 1996, p. 88).

The concept of learner autonomy that underlies Dam's classroom practice has two further features that distinguish it from Holec's. First, learning is seen not only in individual and cognitive terms, but also as a social phenomenon grounded in interaction and collaboration. In Dam's version of the autonomy classroom, knowledge – proficiency in the target language – is collaboratively constructed. Learners are expected to set individual learning goals; and homework, usually undertaken individually, is a 'must', as is extensive reading in the target language. But the products of individual effort – for example, word cards or picture dominoes designed to support vocabulary learning – are always added to the learning resources of the class. And individual learning is pursued within the interactive framework of pair and group work, all of which results in the collaborative production of target language text – perhaps a story, or a collection of poems, or a short play that can be performed in front of the rest of the class.

The second feature that distinguishes Dam's concept of learner autonomy from Holec's is this: from the beginning the target language is the principal medium of all classroom communication, whether it is concerned with discussing and agreeing upon goals, selecting and carrying out learning activities, or evaluating learning outcomes. From the beginning, in other words, the target language in its metacognitive as well as its communicative function is the channel through which the learners' agency is required to flow. The development of learners' capacity to manage their own learning is thus internal to the development of their proficiency in the target language. In its social-interactive dimension the autonomy classroom may be described as a self-transforming 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991); in its insistence on language learning through language use, it shares with mainstream theories of second language acquisition the assumption that spontaneous, authentic use of the target language is a precondition for effective learning.

The dynamic of Dam's autonomy classroom is driven by a recursive cycle of activity: making plans, implementing them, and evaluating the results. Effective management of this process requires continuous documentation: logbooks to track the progress of individual learners, posters written by the teacher on the basis of interaction with the whole class to capture issues and content that have collective importance. When we add to this the texts in various media that learners produce, individually and collaboratively, in fulfilment of their learning plans, it is clear that the autonomy classroom generates large quantities of data that lend themselves to action research (Burns, 2010). The fact that, under the teacher's guidance, the learners are individually and collectively in charge of their own learning means, of course, that they are effectively the teacher's co-researchers and can be explicitly drawn into the procedures of action research as another dimension of learning.

Large amounts of data illustrating the gradual development of the learners' communicative and metacognitive capacities in the target language also invite analysis using the perspectives and techniques of 'traditional' research into second language acquisition. Since the 1990s Leni Dam and Lienhard Legenhausen have carried out a number of longitudinal studies that explore different

dimensions of the acquisition of English by Dam's learners – lexical and grammatical development, mastery of conversational interaction, the growth of metalinguistic awareness, and so on (for an overview, see Legenhausen, 2003). There is certainly room for a large number of replication studies carried out in similarly configured learning environments; but the autonomy classroom also comes to meet the recent 'social turn' in theories of second language acquisition – for example, complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, 2008), dynamic systems theory (Van Geert, 2008), neo-Vygotskian sociocultural theory (Lantolf and Thorne 2006, Lantolf and Poehner, 2008), the sociocognitive approach (Batstone, 2010), and ecological approaches (Kramsch, 2002, van Lier, 2002, 2004). Because these theories tend to see second language learning as a 'process of socialization into specific communities of practice' (Pavlenko, 2002, p. 286), traditional language classrooms have little to offer them. The autonomy classroom as realised by Leni Dam, on the other hand, is a learning community in which the autonomy of individual learners is expressed and developed in target language discourse that is interactive and inescapably social: an environment that should be ideally suited to the exploration, substantiation and/or refinement of these new theories. Research of this kind could, I believe, give the autonomy classroom a pivotal position in applied linguistic research.

Conclusion

The two concepts of learner autonomy that I have summarised in this article seem to invite, and have certainly stimulated, two quite different kinds of research. Work that focuses on autonomy without at the same time focusing on the development of second language proficiency all too easily ends up saying little or nothing about language learning as such, which must raise doubts about its relevance and utility. Research that treats learner autonomy as a dimension of target language proficiency, on the other hand, has the capacity to contribute decisively to the study of second language acquisition while generating new insights into the nature and dynamics of autonomous learning environments.

Two points are worth making in conclusion. First, *language* learner autonomy is to be found wherever learners exercise their agency – make choices, take decisions, implement plans, evaluate results – *in the target language*. I noted in the first part of this article that advice is often provided to self-access learners in their first language. There are, however, some notable exceptions, like Helsinki University's ALMS (Autonomous Learning Modules) project, which supports students' learning of English (see Karlsson et al., 1997 for a full description and Kjisik 2007 for a retrospective evaluation). One-to-one advising sessions are central to the scheme. Because these sessions are conducted in English and combine reflection with communication, they help to overcome the necessarily episodic and fragmentary nature of the language learning process (Karlsson, 2008) and support the development of learners' autonomy.

Secondly, online communication has the capacity to transform programmes of self-access language learning and the concept of learner autonomy on which they are based. Noting that Holec's 'learner autonomy model was used to analyse the extent to which the learner takes charge of his or her own formal language learning', Sockett and Toffili (2012, p. 139) argue that this model has been superseded by communicative reality: learners can now develop their second language proficiency informally, by participating in social networks (and thus, as I would add, exercising their agency in the target language). Sockett and Toffili substantiate their argument by analysing data collected from a

small group of French learners of English; they carry out their analysis from the perspective of dynamic systems theory, one of the theoretical approaches to second language acquisition mentioned in the second part of this article. In terms of the argument I have developed, of course, Sockett and Toffoli's research shows not that learner autonomy has had its day, but that social networks and related modes of electronic communication invite a shift from the first to the second of the two concepts of learner autonomy I have been concerned with.

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3

Empowering English language learners to build autonomy and motivation in urban secondary Math and Science classes: The peer enabled restructured classroom (PERC)

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Introduction

Over the past five years, an innovative and successful program titled Peer Enabled Restructured Classrooms (PERC), funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and associated with the Math and Science Partnership in New York City (MSPinNYC), has made substantial inroads into changing the teaching and learning culture in urban secondary math and science classrooms. This program targets historically underperforming students in New York City public high schools. Most of the participating students represent underachieving and underserved culturally and linguistically diverse populations.

In this innovative program, Teaching Assistant Scholars (TAS) work with underperforming students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) courses and content. The PERC model provides an interactive, engaging and student centered classroom environment that supports student learning by pairing more advanced peer tutors (TAS) with underachieving and historically at risk inner city, urban students, many of whom are English Language Learners (ELLs). The TAS work with small groups of three and four students in Integrated Algebra (IA) and Living Environment (LE), also known as Biology. Students in these classes have either failed the course or the state exam at least once, or whose 8th grade math and/or science test scores indicate a probable need for intervention in order to successfully complete the courses and pass the state exams. The PERC model was developed in math and science classes, because students must pass Integrated Algebra, and at least one science class, usually Living Environment (Biology) in order to graduate from high school with a standard diploma.

The PERC program currently has two main goals:

- To alter the secondary math and science teaching and learning environment, by preparing teachers to use strategies that have been developed by the PERC model
- To work with urban secondary schools to continue to develop the model and exemplify it for other schools and districts in NYC and beyond

Background

The PERC model began in 2008-2009 as a pilot project in four high schools, with eleven teachers, and over 600 students in New York City's public high school system. Up to this point, the concept and basic structure of the PERC model had been developed in 5-week summer school programs from 2005-2008. The PERC model that emerged from these short-term programs helped to bring to light the kinds of strategies that were critical to student success, especially for ELLS. The 2008-2009 pilot program was the first attempt to fully develop the PERC model in a complete academic year. Most students were in 10th grade, although some students were in the 11th grade because they had failed the class or the state exam in 10th grade. Classes also included some 9th grade students, depending on the individual school program structure and student scheduling practices.

Program design

In order to alter the teaching and learning environment, several substantial changes have to be made to teachers' traditional view on pedagogy and students' traditional ideas on learning. The model requires a shift from a teacher centered to a student centered educational context. The teacher must abandon his or her role as that of the "provider of information" and allow for a gradual release of authority to empower students to take on the role as participant learners. In order to accomplish this, students must have a sense of motivation and must develop a level of autonomy in their learning. Students must be able to take charge of their own learning (Holec, 1981).

The PERC model includes attention to student motivation and a classroom environment that fosters learner autonomy. The model builds on the teacher as facilitator, the use of peer instructors, called "Teaching Assistant Scholars or TAS, and an expectation of student engagement in all lessons. In a PERC classroom, students work in small groups of 3-4 students with a TAS group facilitator. The TAS guides the group activity, scaffolds learning of new concepts, and assesses student understanding. The TAS must have passed the course and the state end-of-course exam in the relevant subject area, but do not need to have achieved an advanced score or be eligible for honors classes. The TAS lead the students in their group everyday, and all students are engaged with the TAS throughout the lesson. The teacher circulates the room and facilitates in the learning by talking with the groups, answering clarification questions, adding content information into the discussions, or providing additional explanations, modeling or demonstrations. Teachers take this time to ask higher order thinking questions and to extend the groups' content knowledge. The PERC classroom is not just group work or a workshop model of teaching. It is a student-centered classroom. Some of the most important characteristics of a PERC classroom are:

- Teachers take an active but not central role in the classroom
- Teachers learn to listen
- Teachers and TAS collaborate to find best ways to motivate and teach the PERC students
- Teachers trust the Teaching Assistant Scholars
- Teachers relinquish control to TAS and to the students
- Students take responsibility for their own learning

- TAS take responsibility for their students' learning
- Teachers believe that all students can learn

To accomplish this kind of classroom transformation, “business as usual” is suspended and a new paradigm of the classroom as a learning lab emerges. Scheduling must be adjusted for the TAS, and the teachers must give up be flexible and willing to change their teaching style and methodology. Teachers must be well planned ahead of time, making accountability transparent. Teacher motivation is raised because of the TAS and the PERC researchers who are often visitors or observers in the classroom (Gerena, Keiler, Levine, McCauley, Mills, Ruscigno, Sweeney, Weiler, Zimmerman, 2010).

A typical daily schedule might look like this:

Time: Classes are usually 50-55 minutes	TAS: There are usually 6-8 TAS in a room	Students: There are usually 30 students in the room	Teacher: A content specialist
0-10 min – Do Now Exercise- Usually a review question or an anticipatory activity	Takes attendance, motivates students to focus on the “Do Now” exercise	Get organized in their groups, Begins to work on the “Do Now” activity	Takes care of business items, or paperwork that TAS cannot be responsible for
10-20 minutes Whole class instruction	Take notes on the teacher’s presentation; answer “right there” questions during the teacher’s instruction	Take notes, follow instructions, writes questions for later discussion	Whole Class Instruction on the daily lesson objective, aim or goal
20-40 min – Group activity	Facilitate completing the assigned work; Monitors students’ comprehension of the concept or task; Uses literacy based strategies	Work with the group members and the TAS to complete the task or assignment; Monitors own progress and comprehension; Asks questions and requests clarifying information	Circulates the room & assesses student work; Supports TASs as needed; Asks higher order thinking questions; Scaffolds learning; Models, demonstrates, provides examples, and additional explanations; Clarifies misconceptions or difficult concepts; Conducts informal formative assessment
5-10 min – Wrap up	Collects work, gives points or other positive reinforcement	Thinks about own learning, asks questions on follow up or homework assignments	Whole Class; Recaps the lesson; Shares important information; Gives feedback to the class

Table 1: A typical daily schedule of the PERC classes

Ongoing evaluation and results

This model has produced remarkable quantitative results in learner gains as measured by end of course state level exam pass rates. In June 2009, after implementing the PERC model for the academic year, the pass rate improvement over control groups ranged from 3% to 60% with an overall average improvement of 20.2% (Mills, 2010).

Subject	N (exp)	%pass	N (control)	% pass	%pass
IA	171	65.7%	199	42.7%	+23
IA	161	39%	193	19.7%	+20
IA	18	88.9%	44	27.3%	+60
IA	43	51.2%	121	48.8%	+3
LE	111	70%	212	49.1%	+21
LE	60	73.3%	99	56.0%	+15
LE	30	96.7%	68	76.5%	+20

Table 2: PERC learner gains and comparison scores as measured by end of course state exams

The pass rates for the following summer school program using the PERC model were equally impressive. For the Integrated Algebra classes, the pass rate for the fully implemented PERC model was 90%. The Citywide pass rate, taking the same state exam, was 35%. In Living Environment, the PERC pass rate was 63% and the Citywide pass rate was 30%. It became obvious that the PERC model has sustainability and efficacy in both the academic year and the summer school programs.

Research findings also revealed gains in the affective areas of student satisfaction, student sense of efficacy, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and autonomy for both the TAS and the PERC learners.

Research conducted through the 2008-2009 academic year (Zimmerman, 2010) focused on examining if the PERC model created learning environments that fulfilled the students' basic psychological needs, enhanced motivation, and encouraged students to take a deep approach to learning. Research revolved around a theory-based integrative model for motivation and learning (Levesque, Sell, & Zimmerman, 2006). This model was used to provide a context to understand why the PERC model is such a robust and effective classroom model (Zimmerman, 2010). PERC participants' motivation, autonomy and self-efficiency were measured based on of self-determination theory (Deci, & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2000). It included competence, as measured by a sense of mastery and improved skills; relatedness, as measured by a sense of connectedness; and autonomy, as measured by volitional choice. The research was conducted using two validated assessments: Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ), Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ-A) (Zimmerman, 2010). The results of this research revealed that:

- The learning environments based on the PERC model were effective in satisfying the students' basic psychological needs of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

- The learning environments based on the PERC model help shift the students' motivation to a more self-determined (intrinsic) form.
- Of 604 students:
 Autonomy, relatedness, and competence levels were significant at the $p < 0.001$ and self-determination was significant at the $p < .20$

Literacy infusion into the project

The program, while not originally focused on English learners, evolved into a program that began to identify the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) and Former-English Language Learners (F-ELLs). During the first pilot academic year of implementation, a special focus was developed to assist English Language Learners (ELLs) and Former English Language Learners (F-ELLs), in the PERC Living Environment (LE) biology and Integrated Algebra (IA) classes. The specific goal of this focus was to provide teachers and TAS with the tools to model, demonstrate and ultimately pass on literacy strategies to the ELLs. It was hoped that providing teachers and TAS with a "toolbox" of literacy strategies would to help them better prepare ELLs and F-ELLs to successfully pass the New York State Regent exam.

The decision to add literacy strategies to the model was based on research findings that show that specific literacy skills are necessary to help ELLs successfully tackle content area learning. It is not enough to just use specific literacy strategies in the teaching process. It is equally, and perhaps more important, to explicitly teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to help ELLs process complex, academically challenging materials, while they are acquiring a second language (Carlo, August, McLaughlin, Snow, Dressler, Lippman, Lively, & White, 2004; Hart & Okhee, 2003; Faltis, & Coulter, 2008; Curtin, 2009; Walqui, Koelsch, Hamburger, Gaarder, Insaurralde, Schmida, Weiss, 2010).

There are many benefits to teaching language learners specific strategies. Chamot, Keatley, Meloni, Gonglewski, & Bartoshesky (2009, p.3) consider the benefits in terms of motivation and autonomy. They recommend teaching learning strategies in language classes because strategies can "increase student motivation by increasing students' confidence in their own learning ability and by providing students with specific techniques for successful language learning". They go on to state that "students who have learned how and when to use learning strategies become more self-reliant and better able to learn independently". (p.3)

Literacy professional development was divided into four strategy blocks, each of which had several strategies from which to choose. The teachers chose which one would best fit the particular lesson or topic they were teaching. This provided the teacher with a high level of autonomy as to which strategy would be implemented in the curriculum and when it would be introduced.

Strategy Block 1	Strategy Block 2	Strategy Block 3	Strategy Block 4
Vocabulary / Concept Building	Elements of Text and Text Analysis	Summarizing	Comprehension Activities
Strategies and Activities	Strategies and Activities	Strategies and Activities	Strategies and Activities
Vocabulary Maps Concept Definitions Maps Semantic Webbing Word Walls Tiered Vocabulary Use of Cognates Flash Cards	Elements of text structure: Identifying and using the structure and organization of text Headings, Subheadings, Use of prefixes, affixes, roots Visuals, Bold type, Underlined words, Italics and graphics; Pictures, maps, graphs, illustrations SSS: Selective attention: Underline, circle, highlight key words Skim: Rapid glancing to find out generally what a reading is about Scan: Rapid reading for specific purposes	GIST: (Generating Interactions between Schemata and Text) Four Two One Final Countdown Two Column Notes T Charts	QAR (Question-Answer-Response) SQ3R (Survey/Question Read/Recite/Review) Jig-Saw Inferring Analyzing Main idea Predicting Visualizing
For all Blocks Graphic Organizers were used: Concept maps Free From maps Sequence maps Comparison maps (Venn diagram with written narrative conclusion) Content Frames Categorizing tables			

Table 3: Literacy strategies blocks and aligned activities

A strategy per week, conditional upon the teachers' ability and time, was incorporated into the content teaching. These strategies were introduced, modeled, and demonstrated for the TAS and teachers in professional development sessions. The researchers visited classes to observe and monitor the use of the literacy strategies in the PERC classrooms. After a strategy was observed, the TAS and the teacher would comment on the perceived effectiveness of it.

The attention to ELLs included a variety of theories and practical models. As a result, it drew upon the theoretical foundations of second and foreign language acquisition, vocabulary development, comprehension strategies and effective teaching practices for English Learners and to provide comprehensible input in a low anxiety setting. It also drew on methods and materials to increase

motivation and autonomy in language learning contexts (Wachob, 2006; Spratt, Humphreys & Chan, 2002).

The literacy practices were aligned with effective practices to provide ELLs a learning environment conducive to their needs. The following graphic organizer illustrates the convergence of all of effective practice for ELLs that were infused into the PERC model (Allen, 2007; Cummins, 1981, 1994; Diaz-Rico, 2004; Echeverria & Graves, 2010; Echevarria, Short, & Vogt, 2008; Echeverria, Vogt, & Short, 2007; Folse, 2009; Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010; Krashen, 1982, 2003; Lockspeiser, O'Sullivan, Teherani, & Muller, 2008; Perego & Boyle, 2008; Reiss, 2008; Richard-Amato & Snow, 2005; Uhl-Chamot, 2009).

Effective practice includes all the characteristics of both the PERC model and language learning. The graphic organizer, as a circle, demonstrates that there is no one quality more important than another. The lack of hierarchy reveals the equal importance of all practices.



Figure 1: Effective practices for ELLs

Qualitative results of training, modeling and implementation of literacy strategies

At the end of the 2010 academic year, interviews were held with selected teachers, TAS and PERC ELL/F-ELL students. Teachers, TAS, and PERC students were scheduled to participate in focus group interviews, separated by group, and a question protocol was developed for each group. Focus group interview sessions were approximately 20-25 minutes long and contained between 3-5 participants. Questions were presented to the groups and participants were free to respond. Interviewers assured

that all members of the focus groups were given ample opportunities to respond and that all voices were heard.

Based on these interviews with teachers, TAS and PERC students, the following practices were identified as effective with ELLs:

- Breaking down content into comprehensible chunks
- Use of students' background knowledge and experiences
- The use of manipulative materials, graphic organizers, and other visuals
- Attention to key terms and vocabulary development
- Peer interaction to improve scientific and mathematical oral discourse
- Increased wait time
- Most TAS felt that the GIST, SSS, Flash Cards, Word maps, Word Wall activities, Tiered Vocabulary, and QAR were the most useful strategies.

Literacy strategies: Voices of ELLs/F-ELLs

In small focus groups, the ELLs/F-ELL students were asked to talk about the strategies that they found most helpful to them in the PERC math and science classrooms. The following are excerpted quotes from these interviews:

"I understood when the TAS spoke slowly and explained step by step."

"The TAS helped us with the vocabulary and writing."

"They (the TAS) actually, like if you don't know it, explained it no matter how long it took."

"The way they break it down so we can understand."

"They showed us details, they used simple words, and examples to make it easier for us."

"They (the TAS) go slow and show me more attention."

"They explain everything and help me out in a way that I can understand it."

"She taught us how to use parts of words, like "anti" in antibiotic and "a" in abiotic."

"She drew and illustrated. She would get up and do an action which helped me a lot."

"She used a lot of words that look like Spanish words, similar words to help me understand."

"Pictures were very important for me to understand."

"Most helpful were the activities we did. It was nice to see different answers to the same questions."

"When I have a problem she speaks to me in Spanish. Sometimes in English I don't understand it. It really helps when she tells me in Spanish."

Literacy strategies: voices of The TAS

In small focus groups the TAS were asked to talk about the strategies that they thought most useful to them and the students in the PERC math and science classrooms. The following are excerpted quotes from these interviews:

"I used pictures, drew pictures and used the whiteboard."

"Break everything down and draw pictures."

"If a student doesn't know English they should have a tutor who speaks their language."

“I would use the whiteboard, write on the board, list words, say it again, do anything to get them to understand.”

“I used illustrating, writing it out on the board, breaking problems down into steps, show things piece by piece.”

“I go slower so he can understand. I give him practice time.”

“If he doesn’t get it, I go back and give him a simpler question and go through it step by step.”

“If a student doesn’t get it sometimes other teachers just teaches it over and over again the same way. If my students don’t get it, I use a different strategy.”

Conclusion

The PERC project is continuing into its second phase for the years 2012-2017. It will continue to use theory-based integrative models for motivation and learning (Levesque et al., 2006). A main focus of the continuing project is to investigate the effects of participation in the PERC model on students’ and TA Scholars’ motivation towards STEM class work, and their perceived satisfaction of competence, autonomy, and relatedness.

The PERC model builds on peer instruction and interaction, creates a student centered teaching and learning environment, and develops student motivation, autonomy, and relatedness (Gerena et al., 2010).

The PERC model is flexible enough to include aspects that were not originally planned for, such as literacy strategies. By adding the literacy component to the overall plan, it provided scaffolding and support for ELLs and F-ELLs, using effective practices in difficult content material courses (Amaral, Garrison & Klentschy, 2002; Gerena & Keiler, 2012; Meltzer & Hamann, 2004; Rogers, Ludington & Graham, 1999; Stoddart, Pinal, Latzke, and Canaday, 2002). The PERC model is working towards improving the literacy skills of both the TAS and the PERC students. The TAS have reported ‘transporting’ their newly acquired literacy skills to other classes and content areas of study (Gerena & Keiler, 2011). The model provides ongoing, consistent, and relevant professional development to the participating teachers, thus building capacity among STEM teachers.

Given these qualities, the PERC model is a viable structure that can be adapted for English language teaching and learning classes at all academic, linguistic, and age levels. The PERC model can offer an innovative framework for those who are interested in developing authentic and motivational English language programs that are focused on English as a second or foreign language growth, student motivation and student autonomy in second language learning. In order to accomplish this, professional development and training would be the first step to establishing a program structured on the PERC model and schools would have to plan student, TAS and teacher schedules accordingly. Administrative support and teacher/parent buy-in would be indispensable for program success. Parental input would prove indispensable for program success. It would be recommended that schools begin with one grade level as a pilot, and continue adding a grade level each subsequent year. In this way, program developers or organizers would be able to improve program design or perfect any weak points in the program’s framework.

Using the PERC model can lead to greater student engagement and participation, and an increase in motivation and higher levels of learner autonomy. Educational contexts that utilize

Teaching Assistants as peer instructors, teachers as facilitators, and a student-centered approach to teaching, can empower both teachers and learners in genuine second language development teaching and learning contexts. The PERC model would be recommended to all programs that desire their students to develop language skills, autonomy, and motivation for future learning.

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4

Motivation and autonomy through CLIL.

A collaborative undertaking.

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Introduction

During the 2011 school year, a group of three secondary school teachers and myself as a teacher-researcher engaged in developing language-driven Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) lessons and context-responsive materials in order to foster motivation among our secondary school students. For most of them, English as a curriculum subject did not offer new avenues for meaningful learning as our lessons were characterised by coursebook-dependent practices. Therefore, we agreed to change this landscape by exploring CLIL and teacher-made materials through Collaborative Action Research, hence CAR (Bruce et al., 2011; Burns, 2010; Rainey; 2011; Wyatt, 2011a).

In this paper I discuss how motivation and autonomy emerged from such a research project at a secondary school in Chubut. For three school terms and following the general features of language-driven CLIL (Bentley, 2010; Coyle et al., 2010; Dalton-Puffer, 2011; Kiely, 2011) we systematically infused content in our EFL lessons and developed context-responsive CLIL didactic transposition. Topics, activities, and sources of input were negotiated between us teachers and our students. Interviews, classroom observations, and student surveys revealed that our pedagogical interventions were beneficial for both students and teachers in terms of motivation and autonomy.

A review of motivation and autonomy in CLIL

CLIL studies show that learning may be improved if content, or even language thematisation, meets students' interests. Such an interest in the relationship between motivation and CLIL is outlined in Coyle et al. (2010, p. 88-89) who relate CLIL motivation to integrative and instrumental motivation. The authors assert that motivation could be fostered not only through the offering of cognitively rich activities, thus strengthening the ties between cognition and motivation, but also through collaborative tasks, personalised learning goals, and self-evaluation instances. In general, it may be agreed that the fact that CLIL offers two elements, i.e., content and language, helps students develop a flexible view through which the most liked element may help them improve their attitude towards the less liked element. For example, in a study carried out in Finland, Seikkula-Leino (2007) found that, despite similar academic achievements between CLIL and mainstream classes, the former demonstrated stronger motivation to learn in general including foreign languages because of the challenge that content posed.

Huang (2011) investigated the impact of CLIL among EFL young students' motivated behaviours in a summer school in Taiwan. Her study compared a CLIL group with an EFL group using video-recorded classroom observations and fieldnotes. Results showed that the CLIL group produced more complex and longer sentences as interactions were shaped around topics and cognitively engaging activities which required students to explain processes to one another. In addition, CLIL students not only appeared to volunteer and participate more eagerly but also increased their attention. The author concludes that a shift from form-focused lessons to meaning-focused lessons was responsible for students' motivated behaviours.

Along these lines, Lasagabaster (2011) believes that the older secondary students are, the less motivated they become in formal settings because of their increased rejection of the school system. This led him to wonder whether a CLIL approach may help diminish the effects of these issues. In a cross-sectional study of 191 students from four different secondary schools in the Basque Country, Lasagabaster investigated the correlation between motivation and language achievement in CLIL and EFL settings. Through a questionnaire and a placement test, the author concluded that the CLIL students showed higher levels in four areas: (1) interest or instrumental motivation, (2) attitudes towards English lessons, (3) effort, and (4) grammar proficiency. However, the limitation of this study was that while the EFL students had three hours a week, the CLIL students had three hours a week plus two content subjects taught in English. This difference in amount of exposure might be the cause of the learning outcomes rather than the approach in itself (Bruton, 2011).

Two CLIL-motivation studies are the result of teachers researching their own practices. McCall (2012) reports the development and implementation of a curriculum around football to foster intrinsic motivation and fight underachievement among boys in the French class. After one school year of projects and teacher-developed materials around football, surveys and interviews to teachers and students revealed that boys (and also girls) found French learning more engaging. Boys' attitude to learning French seemed to have improved given that the focus was on a sport. Conversely, Mearns (2012) evaluates the benefits of a small-scale study in which her students learnt German and Health Science for six weeks. Through a summative questionnaire, results revealed that while CLIL seemed to have improved motivation to learn German, tasks such as 'speaking in front of the class' affected students' levels of confidence in their own progress. The author also points out that only the high-achievers benefited linguistically and motivationally.

Based on the publications reviewed above, I observe there is need for CLIL research which examines the following interrelated spheres in teacher-led CLIL implementations: (1) the relationship between student motivation and teacher motivation (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011), and (2) teacher motivation, autonomy and identity reconfiguration derived from teacher-developed materials. I argue that these issues are important to be researched since they determine the extent to which teachers adopt, adapt and evaluate CLIL explorations regardless of their orientation towards content or language. Research on bottom-up CLIL experiences should not only be concerned with the language and cognitive gains among students, but also with their motivation in synergy with that of their teachers so that these experiences could be sustained and improved over time.

I see teacher motivation as the highly intrinsic drive to teach knowledge and influence people. Teacher motivation is closely linked to teacher autonomy since the more autonomous teachers are,

the more motivated they may be (Benson, 2007). Teacher autonomy, in turn, may be seen as a professional attribute which refers to teacher's freedom to implement a curriculum discretely. From this stance, a self-directed teacher becomes a co-constructor of his/her own professional development through individual and collective actions (Ding, 2009). Benson (2010) adds that teachers may exercise their autonomy by creating opportunities which exceed the prescriptive curriculum and designing tasks and materials which respond to their students' interests and abilities. In relation to materials and teacher autonomy, Wyatt (2011b) provides an account of a teacher whose practical knowledge in materials design, autonomy, and confidence grew as a result of an action research experience which allowed the teacher to adapt and finally produce his own materials to meet his contextual needs.

I believe that motivation and autonomy may reconfigure the identity of 'becoming a teacher' not only through the classroom-based process of teaching but also through one's individual as well as social recognition. Teacher identity may be granted when colleagues, students and other members of the community regard a teacher as a professional of teaching constantly developing and investing in teaching (Clarke, 2009; Norton & Toohey, 2011). Teacher-developed materials may help teachers to be seen as autonomous professionals whose actions help motivate their and colleagues in the processes of language teaching and learning.

Developing language-driven CLIL

In order to foster motivation through our CLIL-CAR research project, we teachers negotiated how to shape language-driven CLIL with our students. Contents emerged from them in an attempt to make the learning experience engaging and context-responsive. Through surveys and voting, the students suggested topics, sources of input, and activities, which we incorporated in our lessons. On the one hand, content was the driving force within our foreign-language CLIL model. On the other hand, authentic sources were paramount in our students' eyes. Given this landscape, we tended to equate language learning to language and thinking skills development within which vocabulary and incidental grammar awareness occurred.

While the collection and selection of authentic sources shaped the content to be taught, it was listening and speaking skills which shaped the content taught. How listening and speaking activities were developed and performed was synchronised with lower- to higher-order thinking skills since language learning was engaging when the language activities were loaded with a cognitive challenge that allowed the students to engage with the content in various ways. Along these lines, I personally believe that language-driven CLIL intersects with student and teacher motivations as these drive and are driven by pedagogical negotiations between teachers and students. To some extent, I advance that student-and-teacher motivation illuminates language-driven CLIL from within and that student-and-teacher motivation is the conveyor belt through which CLIL moves.

Language-driven CLIL and motivation

According to the classroom observations, staff meetings, and interviews with teachers and students we gathered, language benefits in terms of practice were highlighted by the students as a result of a bottom-up context-responsive language-driven CLIL which included teachers' materials. In addition,

motivation improvement was acknowledged from the beginning of Cycle 1 in our CAR plan and it developed through the different stages of the three cycles.

In Cycle 1, there was a battle of clashes and consequences as regards motivation. We saw our students as demotivated and incapable of contributing to or understanding the innovation that CLIL entailed in their lessons. We teachers felt that our demotivation was a consequence of our students' apathy and that our interests and drive for change were more important than those of our students. In addition, we believed that nothing 'important' could motivate them. Nevertheless, students' and teachers' motivations became aligned and compatible once we agreed that it was content that underlined both our discrepancies and points of contact and that we had to negotiate topics, sources, and activities. Differently put, what motivated us all was the negotiation of topics and how these topics were successfully inscribed and transposed in our teaching and learning practices.

My study confirmed that student motivation in CLIL depended on the contents covered (Coyle et al., 2010, Lasagabaster, 2011). However, I should stress that their effort, motivated behaviours such as participation and attention and interests (Huang, 2011; Seikkula-Leino, 2007) increased as these contents came from them and the sources and activities we teachers developed responded to their linguistic and cognitive demands. These motivated behaviours were both noticed by teachers and the students in both teachers and students.

Despite this progress, my study could not claim that students' language proficiency increased as I did not contemplate pre- and post-tests qua an experimental study. In this respect, only some students voiced that their language development had improved due to the topics, exposure to authentic audiovisual sources and speaking activities such as discussion or debate. Content also may have determined teacher motivation since the shift from grammar-based teaching to topic-based teaching, even when this latter meant time investment for materials development, was strong.

It seemed that content and the authentic nature of sources to a lesser extent, acted as a catalyst which aligned student and teacher motivation in a way that it promoted negotiation, understanding, and above all, democratisation of classroom practices which also required new roles. In this sense, students were also seen as knowledge generators, source providers and activity evaluators. As a result of this motivation alignment and role reconfiguration around content, student and teacher motivation entered into dynamic interaction (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011) through which their increase was directly proportional. Despite different language learning and content learning outcomes, motivation increased as every actor involved perceived that their motivations were inseparable and concomitant (Figure 1).

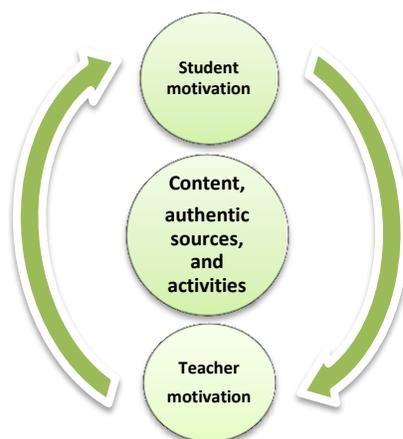


Figure 1: Student motivation – teacher motivation in interaction.

Teacher and student motivations shaped and were shaped not only through the negotiation of topics, sources and activities but also through the co-construction of knowledge and social relationships that took place within the classroom setting. Such a change in the classroom landscape positioned students under a light in which their identity was revamped. In other words, we teachers ceased to see them as demotivated or uninterested in ‘serious stuff’. Instead, we saw them as concerned with current and historical issues given the most voted topics (Nazis in Argentina, Drug decriminalisation, etc). In general, these reconfigurations generated new modes of verbal interaction and agency through motivated behaviours such as attention and participation from both teachers and students. These affected other spheres of teacher development which I will discuss below.

Teachers: motivation, autonomy, and identity

While our CLIL explorations acted as a trigger to understand our students’ needs and interests and negotiate those with ours so as to arrive at a student-teacher motivation unity, I believe that teachers gained in other aspects of our professional development.

First, the nature of the CAR-CLIL project allowed us teachers to exercise our full autonomy even when the principle of responsiveness marked our endeavour. Teacher autonomy and collaborative professional development was evidenced through how we changed the way we developed our materials cycle after cycle. When we realised we were fully capable, autonomous, and confident, our materials acquired different features. In every cycle, our materials became more context-responsive and activities better organised in terms of complexity. For example, while my first worksheets were a massive collection of activities arranged in an order which followed the history of Rock and Roll, my worksheet in Cycles 2 and 3 moved from audio-visual input and vocabulary in guided activities to discussion tasks.

Nevertheless, I believe that teacher autonomy was based on the fact that neither the institution nor I as a teacher-researcher set an agenda we had to strictly follow. Because all of us were self-directed and experienced teachers, our indigenous CLIL model was co-constructed through individual and collective actions as Benson (2007) and Ding (2009) assert. I believe that the best

instances of how teacher motivation and autonomy were related was (1) when one of the teachers realised that her motivation was driven by our autonomy, and (2) when stages started to overlap between Cycles 2 and 3 and when another teacher decided to hand over Cycle 3 to her students.

Our regained teacher motivation and extended autonomy helped us project a new identity which was clearly validated by our students and possible peers (Clarke, 2009; Norton & Toohey, 2011). I feel that our professional identity reached momentum when our students began to express the view that through our use of our own developed materials they saw us as active, interested, participatory and independent teachers who did not need a coursebook or all-grammar lessons to feel that we were EFL teachers. How our teacher identity, autonomy and motivation appeared under a new light may have been the consequence of our language-driven CLIL implementation.

Conclusion

It is my belief that this experience may encourage other colleagues to democratise their teaching practices in such a way that students' interests and needs are carefully incorporated in the EFL classroom. This calls for systematic practices which consider teacher evaluation as a vital part of formal education. Evaluation and constant feedback may also enhance the motivation to teach and the motivation to learn.

I also hope that this experience may invite other teachers to exert their autonomy by developing practices which are not solely driven by marketed coursebooks or top-down agendas. Teachers may collaboratively engage in developing their own materials and invite their students to contribute to this venture by suggesting topics, sources of input, and activities. In so doing, the EFL lesson will become a place for meaningful and relevant learning through context-responsive pedagogies. Our language-driven CLIL initiative may be an example that all these aims could be achieved.

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5

Perceived ethnolinguistic vitality of the English as a second language teacher: A qualitative look at middle and high school Hispanic students' preference

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Background

Due to immigration to the United States of America over the last decade, many schools and communities have had to rethink their definition of community (Arcaro, 1995; Dobson, Dobson, & Kessinger, 1980; Hawley, 2007). A community is not only the people who live together that have shared experiences, it is also people of differing ethnolinguistic backgrounds living within similar geographic areas. One unifying thread between these cultural groups is often the school within the community. Particularly in more sparsely populated geographic regions, students of varying demographics attend one school, sharing classrooms, lunch tables, and teachers' attention. Due to the statute that declares that all children, up to the age of 16, must attend school, the school has become a center that gathers people with multiple ethnolinguistic perspectives.

Family Perspective

While a wealth of nations makes up the immigration population into the United States, Mexico is a significant contributor. In 2000, Hispanic people made up 12.5% of the population in the United States (US Census Bureau, 2005). In Iowa, 2.8% of the population was Hispanic in 2000, up from 1.9% in 1990 (US Census Bureau, 2005). The official language of Mexico is Spanish, and the culture is rich in not only Spanish background, but also in many native Mexican cultures.

While retention of the immigrant's own heritage is important, the ability to function in the society of the United States is equally important in order for immigrants to secure a job and survive economically (Baker, 2001). Many immigrants come to the United States with children. Once in the United States, immigrants have to abide by local laws, one of which, according to Chapter 299 of Iowa Code, mandates that parents send their children to school until they are 16 (Iowa Legislature, 2012). Many parents see this as an opportunity for their children to learn English so they will be able to obtain high quality and lucrative employment in the future. Sadker and Sadker (1994) illustrate the fact that high school graduates gain employment at a higher rate than students who drop out of school.

Some immigrant parents see schools as a place beyond their realm of understanding, knowledge base, and societal status. It becomes something threatening to them instead of something welcoming (Baker, 2001). If parents do not feel comfortable with their children's educational system, then the question is, will they have a positive influence on their children learning the language at that institution? If parents have a strong network or community of the same cultural background as theirs, an intergroup, then they will most probably turn to them for counsel on how to best handle this fear (Cenoz & Valencia, 1993; Yagmor, 2011).

School Perspective

Schools are obliged to educate all students no matter what their native language is (Iowa Department of Education, Educating Iowa's English Language Learners). The English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher plays an integral part in the immigrant student's first months in the United States school system. The ESL teacher's job is to assist the student in acquiring enough English to be on par with the student's peers.

English acquisition can happen through the use of multiple methodologies including push-in models and pull-out models which can utilize discussion of day-to-day happenings of the student's life (Baker, 2001). Discussion of self can be the first topic when acquiring a language, simply because it is something about which the student already has knowledge. However, this topic can make the student feel emotionally exposed or naked, especially if the ESL teacher has no understanding of the student's cultural norms. Language does not exist in a vacuum; culture is always tied to it (Baker, 2001; Johnson, 2000).

If the student comes to the school already having the innate desire, or intrinsic motivation, to learn the majority language, then the teacher's influence will play a lesser role (Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Noels, Pelletier, Clement, & Vallerand, 2000). However, if the student and parents are apprehensive of the educational system, then the ethnic understandings of the teacher could be a crucial factor.

Howard Giles, a researcher in Second Language Acquisition, created the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality, which refers to the amount of support one ethnic and/or language group has in a community (Giles, 1977; Giles, Rosenthal, & Young, 1985; Yagmor, 2011). Giles said that if there is a strong network of supporters, then the people within that group will rely on the opinions of others when formulating their own. The three contributors to the vitality are status, demography, and institutional support. If the school as one of the Community's institutions was to employ an ESL teacher who could connect with that ethnic group and influence their perception of the importance of acquiring the majority language, would this not be beneficial in affecting the intrinsic motivation?

Cummins (1998) claims that if the minority student feels marginalized or that he/she is from a lower social class within the educational institution, there will be less chance for the minority students to succeed in language acquisition. He feels that elevating the minority status within the majority group is key to the ESL students' success. This echoes what Giles (1977) says about the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality. One way schools could achieve this improved social standing and achievement level is to appoint a teacher who is fluent in both the majority language and the minority language, a teacher who is accepted by both social groups as an equal. The teacher could teach the majority language group the minority language, showing not only the differences between the two cultures, but

also the numerous similarities. If the minority intergroup feels that their culture shares equal social status with the majority language group, they are going to feel that they are an important part of the community, and thus feel less threatened.

While this could have social implications in the school, there could also be personal implications for the ESL student. One of these implications could be a lowering of the student's affective filter (Krashen, 1985). Krashen claims that a student puts up a block or filter to language acquisition if the student feels threatened or unsafe. Allowing the student to feel proud of whom he or she is could lower the student's shield or filter, thus allowing him or her to internalize the second language (Krashen, 1985). One further implication could be the minority group feeling that their own heritage and language are not being threatened, thus freeing up their desire for the group as a whole to acquire the second language.

This paper will be looking at the ESL teacher through the eyes of the ESL student. The overarching question of this paper is: Does the perceived ethnolinguistic status of the ESL teacher matter to middle school and high school Hispanic ESL students?

Pilot Study

In order to better understand this phenomenon of Hispanic ESL students' perceptions and preferences of ESL teachers, a qualitative study of high school and middle school Hispanic students in Southwest Iowa was conducted using pictures and descriptions of possible ESL teachers. Student questionnaires were distributed to elicit responses about ESL student preference for ethnicity and language ability of an ESL teacher.

Participants

The participants for this study were chosen based on their geographical proximity to the researcher. The students were enrolled in one of two ESL programs in Southwest Iowa Public schools. Each school had a total student population of less than 1,500. The participants were either middle school or high school aged. Both schools employed a pull-out ESL method and teachers who were native English speakers with some knowledge of the minority language. All 41 ESL students at the two participating schools were invited to participate in the study, resulting in 28 student participants.

Methodology

As there is a lack of research about students' preference for ethnicity and language abilities of ESL teachers, a preliminary and qualitative study was conducted to better understand the phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). A questionnaire was used to elicit student responses using both multiple choice and open-ended questions. The students were told that the questionnaire was about their preference for ESL teachers, but they were not aware of the overarching question guiding the investigation.

Findings

The researcher collected all the questionnaires, tallied the results of the questions and reviewed the student comments to provide a triangulated glimpse of the students' preferences.

Picture Findings

On the first portion of the questionnaire, the first question asked students to select a teacher, by way of pictures, from whom they would prefer to learn English. There were three pictures of women from

three distinct ethnicities: Hispanic, Caucasian, and Asian. This section of the questionnaire was included to elicit the students' probable preconceived notion upon first meeting the teacher. If the students were to meet their ESL teacher, what would their first instinct be? Would they immediately feel comfortable simply based on the teacher's assumed ethnicity? The follow-up question ("Why did you pick this woman?") was included to see if the student assumed the correct ethnicity or if he/she did not immediately think of ethnicity, but instead just thought about the personality of the teacher or another mediating factor.

In the multiple-choice section, 12 of the 28 students answered that they selected their picture at least partially because they thought either the person looked nice or was pretty. Only 7 of the 12 marked that as their only criterion for selection. Five participants considered the language factor and ethnicity to be important.

Of the 21 students who marked a language as the reason that they picked the teacher, 12 of the students marked that they picked the teacher based on their assumption that the teacher spoke Spanish. Seven of the participants said that they picked the teacher based on their assumption that she spoke English well.

Looking at the selection of the teacher based on the pictures, 20 participants preferred the Hispanic woman. Five participants selected the Asian teacher, and 3 selected the Caucasian (Table 1). Interestingly, it should be noted that while 5 students selected the Asian teacher, two of them gave the following reason for choosing that teacher: "she looks like she speaks Spanish." This could indicate that in their personal experience they have encountered someone who looked similar to the Asian woman pictured, and that person spoke Spanish. It could also be something that could be addressed when using this questionnaire as a reference point for further study. Modifications might need to be made.

Ethnicity of teacher pictured	Students selecting this teacher ("X" represents each student who selected the teacher.) (n=28)
Hispanic	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX 71%
Caucasian	XXX 11%
Asian	XXXXX 18%

Table 1: Picture Based ESL Teacher Ethnicity Selection

The ideal teacher

On the reverse side of the questionnaire, the second question asked participants to select one of the descriptions of a teacher from whom they want to learn English. Of six responses, two were selected most often. The one that was selected most often was the selection that read the following: the Hispanic woman born in the United States who has spoken Spanish and English her entire life. This choice was selected by 14 participants.

The next most frequently selected description, the woman born in the United States who has spoken English all of her life and learned to speak Spanish in college, was picked by eight of the participants. Three said that this teacher would be able to speak English better than Spanish and that would help them learn English. One said that because this person had studied Spanish, she would help them understand both cultures. One of the four remaining participants said this teacher, knowing both languages, would be beneficial to students if they had questions or needed help.

Three participants selected the woman from the United States who only speaks English. Two selected the Hispanic woman who was born in Mexico and has spoken Spanish all her life and learned English in college. Both of them felt that it was important that this person had learned English just as they had. One of them mentioned that this person had become a professor of English; therefore she must have learned a lot of English. Only one person selected the Asian woman who learned English in a college in the United States (Table 2). The reason given was that the teacher would not only be able to teach the students English, but could teach another foreign language as well.

Teacher Description	Students selecting this teacher (n=28)
A woman from the US that has spoken English all her life but learned Spanish in college.	XXXXXXXX 29%
A Hispanic woman that was born in the US and has spoken Spanish and English all of her life.	XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX 50%
A Hispanic woman that was born in Mexico and has spoken Spanish all her life and learned English in college.	XX 7%
A woman from the US that speaks only English.	XXX 11%
A Japanese woman that has spoken Japanese all her life and learned English in a college in the US.	X 3%
A Hispanic woman that was born in the US and speaks only English.	0%

Table 2: Criterion Based ESL Teacher Selection

Making meaning

The results of the study show that students prefer their ESL teacher to be able to communicate in both the majority language as well as the students' native language. Looking at the above tables, it can be surmised that while Spanish tends to be important to the participants, the majority would rather see that the teacher's English skills are equal to or surpass the Spanish skills. This could also be seen in the questions following the picture section of the questionnaire. This information substantiates the theory that students want to have an ESL teacher who is able to bridge the gap between their native language group and their second language group. This student desire for the language teacher to be able to

communicate in both languages could be tied to the fact that the students' ethnolinguistic vitality can be elevated in status within the educational institution (Giles, 1977).

It should be noted that while the majority of the participants thought that the teacher's Spanish skills were important, a few preferred the teacher to have no Spanish skills at all. In the open-ended commentary section of the questionnaire, some participants expressed strong feelings about the importance of the ESL teacher not speaking the participant's native tongue. This was an opinion of only a few students, but it could prove more important in further studies involving larger groups of participants.

Conclusions

As this study was qualitative in nature and therefore has limited generalizability, there are multiple implications which should be explored both by Public Education (K-12) and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE).

Based on this small scale study, administrators hiring K-12 ESL teachers might consider the ethnolinguistic background and abilities of hirees. If and when possible, administrators might be best served by hiring an ESL teacher who can cross the boundaries between the majority ethnic and language background and the minority language group represented in the geographic region.

As a component of the tenure process, professors at IHEs must conduct research in order to garner tenure status; further research on this topic could be conducted to meet that need. As this was a qualitative study, a quantitative pilot study could be carried out to test the reliability and validity of this instrument. Additionally, as this was a study of ESL students, a similar study could be conducted on the perceptions of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students to compare findings.

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6

Teacher motivation and autonomy in curriculum change implementation

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Introduction

In 2008, the General Council of Education in Entre Ríos, Argentina, launched a local secondary school reform, based on the 2006 enactment of a new Law of National Education. To this end, a curricular committee was formed, whose first steps involved the design of a series of documents aiming to help teachers understand the change and guide its implementation. Change diffusion was further carried out through a series of teacher briefings conducted between 2009 and 2010. Implementation of the new curriculum took place in 2010 without any formal assessment of the prior piloting phase and without any planned scheme for a teacher development programme, other than the afore-mentioned briefings.

A small-scale multiple case study on teacher beliefs and curriculum change implementation conducted by Soto (2011) in the same context reveals that curriculum change uptake is limited and teachers possess little information on the innovation, information which is not always accurate. The main reason behind this situation seems to spring from the fact that most secondary school teachers have had access to neither the above-mentioned documents nor the “asistencias técnicas” provided by the local Council of Education. Most importantly, through the comparison of teacher produced documents (especially their syllabuses and class activities) and the rhetoric in the official documents, the study points to the existence of tensions between what teachers believe and what they actually do in their classrooms. In other words, in line with other studies in the field of teacher cognitions (Borg, 2009), teachers’ pedagogical decisions do not seem to draw upon the curriculum tenets but upon their beliefs about their learners’ proficiency level and their teaching contexts, and are mainly based on their chosen textbook and on grammar instruction.

The relevance of exploring teacher motivation and autonomy to implement curricular changes, therefore, resides in how these factors influence teachers’ instructional decisions and generic

processes (Borg, 2006) and how they articulate with the principles underlying the mandated curriculum.

Drawing on Soto's findings, the present study looks into teachers' motivation to internalize and adopt the curriculum main specifications, in the light of their perceived preparation and autonomy to do so.

Motivation, autonomy and curriculum innovation

There is no lack of literature illustrating the fact that the process of implementing an educational innovation cannot be successfully completed without the active involvement of teachers (Fullan, 2001, 2007; Wedell, 2009). During routinely curriculum innovation implementation, however, such involvement often implies teachers' inadequate interpretation of the mandated curriculum specifications and the translation of the curriculum intentions into classroom practices, without any further form of teacher participation and, frequently, without any planned long-term scheme for teacher development programmes.

In relation to teacher motivation and curriculum change, Litwin (n/d) explains that

La motivación (...) quedó circunscripta a la condición del aprendizaje de los estudiantes olvidando el esencial valor de la motivación docente, la selección curricular se redujo al cumplimiento del currículo oficial, más de una vez, ajeno a los intereses o saberes de los profesores (...) [Motivation (...) has been circumscribed to the condition of students' learning leaving aside the essential value of teacher motivation, curricular selection has been reduced to the mere adherence to the official curriculum, more often than not, oblivious to the interests or knowledge of teachers.]

Although research in the field of teacher cognitions in relation to innovation implementations is not abundant, (Hargreaves, 2001; Spillane et al., 2002), the few studies available indicate that motivational characteristics such as goal setting, a sense of efficacy, and volition are a fundamental component of agency (Paris, 1993). On the contrary, if a change is externally imposed, teachers can view it as a threat, which can undermine their beliefs, and shake their confidence in their established practices and feeling of self-efficacy (Chacon, 2003). In this sense, Sikes (1992) claims that as a result of such imposition, teachers "might lose their sense of meaning and direction, their 'framework of reality', their confidence that they know what to do, and consequently they experience confusion and a kind of alienation" (p.43).

Defining teacher autonomy is not a straightforward task. Generally speaking, the phrase "teacher autonomy" is used to refer to the extent to which teachers take independent decisions, design, and implement those teacher practices that are more suitable for their teaching contexts within the framework of government policy initiatives. In this sense, it is easier to discuss the concept in relation to those factors that are commonly thought to either foster or hinder autonomous behaviour.

For change to happen, however, it is necessary for teachers to believe in the intended curriculum, so that they develop a sense of ownership, which might lead to the adequate

implementation and sustainability of the change (Fullan, 1991, 2007; Kennedy, 1987; Markee, 1997). Ownership of the curriculum refers to the degree of teachers' understanding of and familiarity with the innovation, and their positive acceptance of it. If an innovation is to produce any impact in the classroom, what is required, then, is a deep change (Fullan, 1991, 2007). This implies a change that goes beyond the rhetoric of the official curricular documents or the mere change of methodology and textbook. It involves changes in the beliefs and attitudes that teachers hold in relation to both teaching and learning, and teachers considering themselves active agents of change. As Fullan (1993) suggests, "(I)t is only by individuals taking action to alter their own environments that there is any chance for deep change" (p.40). This encompasses teachers re-examining their beliefs by making them explicit, which, in turn, might require the collaboration of others.

This idea of agency was originally put forward by Paris (1993), who discusses curriculum implementation as a dynamic process and from the perspective of teachers. Paris uses agency when characterizing relationships of teachers to curriculum that are marked by "personal initiative and intellectual engagement; thus, teacher agency in curriculum implementation involves initiating the creation or critique of curriculum, an awareness of alternatives to established curriculum practices, the autonomy to make informed choices, an investment of self, and on-going interaction with others." (p. 16).

For the purposes of this study, then, autonomy is encompassed within Paris' (1993) definition of agency. In order to provide a working definition, I will draw upon the work of Fleming (1998), who explains that autonomy is "the degree to which teachers have the desire to make curriculum decisions using personal initiative and intellectual engagement" (p. 20). This author further claims that

Although autonomous teachers might make use of the suggestions made by administrators or found in curriculum guidelines, they assume the principal responsibility for making curriculum implementation decisions in the classes they teach (p.19).

Traditionally, authors such as Deci and Ryan (1985) have claimed that autonomy leads to enhanced motivation. Similarly, these commentators highlight the role that an autonomy-supporting learning context has in the development of motivation.

The study

The subjects for this study were contacted via email. All potential participants were informed of the purpose and methodology of the study and the only specific requirement for subject selection was that teachers should be working at state secondary schools.

The data were collected through a questionnaire, which was sent by email to 56 school teachers. The school sample was made up of 83.3% (n=10) state-run schools and 16.6% (n=2) private schools subsidized by the government. Schools were distributed over Entre Ríos but mainly situated in Paraná and neighbouring cities. As regards teaching experience, 3 participants (25%) had taught for 1-4 years, 6 (50%) for 5-9 years, and 3 had taught for 10-14 years (61.9%). The responses concerning participants' teaching experience at the secondary level show that only one subject had more than 10

years experience (8%). The majority of the respondents taught EFL at secondary schools between 1 and 9 years and they were all female.

I decided to carry out a quantitative study. The use of a questionnaire survey was decided upon the basis of its usefulness for gathering data on a large scale and which allowed for quantification and generalisations (Dörnyei, 2003) The questionnaire employed was adapted from McGee et al. (2006) (see Appendix).

The questionnaire was presented in English and had four main sections, each focusing on a different aspect. The first two sections required teachers to provide information about their teaching backgrounds and school details. Section 3 contained 18 items, which explored teachers' response to the 2010 curriculum for foreign languages in the jurisdiction in terms of the teachers' perceived value of the innovation and the variables perceived as influencing teacher motivation towards the change. The last section looked into teachers' autonomy and perceived level of preparation to implement the mandated curriculum. Respondents were required to choose an alternative by ticking statements and to fill in answers on a 5-point Likert scale (Dörnyei, 2003). Teachers were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with each item. Participants were also invited to provide any further information they considered relevant for the study.

Given that this study was thought of as a continuation of Soto's (2011), coding of the data followed a deductive approach. In other words, the data collected was here used to verify or disprove some previously chosen categories. Analysis of the main findings, then, was done in the light of the following main aspects, which draw upon Sinnema's (2011):

- Receptivity: the extent to which teachers value the curriculum, their confidence in implementing it, and the degree to which they perceive implementation to be feasible.
- Understanding: how educators understand a range of key elements of the new curriculum (including subject content knowledge, subject-content integration, skills and strategies development, assessment) and their views about the extent of shift required or offered under the new curriculum.
- Motivation and autonomy: the variables perceived as affecting motivation and willingness to adopt/adapt the change to suit their teaching contexts.
- Support: the kinds of support educators encountered during the initiation and implementation stages of curriculum change

To analyse the data I made use of descriptive statistics. To this end, after the necessary pre-processing and coding, the data were transferred and analysed using the statistical package Laboratory of Educational Research Test Analysis Package 5 (Lertap, 2000), which is used in combination with Microsoft Excel computer software spreadsheets. The data gathered in each set of responses to the Likert-scales prompts were tabulated and coded from 1 to 5 in order to determine the total number of positive, negative and neutral statements obtained. A response of strongly agree was given a score of 5; a response of strongly disagree, a score of 1. Responses that fell between this were allocated 2, 3 or 4, depending on where they fell. These figures were then entered into the Lertap-Microsoft Excel

spreadsheet and analysed in terms of: a) frequencies; b) scores (media, mean and standard deviation); and c) averages. The main type of descriptive statistics focused on, however, were measures of central tendency (i.e. averages), which were also plotted out in bar charts.

Findings

Because of limited space, this section will only look at the main findings related to teacher receptivity, motivation, and perceived level of autonomy to implement the changes.

The first and most striking finding pertains to the low rate of teacher response: 21% (n=12), which might, perhaps, be in itself indicative of a certain demotivation or disinterest to discuss the curricular change or aspects related to it – although, of course, it is not possible to establish this without further research, which is more qualitative in nature.

In relation to the main focus of this study, the questionnaire asked teachers to give a very simple measure of their level of motivation to implement the new EFL curriculum. Results show that 33.3% of the respondents are either motivated at times or not motivated at all. This low level or complete lack of motivation, however, does not seem to correlate with the perceived level of autonomy, given that 91.6% of the respondents claim to feel autonomous enough to introduce changes in the curriculum. These results show that for the participants, absence of motivation to implement the mandated curricular innovation does not inhibit teacher autonomy; neither does it mean that autonomous behaviour leads to enhanced motivation to implement the changes. It is relevant, therefore, to analyse the variables perceived as affecting motivation and willingness to adopt/adapt the change negatively.

Among the factors impinging on teachers' motivation to implement the change are learner behaviour (50%) and lack of parental or community participation (41.6%). Generally speaking, however, most questionnaire responses cluster in the "at times" or "sometimes" categories. Factors comprised in this "neutral" category include the number of contact hours (66.6%), extra duties and tasks (66.6%), adequacy of pre-service training (58.3%), and opportunities for in-service training (41.6%). Although in order to further confirm these findings more research is necessary, results indicate that some key curricular aspects might be unclear, unknown, or even subject to misunderstanding on the part of the participating teachers. On the other hand, variables such as class size, available materials, supervision and/or mentoring opportunities (41.6% respectively), and co-teaching opportunities (58.3%) all fall within the "motivating" category.

In relation to the participants' receptivity and response to the curriculum, answers show that teachers are not certain about issues pertaining to the value and feasibility of curricular change implementation, finding which finds support in Soto's study (2011). In general, teachers tend to agree that the new EFL curriculum is user-friendly in some way (66.6%) and that its mandates are not always easy to implement (83.3%). Similarly, the ratings for teachers' confidence to implement the new curriculum successfully fluctuated, with 33.3% of the participants claiming they feel very confident or confident to implement the changes and 41.6% only feeling so at times. This varying degree was attributed to different variables perceived by teachers as affecting their confidence. These include their mastery of subject content knowledge (83.3%), their teaching experience (83.3%), and the availability of opportunities for teacher professional development (91.6%). Findings in relation to the

contribution the school itself has made for successful curriculum implementation are also high (66.6%, 58.3% respectively). This contribution was assessed in terms of, for example, the school authorities' skills in translating the curriculum objectives into an organised institutional plan of action or the authorities' attitudes. These factors also seem to correlate with teachers' positive appreciation of the flexibility the curriculum offers (75%) and their autonomy to introduce changes (91.6%).

Conclusion

This study has addressed only a small fraction of the many variables that might affect the ways in which language policies are understood and realized by teachers, in the light of their teaching contexts, and many remain to be further investigated. One other limitation relates to the number of participants. However, the results provide an insight into teachers' receptivity and understanding of the mandated curriculum, and into their perceived levels of motivation and autonomy to embrace the change.

The study shows that teachers tend to rely on their own experience, beliefs, or preferences rather than in the curriculum specifications, and that they feel autonomous enough to do so. Similarly, although the final curriculum design was preceded by a series of policy documents supporting the curriculum main tenets and guiding teachers in the initiation state (Fullan, 2007), these do not seem to have directly affected teachers' motivation to implement the curricular change. This, in turn, casts doubt on the mechanism chosen for innovation diffusion and implementation support. Clearly, for an innovation to produce any impact in the classroom, what is required is some form of deep change (Fullan, 2001, 2007), which goes beyond the rhetoric of the official curricular documents.

Perhaps the most relevant implication pertains to the fact that, this study represents an initial – if modest – attempt to research EFL curriculum change in a context, where very little research has been conducted to date that inquiries into teachers' response to the intended innovation implementation. In this sense, this study leaves a door open for further research of this kind.

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APPENDIX

Curriculum implementation, Teachers' Motivation and Autonomy

This questionnaire is part of a small-scale study on curriculum innovations. The main goal of the study is to explore state secondary school teachers' motivation and autonomy to implement the ELT curriculum changes introduced in Entre Ríos, in 2010. Your responses are important as they will inform the later stages of a study I intend to conduct, which will culminate in a series of teacher development workshops. There are no right or wrong answers here – what I am interested in are your views on this issue.

Thank you.

 **SECTION 1**
ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

Please, tell me about your institution.

City: _____

Type of institution (Tick as appropriate)

State State subsidized

 **SECTION 2**
ABOUT YOURSELF

Please tell me about your teaching background.

1. Years of experience as an English language teacher (Tick ONE):

0–4 5–9 10–14 15–19 20–24 25+

2. Years of experience as an English language teacher **at state-run Secondary School** (Tick ONE):

0–4 5–9 10–14 15–19 20–24 25+

3. Highest qualification (Tick ONE):

Certificate Diploma Bachelor's Master's Other

4. What class year level(s) do you currently teach? (Tick appropriate boxes):

Year 1 Year 2 Year 3 Year 4 Year 5 Year 6

 **SECTION 3**
ABOUT YOUR RESPONSE TO THE 2010 EFL CURRICULUM

1. How user-friendly have you found the English curriculum statement?

Very User-friendly User-friendly in some way Not user-friendly

2. In your teaching of EFL, to what extent has the English curriculum statement with its strand levels (i.e. the four macro-skills, strategy development, subject-content integration, etc.) has assisted you in:

a. Planning your classroom syllabus?

Very useful Useful Sometimes useful/Sometimes not Not useful at all
Don't know

- b. Gaining an overview of the progression of key concepts (contents, skills, attitudes, etc.)
 Very useful Useful Sometimes useful/Sometimes not Not useful at all
 Don't know
- c. Developing (specific) learning outcomes based on the achievement objectives?
 Very useful Useful Sometimes useful/Sometimes not Not useful at all
 Don't know
- d. Assessing learner achievement and progress?
 Very useful Useful Sometimes useful/Sometimes not Not useful at all
 Don't know
3. How motivated to implement the mandated changes do you feel?
 Highly motivated Motivated Sometimes motivated/Sometimes not
 Not motivated at all Don't know
4. To what extent do the following factors influenced your (de)motivation? (Tick ONE):

	Highly motivating	Motivating	Neutral	Demotivating	Highly demotivating
Number of contact hours	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Class size	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Student behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>				
School environment	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Working conditions	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Materials available	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Extra activities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Adequacy of pre-service training	<input type="checkbox"/>				
In-service training opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Co-teaching opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Supervision / Mentoring opportunities	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Parental / Community participation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Other (Please specify briefly): _____					


SECTION 4
ABOUT YOUR PREPARATION TO IMPLEMENT THE EFL CURRICULUM

1. From your experience in foreign language teaching, how confident do you feel with the planning, teaching and assessing aspects of the new curriculum?

- Very confident Confident Sometimes confident/Sometimes not
 Not confident at all Don't know

2. How easy has it been for you to implement the curriculum statements you teach from?

- Very easy Easy Sometimes easy/Sometimes difficult
 Difficult Very difficult

3. How do you rate your own content knowledge to implement the curriculum?

- Good Satisfactory Needs improvement Not sure

4. Do you think the curriculum is flexible enough to allow for changes to meet your students' needs and interests?

- Yes No

5. Do you feel autonomous to introduce changes to the curriculum statement?

- Yes No

6. In relation to Questions 1, 2 and 5 above, which of the following factors have contributed or not to your confidence and/or autonomy?

	Contributed	Not contributed
Your knowledge of English	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your teaching experience	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your professional development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your school skills in translating the curriculum objectives into a scheme	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The school authorities' attitude	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (Please specify): _____		

7. How much further professional development do you think you need in order to effectively implement the curriculum statements?

- A lot Some Not sure No more

8. Did you attend the 2009-2010 *Asistencias Técnicas* carried out by CGE officials?

- Yes No

9. Have you attended any of the Teacher Development sessions conducted as from 2011?

- Yes No

If *no*, please comment on some of the reasons for not attending:

Thank you for taking the time to respond!

7

Tagging Facebook in the ELT picture: developing student motivation with social networks

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Introduction

The widely accepted learner centredness in the ELT context has inevitably produced a shift in focus, placing students' interests and motivation at the core of attention. The technological era society is immersed in has also revolutionised the classroom since the innovative and numerous tools now available for both teachers and students alike have opened up a myriad of opportunities that enhance the teaching and learning process. The aim of this presentation is to stimulate reflection about the potential of using one particular resource, Facebook (FCBK), with university level students in the ELT classroom.

Theoretical underpinnings

Today's ELT classrooms are somewhat different from what they used to be not long ago. Technological advances have made it possible for learners and teachers to reach unthinkable horizons and to access knowledge from a variety of sources that are no longer restricted to the realms of the classroom. This has inevitably changed not only the lesson dynamics but also the power relationships within it (Reid, 2011). Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) have provided learners with the right tools for them to take on a more active role in their learning process and have generated a special atmosphere to which they have a lot to contribute.

Feeling part and parcel of some of the decision-making processes that involve their own learning, students' self-esteem is boosted. This new space allows them to become leaders and, at the same time, creates the right atmosphere to induce "the mutual influence among the members of a team" (Johnson & Johnson, 1999, p.1), which is a characteristic of collaborative learning. Thus, the implementation of e-learning tools that aim at building up learners' collaborative as well as self access skills is crucial to facilitate lifelong learning (Garrison and Kanuka, 2004).

This new generation of 'digital natives' (Prensky, 2001) has other needs which have to be interpreted and catered for by teachers committed to understanding the changing world the learning

community is in. Bringing into the classroom a slice of what keeps learners hooked for so much time outside of it guarantees involving them by stimulating their interest. Besides, incorporating e-tools enhances the “credibility of teachers engaged in contemporary student culture” (Garrison & Kanuka, in Blattner & Fiori, 2009, p.17). Educators who are receptive to their learners’ needs are not only ready to adapt to new tendencies but also open to capitalise on what learners find appealing and attractive. Addressing learners’ interests helps towards developing a special bond whose bearings are rooted in the affective and motivational dimensions, and this, according to Gass and Selinker (2008), influences success. Engaging students’ minds and hearts in the learning process is the key to maintaining a positive atmosphere, especially if a sense of belonging is nurtured via the implementation of specific tasks to do so, and technology is the perfect ally to embark upon such endeavour.

Facebook: features and potential for ELT

As stated above, CMC and ICTs have become integral components of teaching-learning practices in education. One of the most popular social media among teenagers today is Facebook (FCBK), a social networking website originally created by and for students of Harvard University back in 2004, though open to public use today. In FCBK, individuals can create profiles, pages and groups -which can be open, closed or secret. Each profile retains the private configuration it had before joining the group. Other features FCBK offers include the option of writing and sharing notes, exchanging private messages, files, pictures, links and any other type of visual or printed text. Additionally, FCBK indicates the deadline of tasks or reminds group members of important meetings, and they all receive immediate notification of any updates on their profile pages. One of the main characteristics of this resource is its ease of management, which, coupled with permanent connectivity, make it possible to create a virtual social networking community of individuals with similar interests.

The outburst of students and educators becoming active members of social networking communities such as FCBK has drawn attention to the potential of such a web resource. One of its promising features is that it provides yet another context of pseudo-real immersion for ELT learners to transform our educational settings. Several studies have focused on FCBK from different perspectives (Blattner & Fiori, 2009; English, 2008; Reid 2011, among others) and serve as reference to the case study reported in these pages. These researchers agree that the benefits of using FCBK in educational contexts include the improvement of authentic language interaction and the development of socio-pragmatic competence (i.e. language use in specific situations, bonding and language awareness through observation and/or experience). Likewise, motivational factors and improved performance in language classes have been associated with an increased sense of belonging. Within this promising framework, the objective of the next section is to outline some experimental work on the use of FCBK at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional del Comahue.

The case study: brief description

Back in 2011, the English II students (Teacher Training and Translation Courses) were introduced to the FCBK project, which consisted in setting up a closed group which learners were invited to join and provide a name to. The main objective of this project was to open up a shared and informal communicative channel to enhance and strengthen the sense of community that should necessarily

characterise a non-threatening learning environment. A step in this direction was to share a brief description of the project and its general objectives with the students, which were: 1. to foster the development of interrelationships within the group; 2. to have access to communication in a fast and simple way; 3. to provide a context of pseudo-real immersion for ELT learners (therefore, whenever possible, the target language –English– should be used, thus facilitating an additional mode of learning). It was made clear that the FCBK group would serve as a “complement” to the daily face-to-face sessions of the course. The second step into involving the learners in this project was the selection of a name to give the group an identity. To this end, learners were asked to put forward different suggestions which were then pulled together. Once they explained the meaning behind their choice to the rest of the class, one name was selected by casting a vote. “Move it!” identified the 2011 FCBK group, whose meaning was related not only to the course-book to be worked on –*Move*–, but also to the idea of moving forward and advancing towards a special destination. Throughout the academic year, the experience was closely monitored by the teaching team from a qualitative analytical perspective. The next section delves into an inventory of the different uses FCBK has actually been put to by students and teachers.

Facebook: typology of its uses

Teachers and students have used FCBK for different purposes, which have been organised into four main categories and a brief description of each one of them is provided below:

- a. Organisational subject-related posts
- b. Content subject-related posts
- c. Academic/Course-of-studies related posts
- d. Affective posts

The first category includes **organisational subject-related posts** in which teachers’ publications are connected with coaching timetables, deadlines for assignments and reminders of future class activities and announcements. Student participation consisted mainly in posing questions related to the items just mentioned.

The second category refers to **content subject-related posts** in which the teaching team has contributed to the group’s wall by publishing the list of contents of the yearly portfolio, instructions for assignments and homework for absentees. Additionally, sample assignments, writing prompts, extra information on review writing, together with guidelines for oral presentations and exams have been shared. Videos and songs are other resources teachers have also uploaded to introduce or emphasise the topics in a new unit prior to or after the class and after finishing a module. Learners have posted summaries of the stories in the subject materials, videos about topics discussed in class or future presentations and also pictures as a follow up after a guest speaker’s talk. They have made use of the group’s wall to share their original stories, audiovisual projects and their Farewell Party video-clips.

The third category makes reference to **academic or course-of-studies related posts**. Teachers have provided web links to sites connected to students’ courses of studies (teacher-and-translator-training), funny mistranslations and pictures about the importance of punctuation. The group has also

been useful to include information about academic events like workshops, scholarship talks, seminars, among others, and a link to the university's academic calendar. Learners have enquired about subject timetables, other teachers' email addresses, problems to access the university's final exam registration platform, the place where they could find some materials and how to translate certain words and expressions for their translation courses. They have also contributed information about academic events like a talk about the changes in the new curriculum, messages to find study buddies and how to get information about what is included in the final exams of other subjects. Apart from this, learners have put on the group's wall funny pictures and word puns, as well as links to online dictionaries and useful websites on idioms. Finally, they have uploaded videos about learning languages, consciousness-raising campaigns –such as *Let's clean the world*–, commercials and inspirational speeches.

The fourth area is connected with **affective posts** in which teachers have included photographs of classroom events (presentations, get-togethers, farewell party) as well as greetings on special days like Easter, Student's Day, Mother's Day and Christmas. They have also praised students' talents and performances in different classroom events. Students have published videos and pictures to play jokes on the teachers to refer to funny classroom anecdotes and greetings for somebody's birthday, or special occasions like Friend's Day. They have also used the group for praising teachers for their work.

Evaluation of the project: analysis of students' feedback

In the written feedback students were asked to submit at the end of the term, some advantages and disadvantages of this experience were identified. As to the former, learners highlighted that this e-learning tool allowed them to be in close contact with teachers and peers, establishing a stronger relationships with them. Besides, getting teachers' continuous feedback and words of encouragement made them feel more confident. They also pointed out that getting their queries answered –generally related to clarification of instructions for assignments, homework deadlines and examination dates– through this medium was effective and fast, speeding up the processes involved in the tasks set. Moreover, by making doubts public, other students who shared the same questions also benefited from the answers. On other occasions, learners themselves offered suggestions on how to solve a peer's doubt and this was expressed in their evaluations as an opportunity to co-operate with others and learn from one another. Another upside that was emphasised is the easy access –through their computers and cell-phones– to interesting material in order to improve their vocabulary and writing skills. All the students highlighted that using FCBK as an e-learning tool in the English II classroom provided a safe platform to share their academic work –summaries of group tasks, student-generated audiovisual texts– with classmates and teachers alike, as well as the opportunity to exchange photographs, clips, general-interest texts and websites.

In spite of these pedagogical and instructional assets, some drawbacks were mentioned, such as the fact that FCBK became –on some occasions– slightly addictive and distracting. Some learners who did not have an Internet connection at home pointed out that it was difficult for them to have access to the group's account. Another objection was the lack of privacy when expressing views or venting feelings. Clearly, the upsides outweigh the downsides, and this reveals that, overall, this has been an enriching experience for all the participants involved.

Implications of an approach that includes FCBK as a networking tool

As revealed by the students' feedback, the FCBK experience has, in our context, yielded positive results as it strengthened the learners' motivation and promoted active involvement in the language acquisition process. In a constructivist framework such as the one adhered to in the subject English II, different literacies need to be developed to guarantee professionalism in future endeavours. The systematic use of social networking media provides learners with access to an open cyberspace in multiple ways that range from simple observation to participation via explicit postings. Likewise, it empowers learners by re-affirming their active roles in their educational experience, which they can enhance by gradually opening up and constructing their own identities without the constraints imposed by traditional lessons (they can lower their affective filters and sheer away from the pressure of monitoring performance, doing homework regularly, being assessed and the like). In this direction, FCBK seems to positively affect the traditional teacher-centred model of interaction of conventional ELT classrooms. Perhaps the single most crucial aspect is the fact that via FCBK, it becomes evident for learners that one of the most relevant "lessons" of the project is the acknowledgment of the value of diversity as a constituent element of present-day virtual and real communities.

This approach also has significant implications for teachers. Gaining access to the learners' use of functional language (in non-formal, out-of-class situations) provides an accurate profile of each student in particular, and this facilitates the design of personalised techniques to address their specific needs. In a similar vein, the teachers' comments and "use" of the language are gradually "picked up" by the learners: in this way, idiomatic expressions and informal phrases are indirectly learnt, assimilated and put to active use in their daily tasks and in-class interactions.

To conclude, the computer-mediated context briefly outlined in this paper has provided students with the new role of intrinsically-motivated 'architects' in search of lifelong learning experiences. FCBK can definitely add another dimension to the traditional ELT experience by contributing to an interactive space that promotes the development of awareness-raising and peer group collaboration. Likewise, the use of FCBK as a tool can affirm learners' identities while creating a sense of belonging and empowerment, as learners become teachers and –sometimes– teachers become learners as they have to keep up with the new codes, conventions and challenges posed by the digital world.

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8**Motivation and its influence on language level performance:
A case study on Year 1 students at an English teacher training
programme****Edith W. Mercaich Sartore¹****María Laura Sollier²****María Alejandra Soto³**¹Facultad de Ciencias de la Gestión, Universidad Autónoma de Entre Ríos²Facultad de Humanidades, Artes y Ciencias Sociales, Universidad Autónoma de Entre Ríos³Facultad de Ingeniería, Universidad Nacional de Entre Ríos**Introduction**

The English Department at the Facultad de Humanidades, Artes y Ciencias Sociales, UADER, offers a four-year pre-service teacher training programme whose main aims are to train teachers in the communicative and linguistic competences that will enable an efficient and fluent use of the English language in its four macroskills and to educate teachers to become committed to participate as active members of the educational system. The programme also aims to train EFL researchers and to provide constant training courses to graduates and teachers in the scientific, methodological, and cultural aspects.

Although the Department is over 60 years old, the programme has become increasingly popular in the last decade or so. Ever since the creation of the UADER in 2000, the number of Year 1 learners has fluctuated between 50 and 160 students. The present cohort consists of 67 learners which have been organised into four subgroups. Among the difficulties that this raises in the number of Year 1 students has brought about, the one concerning us the most pertains to the level of performance in the language that the students evidence. This problem has become more acute ever since the abolition of entrance examinations, in 2008, due to inclusion policies. In other words, even though learners must attend an induction period which includes diagnostic tests in several areas (listening and reading comprehension, speaking, use of English and writing), these are not a restraint for the candidates to start the course.

The main aim of this paper is to explore the motivations that drove 2012 Year 1 learners to enrol in the course and to establish whether that initial motivation is sustained throughout the first term of the present academic year. We will address those issues that might affect learner's motivation. In order to do this, we will firstly refer to the findings of a small-scale survey on learner motivation carried out among the learners in Year 1. Finally, we will try to establish whether the learners' initial

motivation to engage in the programme is either enhanced or hampered by the expected level (CEFR B2), and the contents comprised in the syllabus for the subject English Language I, among other factors.

Theoretical Framework

For over 40 years, a considerable amount of research has been focused on motivation since it has been observed that this plays a crucial role in terms of explaining individual differences in foreign language learning (FLL) achievement.

Even though Gardner's socio-psychological model (1972) has undoubtedly been considered as a seminal work in this field of investigation, some researchers (see, e.g. Crookes & Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) have pointed out that, in certain educational contexts, the traditional categories of *integrative* and *instrumental motivation* do not seem to completely explain certain learning behaviours. Thus, Dörnyei (1994) for example, complements Gardner's theory by bringing together classroom-specific motives in a three-level construct grounded in a more pragmatic, education-centred approach, which is consistent with the perceptions of practising teachers and which coincides with the three basic constituents of the L2 learning process, namely, the L2, the L2 learner and the L2 learning environment.

Similarly, current research on motivation pays more specific attention to the notion of *self*. Dörnyei (2009) discusses this concept in detail and draws several parallels between his 1994 model and that of, for example, Ushioda (2001) and Noels (2003). These models encompass the components in Table 1.

Dörnyei (1994)	Ushioda (2001)	Noels (2003)	Dörnyei (2009)
Language level	Integrative predisposition	Intrinsic reasons inherent to language learning	Ideal L2 self
Learner level	External pressure incentives	Extrinsic reasons for language learning	Ought to L2 self
Learning situation level	Actual learning process	Integrative reasons	L2 learning experience

Table 1: Components of motivation

As Dörnyei points out, all these concepts in the field of motivation aim to "recognise the motivational impact of the main components of the classroom learning situation, such as the teacher, the curriculum and the learner group" (2009, p. 29) or, as Ushioda claims, they answer the need for "more contextually grounded approaches to language and motivation" (2005, p. 7). For the purposes of this study, we will focus on Dörnyei's models, bearing in mind that in his 2009 model he subsumes some of the main tenets behind his 1994 model.

The first level in Dörnyei's 1994 model, the *Language Level*, is the most general one. Here, the focus is on the general orientations and motives associated not only with a positive disposition towards the L2 group and the desire to interact with – or even become part of – that valued community but also with the potential usefulness of mastering the language in views of the individual's future career endeavours. As can be observed, this level closely resembles the Gardnerian

integrative and *instrumental* motivational classification. In relation to this first level, in his 2009 model, Dörnyei introduces the concept of the *ideal L2 self*, which accounts for the characteristics or attributes the L2 learner would like to possess.

Dörnyei (1994) posits that two motivational components underlie the second level – *the learner level*: the need for achievement and self-confidence. He claims that the latter encompasses different aspects including language anxiety, the perceived L2 competence, attributions about past learning experiences, and self-efficacy.

Drawing on the work of Higgins (1987), Dörnyei (2009) develops a complementary self-guide that has educational relevance: the *ought-to* L2 self concept, which refers to the attributes that the learner believes he ought to possess, i.e. representations of someone's sense of personal or social duties, obligations or responsibilities.

Finally, a third level of L2 motivation concerns the *learning situation* which comprises three areas: course-specific, teacher-specific and group-specific motivational components, or the *L2 Learning experience*, which concerns “situated, ‘executive’ motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience” (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). In describing the course-specific motivational components, Dörnyei (1994) states that these are mainly related to the syllabus, the teaching materials, the teaching method, and the learning tasks. These components are in line with Crookes and Schmidt’s (1991) four motivational conditions: *interest, relevance, expectance and satisfaction*. The *teacher-specific motivational components* include the affiliation drive to please the teacher, the teacher’s authority type and the direct socialization of student motivation by means of modelling, task presentation and feedback. Finally, Dörnyei makes reference to *group-specific motivational components*, which consist of goal-orientedness, the norm and reward system, group cohesion, and classroom goal structure.

It is in the light of the main precepts above that we set out to conduct our study into learner motivation.

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to look at the motivation of university students to take up a TEFL programme at a state teacher training institution in Entre Ríos. The study involved the participation of only one of the four Year 1 groups at the English Department in UADER. This was done on the basis that one of the researchers was in charge of the participating group (Group D) and also on the fact that this group was the most numerous. Thus, the study involved the participation of 25 first year undergraduates (9 males; 16 females), whose age ranged from 17 to 26. During the process of questionnaire completion, the researcher in charge helped the respondents to understand all parts. Participants were informed that the information they gave would be kept confidential and be used for research purposes only. Prior to university, most participants had studied English both at state secondary schools (n=18; 72%) and in private schools of English (n=16; 64%).

The study was quantitative in nature. Data were collected through a questionnaire (see Appendix), which was adapted from Dörnyei (2001) and analyzed with the statistical package Laboratory of Educational Research Test Analysis Package 5 (Lertap, 2000). Descriptive statistics were utilized to explain the learners’ motivations. The questionnaire had three main sections that aimed to

collect demographic data and information about the participants' background as EFL learners, and to explore the variables affecting the respondents' motivation. The paper-based questionnaire was written in English and administered in class by one of the authors of this paper towards the end of term one. For sections 1 and 2, participants were required to provide personal information and/or tick items as appropriate. Section 3 consisted of 20 items on a 5-point-Likert scale (Dörnyei, 2003), which asked them to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement running from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree". The data were collated by means of Lertap 5 (2000) spreadsheets and results were tabulated and coded from 1 to 5 in order to determine the total number of positive, negative and neutral statements obtained. A response of strongly agree was given a score of 5; a response of strongly disagree, a score of 1. Responses that fell between these were allocated 2, 3 or 4, depending on where they fell. Results were interpreted in terms of measures of central tendency only, which were also plotted out in bar charts (Figures 1 and 2).

Results and discussion

Dörnyei (1994) highlights the necessity to go beyond the concepts of integrativeness and instrumentality in motivation, on the grounds that "the exact nature of the social and pragmatic dimensions of second language motivation is always dependent on who learns what languages where" (p. 275). Keeping on a par with this consideration, the discussion of the findings for the present study will be done in the light of Dörnyei's motivational components. In particular we will focus on the L2 learning experience and the learning situation itself with a view to establishing which factors are most likely to affect learner motivation and whether the learners' initial motivation to engage in the programme is either enhanced or hampered by the different emerging class-related factors.

Our first level of analysis refers to the participants' reactions and attitudes towards the target language. As can be observed in Figure 1 below, the study has shown varying results.

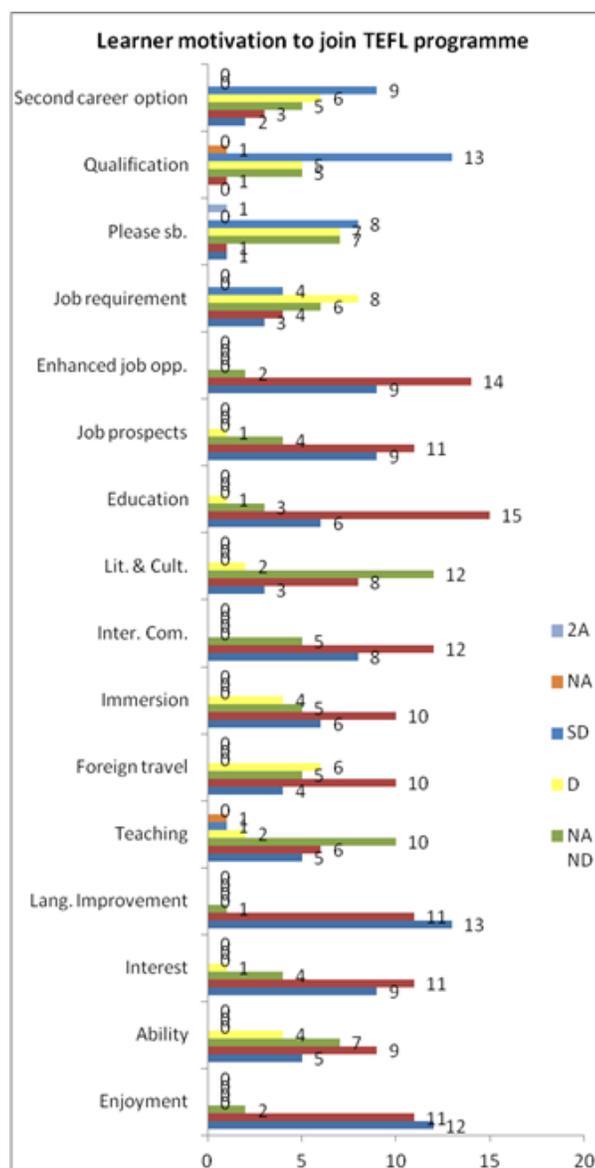


Figure 1: Learner motivation to join TEFL programme.

Although a vast majority of the participants seem to display an intrinsic motivation to learn the language, with 92% claiming that they enjoy learning it and 96% showing a strong desire to become better language users, most participants show a certain tendency towards the instrumental orientation, which correlates with one of Dörnyei's motivational components. The participants' main motivation to learn English seems to encompass a desire to become better educated (Item 19, 84%) and the importance of learning English as a means to have access to better job opportunities (Item 20, 80%; Item 21, 92%). While these varied findings may seem inconsistent, they might be indicative of the complexity not only of language learning but also of exploring learner motivation.

The second level of analysis focuses on the individuals' reaction to the language and the learning situation itself. Motivation is here viewed from a cognitive perspective. We were interested in analysing the language level and the knowledge of the learner. Hence, our study focused mainly on one of Dörnyei's sub-categories for self-confidence, that is, the perceived level of L2 competence.

Unlike previous studies (e.g. Burden, 2001), results show (Figure 2) that participants' perceived level of general L2 competence is high, with 76% (n=18) placing themselves in the intermediate to advanced range. These results also correlate with the subjects' perceived proficiency in listening (40%), speaking (52%), reading (64%) and vocabulary (52%). Their self-rating varies, however, in relation to writing and grammar, areas in which they position themselves at the elementary level (44% and 65% respectively). These findings seem to be partially supported by the answers to Item 27 in which 56% of the participants see their satisfactory academic performance in Term 1 as a factor enhancing their motivation (see below).

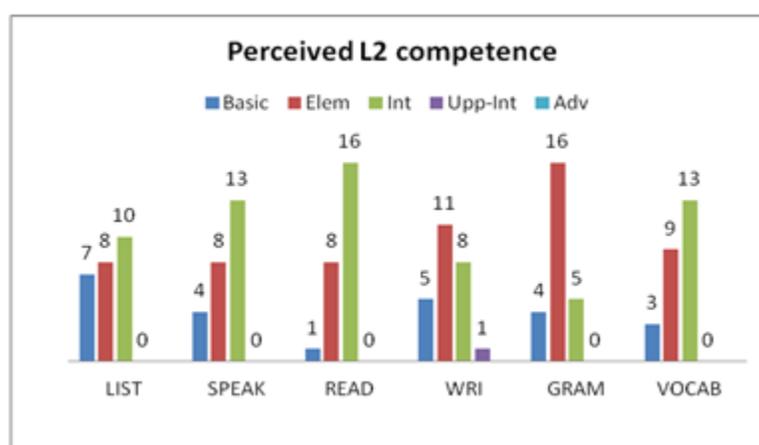


Figure 2: Perceived L2 competence

Our third and last level of analysis pertains to the learning situation itself, which draws upon specific motivational variables among which we can mention those connected with the teacher, the course, and the materials with which the learners interact. In our study, this third level comprises 8 factors ranging from the syllabus contents to the institution itself, all covering Dörnyei's (1994) three motivational components: a) content-specific; b) teacher-specific; and c) group-specific.

In the first case, the study looked at the participants' desire to know more about English, the extent to which they feel instruction is relevant to their goals and their perceived level of satisfaction with their performance during Term 1 (Figure 3). Probably, the most significant finding relates to Item 26, which considers whether the participants' motivation has increased due to instruction in the course of the first term. Answers show that 84% of the learners (n=21) agree that this is the case. Among other findings, variables such as the contents, the amount of homework and extra practice, and the classroom atmosphere in particular seem to have contributed to the participants' increased level of motivation.

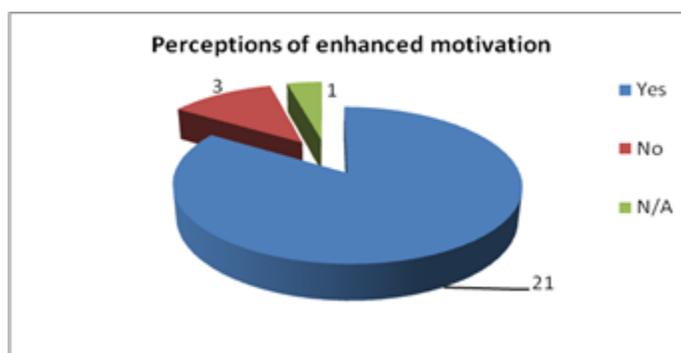


Figure 3: Perceptions of enhanced motivation

The study has also shed light on the participants' perception of the teacher's role in stimulating language learning, with 64% subjects regarding teachers as being a motivational factor, which might be related to a consideration of the teacher as supporting of autonomous learning and a provider of informational feedback (Dörnyei, 1994). Here, outcomes show that 92% of the participants view the teacher as a motivating factor, who encourages and intensifies the language learning experience.

Finally, the study has also given us insights into group-specific motivational components such as group cohesiveness and class dynamics, and other factors ranging from the classroom setting, the available resources and infrastructure to the classroom atmosphere. Results show that students are highly motivated by the nature of the peer relationships established and the friendly classroom environment (n= 23; 92%).

Conclusion

The study here presented was aimed at drawing up some of the most salient variables that seem to affect learner motivation to pursue a career in English Language Teaching at university level. On the basis of our findings and previous discussion, it can be observed that our participants have given high priority to variables related to the characteristics or attributes that they would like to possess as L2 learners and the learning situation per se. Furthermore, in relation to the main aims of the study in particular, we can conclude that - irrespective of what the main source of motivation that the learners possess might be - their motivation to engage in language learning at university has been sustained throughout the first term of the present academic year and that the course contents and/or expected level does not seem to hamper students' perceptions of enhanced motivation.

Even though exploring motivation in terms of integrativeness and instrumentality may seem to be much simpler, Dörnyei has made an important contribution to making L2 motivation research more "education-friendly" (Dörnyei, 1994, p. 283), shedding light on a comprehensive motivational construct relevant to L2 classroom motivation and, consequently, helping teachers gain insight into what may help them motivate students to learn a foreign language.

Pedagogical Implications

It is widely recognized that motivation is a highly important variable that may either facilitate or hamper learners' language achievement. By means of this study we have corroborated Dörnyei's

(1994) claim that in order to explore motivation, we should go beyond Gardner's social psychological model. That is, although modest in its scope, this study reminds us that the mere consideration of motivation in either integrative or instrumental terms does not always account for the learners' desire to engage in language learning or as in this case, to pursue a career in language teaching. As Dörnyei posits, motivation needs to be looked at from different angles and factors pertaining to the "where" – the learning situation level - are important motivational components in the language learning process.

Further Research

The results of the present study showed that the participating university students are highly motivated to learn English. However, having limited the study to one group of Year 1 students only does not allow for generalizations. Clearly, more research in this area needs to be conducted. Richer data might be rendered through research that is more qualitative in nature; that is, other research methods such as interviews could be employed to supplement the survey so that the changes or differences in attitude and motivation among students can be further explained.

Other variables have been left aside in the present study since we desired to narrow down the scope of investigation. However, we acknowledge that in the course of doing the study or pondering the results more questions were raised, which deserve further research:

- How far could the present results be validated at a large scale project?
- What would the results be if we replicated this study at other institutions?
- To what extent do affective factors – mainly related to teacher-specific and group-specific motivational components - influence the results of this project?
- To what extent are the findings of this study supported by the learners' actual performance in exams?

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APPENDIX

Learner motivation to enter a TEFL programme

This questionnaire is part of a small-scale study on learner motivation. The main goal of the study is to explore learners' motivation to enter an EFL teacher training course. There are no right or wrong answers here and this questionnaire is anonymous. What we are interested in are your motives for choosing to study English at FHAYCS (UADER). Please give your answers sincerely as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation.

Thank you very much for your help!

SECTION 1 ABOUT YOURSELF

Please tell us about you.

1. Age (*Please complete*):
2. Gender (*Tick as appropriate*):
M F
3. Do you study and work? (*Tick as appropriate*)
Yes No

SECTION 2 ABOUT YOUR EFL BACKGROUND

We'd like to get some information about your previous English studies:

4. How long did you study English prior to this course?

No previous studies 1-2 years 3-5 years more than 5 years

5. Where did you study English before UADER? (Tick as appropriate)

State Primary School State Secondary School

Private Primary School Private Secondary School

Private School of English Privately

Other (please specify)

6. What is the highest level of English you have attained?

Basic Elementary Intermediate Upper intermediate Advanced

7. Have you sat any international examination?

Yes No

If yes, please specify which:

8. How would you rate your performance in the following language components **before** starting the teacher training course?

	Basic	Elementary	Intermediate	Advanced
Listening	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speaking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Writing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Has your performance increased in the last four months?

Yes No

SECTION 3	ABOUT YOUR MOTIVATION TO TAKE UP THIS TEACHER TRAINING COURSE
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We are interested in why you have chosen to undertake English teaching studies at University. Following are a number of statements about your motivation to study at *Profesorado*. Please give your opinion by ticking ONE answer for each statement.

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
10.	I enjoy learning English very much.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	I have always been good at English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	I have always been interested in foreign languages.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	This course will help me improve my English proficiency.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	I'm interested in teaching English.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	I'm studying English for foreign travel reasons.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	I'm studying English because I want to spend some time in an English speaking country.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	I'm studying English to be able to communicate with foreigners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	I'm studying English to better understand the English literature and culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	I'm taking this course to become a better educated person.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	Taking this course will enable me to get a good job.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	Becoming a teacher of English can lead on to other job opportunities in the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	I'm studying English as part of a job requirement.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	I'm studying English to please somebody else (e.g. my boss/my parents).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	I don't enjoy English but I know it is an	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	important qualification.					
25.	English was my second career option.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

26. Has your motivation to study at *Profesorado* increased over the past four months?

Yes No

What has contributed to your answer in **Question 26**?

		Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
27.	My performance in most subjects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
28.	The level of proficiency expected by teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
29.	The contents developed in the different areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
30.	Homework and extra practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
31.	Exams and assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32.	The timetable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33.	The learning atmosphere.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34.	Teacher stimulation.					
35.	The available resources and infrastructure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
36.	The institutional organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
37.	Events in my personal life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
38.	Other (<i>Please specify</i>):					

Thank you for taking the time to respond!

9

Technology-mediated activities as a boost to motivation and autonomy in the pronunciation class

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Introduction

One of the main concerns explored in contemporary research in education has been the ultimate purpose of learning development: whether learners should be concerned with amassing great amounts of content, or rather with developing certain abilities or skills. In the case of language acquisition, the debate started in the 1970s, with authors who proposed a somehow comprehensive scheme which aimed at providing a detailed description of a student-centred approach (McLean, 1980; Widdowson, 1987; Wright, 1987). This was also the time when these authors proposed new theories, such as the “Learning Styles Model and Experiential Learning Theory” (Kolb, 1984). Along the years, the development of learning styles theories led to new methodologies that would suit the needs of the learners, rather than the needs related to syllabus completion (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). In so doing, the debate of motivation and autonomy started to gain more importance in ever-changing contemporary societies, where new technologies play a most important role in education, and where the need to adapt to these changes and advancements becomes evident (Rogers, 1969).

This paper will thus aim at shedding light on how teaching methods and techniques have evolved throughout the years in order to meet the needs of an ever-changing society, where new technologies are constantly developing. In this context, instructors need to become aware of the fact that these new technologies are at the service of teaching and learning, and that they represent very important sources of motivation for students (Sharma & Barret, 2007). This paper will also aim at exploring the potentially positive effect of blended learning on student motivation through the use of technology-mediated activities with a view to fostering autonomous learning, inside and outside the English-speaking classroom. This will be developed from our perspective as members of the chair of *Práctica de la Pronunciación* at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad de Córdoba by carrying out observation and analysis. This study was carried out with a group of approximately 40 students, mainly those who attend classes on a regular basis. The level of language management is somehow mixed, as the group, regardless of their passing the introductory course examinations, is formed by students who have had different kinds of instruction in previous years, before entering university. Our focus is mostly on the way in which students of the first year of the English Courses take advantage of ICTs and instruction in skills development to enhance autonomous learning, in and out of the classroom.

Tracing back the study of motivation and autonomy

Back in the 60s, when research on motivation had just emerged, Corder (1967, p. 164) stated that “*given motivation*, it is inevitable that a human being will learn a second language if he is exposed to the language data” [italics in original]. Some decades later, Kolb’s (1984) styles model to learning, based on the Experiential Learning Theory, came to propose the importance of experimentation in the teaching-learning process. Kolb’s studies set the basis for several subsequent studies on learning styles, which aimed at accounting for learner differences in the classroom. Such studies derived in theories or approaches which were developed in order to cater for the needs of all the students and so as to ensure a higher level of effective learning, rather than to merely focus on the completion of an institutional syllabus (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). In the case of Second Language Acquisition, one of the most influential theorists in motivation research has been Robert Gardner. In his Socio-Educational model, he proposes that *integrative motivation* can help throw light upon individual differences in Second Language Learning (Gardner, 1985).

More contemporary authors, such as Ellis, have pointed out the importance of making a differentiation between aptitude and motivation. While the first one refers to “the cognitive abilities that underlie successful L2 acquisition”, the latter “involves the attitudes and affective states that influence the degree and effort that learners make to learn an L2” (2008, p. 75). Although we may not be able to increase a student's aptitude, it is up to us as teachers to ensure that our students are motivated so as to maximise the potential inherent in the learning-teaching experience.

In parallel to the issue of motivation, another concept has been explored along the last decades, namely that of autonomy. Approaches to autonomous learning initially developed in the 60s, and they did so in order to assess the need for an ability to adapt to change. An entirely different teaching-learning paradigm developed, and the purpose of education was now focused on the “*facilitation of change and learning*”, based on the idea that “The only man who is educated is the man who has learned how to learn; the man who has learned how to adapt and change” (Rogers, 1969, p.104). This meant, then, that one of the ultimate goals of education aims at providing learners with lifelong tools, rather than merely transmitting knowledge, seeing as such provisions would be of much help at the time of dealing with the unexpected and they would be able to solve problems of different kinds by themselves.

Motivation and autonomy in pronunciation teaching

Research on these issues in the field of pronunciation teaching has started quite recently. One of the main triggers of this kind of research has been the loss of the native speaker as a pronunciation model, due to the rise of English as an International Language (EIL). This means that both teachers and students now lack a definite model to follow, as there is not one English but rather many *Englishes* that could effectively work as models in pronunciation training (Crystal, 1997). The instructor, thus, may feel bemused and not know what *English* to teach, and the focus of pronunciation is somehow lost. Still, as Melhorn (2005) points out, motivation in phonetics is related to a sense of accomplishment in the foreign pronunciation after constant practice. However, she points out that one of the main problems is the lack of class time to cover all the needs in pronunciation teaching, and so

she proposes Individual Pronunciation Coaching (IPC), which consists of similar activities to the ones used in our virtual platform, to enhance learner autonomy.

Motivation and autonomous learning today

In the last decades, technological advances have become available to virtually everyone; however, technological progress took place at a highly accelerated rate, and the need to update oneself has thus become a top priority not only among techno-addicts, but among everyone whose job depends (completely or partly) on the use of technological devices. Second Language Teaching and Learning, in turn, is not oblivious to this matter. Lina Lee (2011) accurately summarises the major concerns in the study on motivation, and she asserts that

The challenge ... lies in engaging learners in the cognitive, metacognitive, social, and affective dimensions of language learning (Little, 2001; Reinders, 2006). Effort, therefore, needs to be placed on training students to learn autonomously with teacher intervention guidance and support (Benson, 2001; Dam, 1995; Little, 2007). (as quoted in Lee, 2011, p. 89)

Research on motivation in recent times, then, is no longer concerned with developing generalised ideals or models of learner motivation (Ushioda, 2011). In turn, research on autonomy is not focused on finding ways of providing students with just any kind of tools to simply help them become successful and active participants in the learning process. Rather, the main focus is on trying to define the role and taking full stock of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a key element to autonomous learning. In the case of language acquisition, research is quite widespread, and one of the most important studies has been that of computer-assisted language learning (CALL), with the contribution of different authors (Davies, Walker, Rendall, & Hewer, 2011; Levy, 1997; Lamy & Hampel, 2007; Levy & Hubbard, 2005; Underwood, 1984). This new outlook on autonomy and learning in relation to acquisition and the imminent influence of ICT in the educational field have meant that new developments in teaching strategies have started to arise and to gain the attention of the community of teachers of English as a Second, Foreign or International Language. This is when such approaches as Blended Learning come into play.

Technology-mediated learning and motivation

Blended learning has been characterised as the combination of face-to-face language teaching and the use of a wide range of technologies, such as the Internet, CD ROMs, blogs, and wikis, among others. As technology has become an inherent part of learners' daily life; especially younger learners or the so-called "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001) expect a learning environment to offer opportunities to use technology. Therefore, the use of any technological device works as a motivational tool as it brings a certain appeal and dynamism to the classroom. Furthermore, technology allows learners to become more autonomous as they practice and study outside the classroom at their own pace and time (Sharma & Barret, 2007). Learners become self-involved in their learning process as they select and evaluate tasks and materials as well as assess their own performance. The use of blended learning opportunities helps learners realise they have power and control over their learning.

One component of technology-based teaching aids is the use of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE). One example of such device is the Moodle platform. Defined as a ' free, open source software package designed using sound pedagogical principles to help educators create effective online learning communities' (Dougiamas, n.d.), it is widely used among teachers of different subjects at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC. Such a device is incredibly useful as it functions as an organising tool where different technology-based teaching aids, such as chats, forums, and web sites, among others, can be managed and unified. Such a device offers students a user-friendly system of organising and displaying tasks and material so as to enable learners to practice and improve their language skills outside the classroom. It is essential to frequently update the tasks and materials at the students' disposal so as to enhance learners' autonomy and to foster their motivation towards the use of such tools. Due to the overpopulation of classes and the scarcity of instructors at a state university, the use of technology devices, especially VLEs, helps to maximise teacher and students' interaction as well as provide students with opportunities to develop their learning skills outside the classroom, using tools which are current in their everyday life. It also serves as a powerful boost to motivation in light of the remarks made above, namely, the possibility of students' pacing and making autonomous decisions about their own learning process, and the opportunity for them to make use of virtuality.

Looking into students' reports

Methodology

The current report is based on student feedback, collected in the form of anonymous short narrative e-mails sent to the teacher from the platform by the end of the first semester. In a course made up of 40 students who attend classes on a regular basis, 32 students reported on their work on the virtual classroom, which we consider representative of the whole student population doing Pronunciation Practice. Students were requested to briefly describe their experience on the virtual platform in terms of the following criteria; a) time management, b) individual versus class work, c) absence of face-to-face interaction with peers and the teacher, d) degree of appeal of the activities available, e) overall description of their feelings and emotions as they carried out some of the tasks on the Moodle platform.

Context and participants: Pronunciation Practice evening course

The students whose reports were taken into consideration are currently attending their first year of studies at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. Although 62 students enrolled in this course at the beginning of the year, the number of students regularly attending Pronunciation Practice classes is on average 40. The topics are presented and practised actively during class time; however, students do not get the chance of practising every class due to time and personal constraints. Some students are particularly sensitive to their peers' and even the teacher's comments and feedback, so some of the students come to class but they do not volunteer to read out. In this sense, the activities on the Moodle platform allow students, even extremely shy ones, to have access to extra practice at home.

The Pronunciation Practice chair insists that students should make use of the Virtual Classroom, even when this is not a compulsory task in order to complete the course. At the beginning

of the year, students are provided with their own username and passcode, and some activities are carried out online in class in order to help students become familiar with Moodle tools and to awaken their curiosity. By occasionally resorting to virtual activities during class time, the teacher reminds the students of the importance of this tool. Some pieces of homework are also related to virtual activities, in the sense that students may be asked to record themselves and send the recording to their peers and teachers to get virtual feedback, usually in the form of an e-mail. The students and the teacher, together with the helping students and teachers, have agreed on a common "virtual metalanguage" as an in-group, semi-standardised set of brief comments that refer to pronunciation performance. This makes virtual feedback and communication more efficient and effective.

Tasks available

On the virtual classroom, students can access model phonetic transcriptions, extra theoretical concerns and "tips" on pronunciation, listening activities and model oral production of the texts studied. There are also videos available so that students can use them as a springboard to the re-telling of stories, model dialogues, and the like. Students can record themselves in .mp3 format if they have a microphone and send their production for teacher assessment via e-mail directly from the Moodle Platform. They will also get their replies via e-mail on the platform when they log on in future. The teacher as a Moodle Platform Administrator can keep track of the students who visit or use the platform, and this is quite useful since it allows for quantitative (though not qualitative) appraisals as to how many students visit the platform and how often they do it. It is of prime importance to mention the fact that a sum total of 4 students belonging to this group have visited the platform this year at least once, and on average 25 students visit the virtual classroom on a quite regular basis.

Data collection and analysis

As part of an evaluating tool of the virtual classroom, the teacher asked the students to report on their experience by replying questions comparing work in class and at home, focusing on matters such as time, interaction with peers and the teacher, and personal appreciation of the tasks (Appendix). This report was a "by-product" of a particularly interesting activity which involved students in the practice of online recorded dictation and subsequent transcription which they had to submit to the teacher via e-mail. It was a by-product in the sense that the set of questions and student answers should be attached as a compulsory requirement to the phonetic transcriptions students sent to their tutors. The activity itself was again not compulsory, so that we felt we were not pressurising students to give us feedback on the virtual classroom.

32 students completed the activity and sent their feedback. Some of them provided very short answers while some others seemed to enjoy this appraisal and became quite personal and detailed in their answers. Taking into consideration that the average number of students in a class is 40, we were quite satisfied and felt that this was actually quite representative of the active student population. In a nutshell, 95% of the students reported that the virtual classroom had enabled them to keep pace with the demands of the chair and the subject. Some of them explained that access to the virtual material meant the possibility of keeping up with the content presented in class, even if they had missed a few lectures. Other students pointed out that the activities uploaded on the virtual classroom

had allowed them to have access to a greater number of practical tasks than those they could actually take part in during class time, which translated into accessible and easy-to-use extra practice. This clearly points to the perception on the part of the majority of students that they were able to manage their own pace and timing. Along similar lines, 90% of the students reported that the use of the virtual classroom had resulted in a more comfortable experience, since they felt that there was little peer or teacher pressure to complete the tasks. Some students, around 40%, admitted to the fact that they found it extremely difficult to read or speak in front of a group, and they highlighted the value of the “impersonal” nature of virtuality when it comes down to overcoming fear and shyness. One student actually stated the following: "When I first used the platform, I [had] never participated in class before, and after that time, I started to read in front of the student helper and the helping teacher." This reflects the idea that the platform was probably the starting point for the student to be able to finally engage in reading out in class.

Most students (around 87%) found the activities “interesting, appealing and fun,” although a few students pointed out they had found some of the tasks repetitive and somehow boring –this was not expressed explicitly but actually hinted at in some statements. At this point, it becomes relevant to explain that the activities the students were assessing involve taking part in guided dialogues with prompts, whereby they can record themselves and then check their performance against “the ideal” which is made available for them to listen to upon completing the task. Other activities involve listening to a recorded text, which has the necessary pausing and repetition so that students can transcribe the text in phonetic symbols –i.e., virtual “dictation”. Finally, 95% of students felt extremely comfortable and relaxed while working on the platform. The remaining 5%, conversely, characterised the experience as uninteresting and even not true-to-life, as they deemed the presence of the teacher indispensable.

Final remarks

Even when the succinct report on student motivation described above may be considered exploratory and mainly qualitative, we can conclude that students seem to be quite interested in the virtual activities we propose, and thus the use of virtuality may eventually result in a boost to motivation in general, since most students find working online appealing and fun. Along a similar vein and according to their comments, students feel less pressurised by the “absence” of the teacher, which reflects positively on their willingness to complete tasks and engage in extra practical activities. They also tend to feel more comfortable with themselves and their own performance. As far as autonomy is concerned, student responses attest to the fact that the use of the Virtual Classroom allows for individual management of time and access to practice materials. It remains to be seen, though, if this increase in motivation and autonomy will result in improved student performance in pronunciation. We are quite positive in this respect, and believe that in time, technology will not just increase motivation and maximise the learning process, but also pave the way for higher levels of performance at the initial stages of proficient pronunciation acquisition in a teacher-training programme at university level.

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Appendix

Now that you have completed the dictation exercise, can you please answer these questions?

Do you feel that the activities on the virtual classroom help you organise yourself better? Why (not)? You may want to consider factors such as timetables or the time you spend on an activity online versus the amount of time you devote to practising in class.

Do you feel comfortable working alone? Are the activities "unreal" compared to what we do in the class? Why (not)? Explain.

Do you feel you are getting enough attention from your teachers in the form of feedback? do you prefer practising with your classmates? Why (not)?

What do you think about the tasks you can work on the platform? Are they interesting/boring, realistic/unrealistic, easy/difficult? Can you use your own words to describe them?

Finally, comment on how you feel when working on the platform. You may include here any comments you want to make about the platform.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING US IMPROVE THE PLATFORM!!!

10

The use of technology as a motivating tool in pronunciation teaching

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Introduction

Nowadays technology plays a pivotal role in our personal and professional lives. This paper reports on a research project in progress at the Department of English Language and Literature at Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes, Universidad Nacional de San Juan, entitled "Teaching and learning English pronunciation with the aid of virtual settings". Our presentation intends to show how the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) may contribute to heightening motivation and autonomy when acquiring the phonological component of the English language at higher education level. Firstly, we will make reference to the design and implementation of technological resources in our teaching practices. Secondly, we will give a brief account of an opinion survey which was carried out in order to gather information about the students' perceptions as regards the use of these tools and its impact on their learning process.

Theoretical framework

The acquisition of a second language is a complex process, and linguistic and psycholinguistic theories contribute to the understanding of the cognition-language relationship involved in that process. Over the last decades much attention has been paid to cognitive models of language learning. According to these approaches, learning is regarded as a dynamic process taking place in the subject's mind and upon which the learner builds on continuously.

In order to describe the acquisition process of the phonological component of the English language we ascribe to the Communicative Language Ability Model (Bachman, 1990) which conceptualizes linguistic competence as a set of specific knowledge components used in communication via language. This framework consists of two components: language competence and strategic competence. The former includes two broad categories: organizational knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. The organizational competence or knowledge comprises those abilities involved in controlling the formal structural aspects of language. This component includes grammatical knowledge which consists of relatively independent competences, such as the knowledge of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and phonology.

On the other hand, it is also relevant to analyze the processes and mechanisms underlying second language learning. In our particular case, we adhere to the principles proposed by an

information processing model, specifically that of the Adaptive Control of Thought, developed by Anderson (1983). Anderson (1983) assigns a fundamental role to systematic practice which, in his view, is the key to automatization. His proposal is a general cognitive model of skill acquisition that can be applied to those aspects of second language learning, such as pronunciation, which require proceduralization and automatization processes.

With regard to the use of ICT tools in educational contexts, Litwin (2005) draws an alternative communicative proposal for the construction of knowledge in the learning process. The author recognizes different uses of technology according to the interrelationship existing among teachers, students and content. One of these uses portrays students as active subjects who need to have at their disposal an array of options tailored to suit their interests and needs. In this context, technology offers students a plethora of choices that foster both group and collaborative work. Our research is in keeping with the belief that the use of ICTs may create an appropriate environment, not only to reinforce basic learning strategies, but also to acquire new meta-cognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategies related to the learning of a second language.

Another important aspect to focus on is motivation. Gass and Selinker (2008) mention that there has recently been a great interest in this social-psychological factor. In this respect, Dornyei's (2005) model adopts the process-oriented approach which can account for the dynamic, complex and the temporal, changing nature of motivation. As regards this, our purpose is to visualize not only the way technology stimulates learners' motivation and helps them develop self-determination, that is, autonomy in the construction of new knowledge, but also how motivation is generated, actively maintained and retrospectively evaluated throughout their learning process.

Methodology

Implementation

This project is being carried out at Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes, with some courses within the English Phonetics and Phonology subarea. With the aim of updating our teaching practices and facilitating teacher-student and student-student interaction, we set out to implement virtual settings in our classes. The incorporation and application of ICT tools was intended to improve the teaching and learning processes, in our particular case, those related to the acquisition of English pronunciation. This technological proposal is designed within the parameters of a blended-learning model (b-learning), i.e., as a complement to face-to-face interaction (Sharma & Barret, 2007). We intend to renew the teaching-learning process considering the characteristics of the users, the organization of course contents and the context where we work. The implementation of ICTs is a challenge that implies a redefinition of teachers' and students' roles. Consequently, this also implies a change in our mindset, which in turn leads to the development of specific competences and strategic thinking that will help us benefit from these innovations.

It is worth pointing out that this project is in line with a specific pedagogical model and rationale, related to a specific discipline, with its procedural and conceptual contents and its learning strategies. In order to describe the way the articulation between technology and knowledge is carried out, we will show how technology is used in the course *Introduction to Pronunciation* during the first

term of the first year of the teaching and research study programmes in the Department of English Language and Literature.

To begin with, diverse ICTs have been used to deal with conceptual and procedural contents. One of them is PowerPoint presentations which have been specifically planned, organized and designed to be used as visual aids in class. This format has made it possible not only to develop contents in a more motivating way, but also to transmit knowledge in a more appealing and dynamic manner. Likewise, the students have made use of PowerPoint presentations as part of the evaluation process. Once they showed them in class, these presentations were posted to be shared by teachers and students.

Another technological medium used in our teaching practices has been the digitalization of units of learning. With the digitalization of image and sound, a change in the construction of knowledge is generated, as the information the students receive is enriched by the synergy of visual and audio representations. For example, students have the possibility of visualizing an image describing the articulation of a target sound in combination with the corresponding auditory representation.

In this educational context, a tool of paramount importance in the teaching of phonology is that of the electronic pronunciation dictionary. Using this CD-ROM contributes to solving problems as they arise in the day-to-day class development, integrating different modes of providing access to the phonological structure of words. When the dictionary window pops up on the interactive board, the students have the chance to see the transcription of a word, showing the relation between orthography and pronunciation --a complex phenomenon for Spanish speakers as there is no correspondence between these variables. This information is reinforced by its auditory representation. Similarly, the dictionary presents graphs that reveal users' preferences of certain forms over others, as shown in Figure1:

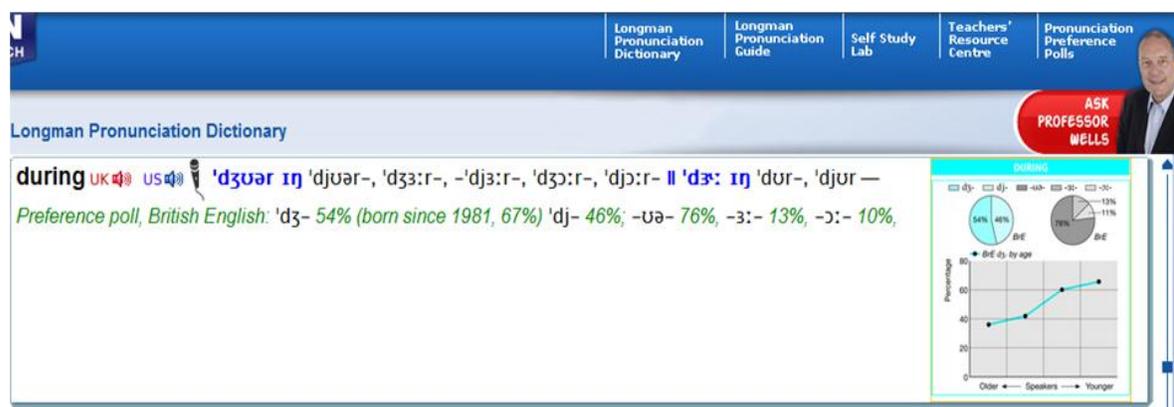


Figure 1: Image of the information captured from *Longman Pronunciation Dictionary*

The phonological information provided by this tool is unfolded in varied ways, thus giving the students the opportunity to explore other ways of constructing knowledge.

The introduction of new technologies has also been crystallized through the teachers' intervention. The teachers opened a gmail account for each of the courses in the project in order to

make sure the students were able to communicate via e-mail. Using this medium eases correction and revision processes allowing teachers to make observations and provide feedback on students' production, such as phonological transcriptions of texts, mind maps and outlines. It is important to highlight the students' active role in the learning process, since these types of interaction foster greater participation, autonomy and self-regulation.

Another digital resource that has been introduced is a weblog. This blog corresponds to the English Phonetics and Phonology subarea and it includes 3 curricular units: Introduction to Pronunciation, English Phonetics and Phonology I and English Phonetics and Phonology II. Using a blog offers manifold advantages: it is a user-friendly system of communication, it does not require simultaneous connection among its users, it allows us to post information in various media and formats periodically and chronologically, students become the protagonists who have the chance not only to analyze the activities proposed but also to share educational experiences with their peers and teachers (González Sánchez & García Muiña, 2010).

The layout of our blog displays a main page which provides access to the three aforementioned courses. This design allows students to enter the class they are attending without difficulty. Once they have access to the site, eight tabs that unveil fundamental aspects related to the organization of the course can be viewed, as shown in Figure 2:

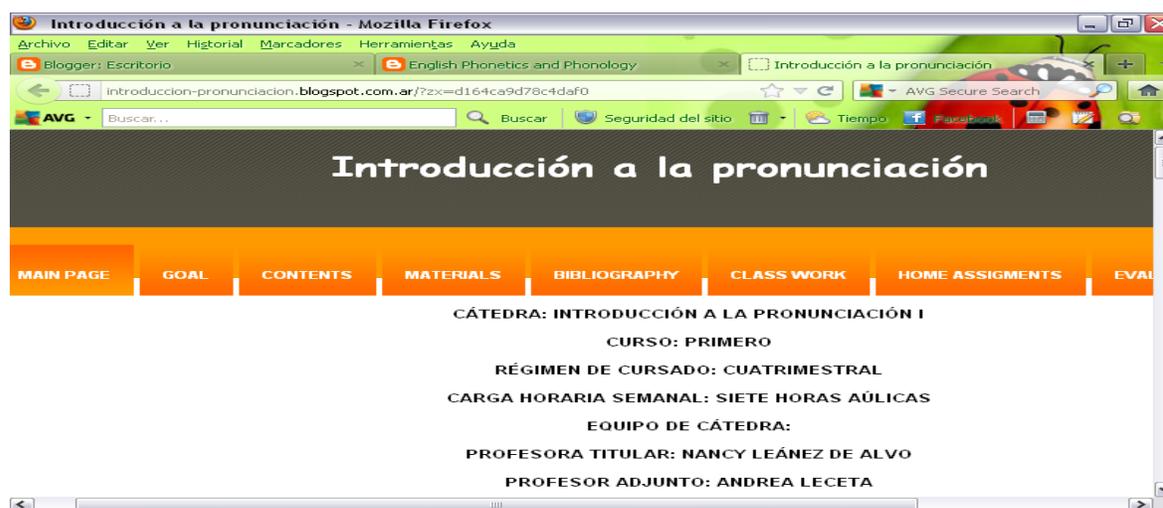


Figure 2: Screen corresponding to the course: Introduction to Pronunciation

The first tab from left to right, called Main Page, presents the contextualization of the course with detailed information about the following: name of the course, schedule, teachers in charge. The second tab, Main Goal, specifies the general aim to be reached by students. The next two tabs, Contents and Materials, provide access to the contents to be covered in class as well as to the digital material to be used. In the particular case of Introduction to Pronunciation, the materials uploaded in the blog include a PDF file that presents and describes gradation, a study guide for practice on this process of phonemic changes and a short story selected to be read and acted out in class. The tab Bibliography includes bibliographic material that serves as reference for each course. The next two

tabs, Class Work and Home Assignments, disclose information about the tasks performed in class, as well as the activities assigned as homework. Finally, the users can enter the field Evaluation, which displays detailed information related to dates, modes and contents of formative and summative tests included in the course planning.

The information conveyed in the last three tabs offers the student the possibility to follow the development of each course on a daily basis, even when he/she has not attended classes. It should also be mentioned that as probably not all users may be acquainted with the use of this technological medium, a tutorial has been included to assist everyone participating in this blog.

Survey results

In relation to the second aspect under consideration, a brief reference will be made to the personal survey that the students were supposed to answer and which was geared towards gathering their opinion about this experience.

Taking into account that, from a cognitive perspective, the student adopts a key role as an active participant in learning, we believe that the perceptions of his/her own learning process may enrich our research analysis. Therefore, with the intention of collecting information from our students' personal views, a semi-structured questionnaire was designed and administered. The data gathered has allowed us to assess the impact that the use of the blog had on the aforementioned course and to appreciate how the new strategies within the field of Phonetics have been developed. It should be mentioned that this survey was answered online from the blog. It consisted of two sections: the first one contained information related to the generalities of the blog, frequency of use, contents included, suggestions and so on; the second one required students to reflect upon the impact that using the blog had on their learning process.

As to the results obtained in the first part of the survey, in relation to the question how often the blog was used, 76% of the students surveyed indicated that the blog was consulted weekly. Another question asked about which contents of the blog were more useful. In this regard, "Home assignments" was ranked first with a 95% preference; "Evaluation dates" with a 90%, was ranked second, followed by "Useful web sites" and "Modes of evaluation" with a 43% and 38%, respectively. An additional question inquired about which other aspects of the blog students considered important to be included. In response to this, some students indicated that the blog could offer additional practice in self-correction, while another group stated that the blog may contain links that could provide further transcription and pronunciation practice.

The second section of the survey focused on the impact the blog had on the teaching-learning process. One of the questions was whether this resource had favoured teacher-student communication; this was responded affirmatively by 90% of the subjects. Another question referred to motivation and whether using the blog had enhanced it. In this case, 70% replied favourably. When asked if the blog had fostered more flexible and autonomous learning, 71% of the students replied affirmatively. Finally, the questionnaire probed into whether the experience of using the blog had been positive, 90% explained that manipulating this technological application proved to be helpful. As to the comments about this specific point, several students emphasised that one of the most valuable aspects of working with the blog was the flow of communication established among teachers and

students, which extended beyond the classroom walls. In addition, another group acknowledged that consulting the blog allowed them to be informed about home assignments for the following class, as well as about bibliography and changes on the evaluation schedule.

Conclusion

This pedagogical proposal intends to optimize the learning process of the English phonological system, taking into account students' needs and the socio-educational context. As teachers, we have faced the challenge presupposed by the introduction of ICTs in the teaching-learning process at a higher education level. We have also found that the use of technological tools helps frame a new scenario which requires different and challenging responses for teachers and students, since they must redefine their teaching and learning practices.

As this project is still in progress, only preliminary observations have been presented. If the findings turn out to be favourable, this proposal can be later applied to other courses at Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes or other institutions that share the same interests.

It is hoped that this work may be meaningful to those who are involved in the teaching and learning of English pronunciation and that it may open new communication pathways between students and the teachers specialized in this field of knowledge.

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11

Towards learner autonomy in EFL academic writing: Peer feedback and self-monitoring

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Introduction

The relevance of learner autonomy has generated interest in the contribution made by students to the teaching and learning process and in the learning strategies they employ. A lot of research has been done on the strategies-based approach to foreign language learning. Results have shown that, through this learner-focused method, students can gradually become less dependent on the teacher because they are given tools to move towards greater autonomy. However, studies of strategy use have tended to pay more attention to broad categories of strategies than to the effectiveness of individual strategies (Oxford, 1990). The current study presents a more detailed picture than others by systematically examining the use of specific strategies to foster learners' autonomy in EFL academic writing. The general objective of this study is to determine whether social/affective and metacognitive strategy training leads to improved performance in EFL academic writing tasks. The specific objective is to assess whether the use of specific social/affective and metacognitive strategies for the writing skill, namely cooperation through peer feedback and self-monitoring, leads to changes in students' observable strategy use and self-perceptions. This study concludes with limitations, pedagogical implications and avenues for further research.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on learning strategies and their theoretical anchoring, cognitively-based theories of learning that view second language learning as the acquisition of complex cognitive skills, and on learner autonomy.

The importance of language learning strategies has been pointed out by several scholars. Under various names – *learning skills* and *learning-to-learn skills* – learning strategies are the ways in which students learn how to improve their skills in a second or foreign language (Oxford, 1990). As Weaver and Cohen (1997) point out, strategies-based instruction is a learner-focused approach to

teaching that emphasises explicit integration of language learning strategies in the classroom with the aim of assisting students in learning the target language.

In cognitive theory, learning strategies are seen as cognitive skills and defined as conscious behaviour, actions taken to enhance one's learning through the storage and use of information about the target language (Weaver & Cohen, 1997). They are important in language learning because they are tools for active involvement, which is essential for communicative competence (Oxford, 1990).

Several classifications of language learning strategies have been published. The three most well-known taxonomies, Rubin (in Weaver & Cohen, 1997), O'Malley and Chamot (1994), and Oxford (1990) share many strategies. According to Oxford (1990), strategies can be classified into two major classes – direct and indirect. Direct strategies deal directly with the language (e.g. memory strategies such as creating mental linkages, cognitive strategies such as classifying, and compensatory strategies such as circumlocution). Indirect strategies deal with general management of learning. In this second class, we find metacognitive, social and affective strategies. Metacognitive strategies are used by learners to regulate their cognitive processes, for example, planning how to accomplish a task, self-monitoring comprehension and production, and self-evaluating how well a task has been accomplished. Social strategies are actions that learners take to interact with other learners, the teacher or native speakers, for instance, asking questions for clarification and cooperating. Affective strategies help the learner regulate emotional factors, for example, encouraging oneself through positive self-talk and reducing anxiety with relaxation techniques.

Research reveals that learning strategies influence the degree of proficiency in a second or foreign language. In fact, researchers have found that the use of appropriate strategies typifies good language learners (Oxford, 1990; Weaver & Cohen, 1997; Green & Oxford, 1995). In spite of the support that the strategy movement has received, the emphasis has primarily been on the teaching process. More recently, however, language teaching has been expanded to include both the teaching and the learning sides of instruction. As the field has become more learner-focused, there has also been an emphasis on helping students become less dependent on the teacher. According to Cohen (1998), the philosophy of foreign language teaching has changed to one which is more interactive and less teacher-centered. Inherent in this shift in focus is a change in the responsibilities of both teachers and students. No longer does the teacher act as the source of instruction. Instead, learners themselves are sharing the responsibility and, in so doing, they are becoming more autonomous (Benson, 2001). Learner autonomy has been defined as "the capacity to control one's own learning" (Benson, 2001, p. 291) and as "a process that enables learners to recognise and assess their own needs, to choose and apply their own learning strategies or styles eventually leading to the effective management of learning" (Peñaflorida, 2002, p. 346). In fact, successful mastery of a foreign language depends to a great extent on learners' autonomous ability to take initiative and make progress beyond the classroom and the teacher (Brown, 2007).

Research review

The relationship of language learning strategies to success in a second or foreign language has been the focus of a growing body of research over the past decades. In general, studies have shown that, by

using strategies, students can become less dependent on the teacher because they have tools to self-direct their learning (Oxford, 1990).

Social/affective strategies

Social/affective strategies are very important in foreign language learning because using a language implies cooperation. Students learning specific language skills can benefit from practising in cooperative language settings and getting feedback from other students on their efforts to communicate.

Feedback on writing is essential to help students consider reviewing and rewriting as integral parts of the process. If there is effective feedback, it is possible to observe “improvement in students’ writing, in their attitudes towards writing and in their language acquisition” (Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990). Increasingly, researchers are gaining knowledge of peer feedback on writing. Over the last twenty years, there has been a proliferation of studies on peer feedback in L2 writing. Research has examined the nature of the comments made, the effects of peer response on students’ writing, and students’ attitudes towards it. Three generalisations about the content of peer feedback, its effects on revision, and students’ reactions to it emerge from these studies (Ferris, 2003).

First, several researchers have investigated the nature of the feedback students give about their peers’ writing. For example, Ferris (2003) discusses various studies that have looked at the aspects of texts students focus on (e.g. language, content, and organisation), and have found that peer feedback is a complex process affected by a variety of factors, and that certain feedback types appear to benefit students. One factor highlighted in these studies is the importance of training students in peer feedback, which results in higher quality feedback and more revisions related to meaning as opposed to surface problems. Second, studies of the effects of peer feedback have focused on students’ use of their peers’ comments when they revise and the sorts of revisions learners make after receiving peer feedback (Ferris, 2003). Because some of these studies have suggested that students use peer suggestions in their revision, peer feedback may be considered appropriate for EFL writers. Third, in general, researchers have discovered that students value peer feedback (Ferris, 2003). These investigations reveal that peer feedback promotes collaboration, develops a sense of audience and improves motivation. These advantages of peer feedback stem from the fact that writing is a social process. As a result, collaborative peer review helps learners respond to each other’s work and create an authentic social context for interaction. Students feel motivated to participate actively in the writing process since they get responses from real readers in a nonthreatening situation. In this way, they develop the skills needed to revise their own writing autonomously.

The studies carried out to date reveal that the success of peer feedback is dependent on student variables, on the role of the teacher and on the classroom context. Overall, the strongest conclusion which can be drawn from current research is that peer feedback varies in its effectiveness depending on the extent to which students are trained to provide it. Although many studies indicate mixed results, researchers have concluded that, under certain conditions, it can be beneficial for L2 writers (Ferris, 2003; Hyland, 2003; Nelson & Carson, 2003). The scarcity of studies of peer feedback on EFL writing reveals the need for more empirical research.

Metacognitive strategies

Metacognition has been of interest to language researchers since the mid-1970s as it enables learners to become aware of what they learn and review their progress (Brown in Wong Mei Ha & Storey, 2006). In fact, Hartman (in Wong Mei Ha & Storey, 2006) postulates that metacognition can make or break student academic success.

Metacognitive strategies go beyond cognitive processes and help learners coordinate their learning. They include three strategy sets (Oxford, 1990): centering learning (e.g., overviewing and linking with already known material), arranging and planning learning (e.g., setting goals and identifying the purpose of a task) and evaluating learning (e.g., self-monitoring and self-evaluating). Their role is to oversee the learning process by enabling learners to think ahead of the task, plan for some action to tackle it, and assess how well they have done it.

Since the 1990s self-reflection has been considered a meaningful process in learning. The methodology of assessing learning has shifted from the teacher to the student. In fact, students' self-monitoring of their progress has become an essential element to raise language learners' awareness and promote their autonomy. The usefulness of self-assessment as a tool for assisting learners is widely accepted by researchers (Kato, 2009). Indeed, Moritz (in Kato, 2009) regards self-assessment as a logical component of learner-centered and self-directed foreign language learning programmes. Similarly, Todd (in Kato, 2009) refers to self-assessment as a prerequisite for a self-directed learner. Likewise, Yang (in Kato, 2009) reports that self-assessment in ESL classes is helpful in the promotion of learner autonomy.

When it comes to metacognition and the writing skill, evaluating is essential. Nevertheless, even if research has explored the criteria teachers use to evaluate foreign language writing, little attention has been paid to the factors that students value when assessing their own writing (Edstrom, 2006). Students' perspectives, however, are an important source of information for teachers and should play a central role in shaping the teaching and learning processes. In fact, a review of writing research found that teacher feedback was most effective if it was focused on student self-assessment (Hillocks in Cohen & Cavalcanti, 1990).

A study by Xiang (2004) investigated the use of self-assessment in Chinese students' writing and revealed that they can be trained to use it, that it is effective to improve the organisation of their compositions, and it is especially helpful to high-proficiency learners. Along similar lines, Kasper (in Wong Mei Ha & Storey, 2006) incorporated self-reflection into ESL writing and found it useful in giving learners control over their writing as they engage in goal-directed behaviour and increase their writing competence. Wong Mei Ha and Storey (2006) studied the relationship between metacognition and the performance in writing of a group of ESL learners in a university writing course who were put in self-editing groups and wrote reflective journals. The findings suggested that, as a result of metacognitive strategy training, both awareness of and ability in writing were enhanced. These authors concluded that, when students self-monitor their writing, they take control of their own learning and improve their skills.

Despite the importance of metacognitive strategies, Lam (2009) argues that the number of studies in the ESL context remains small. Besides, there are studies which show that some learners use these strategies sporadically. In fact, studies of second and foreign language learning reported by

Oxford (1990) have revealed that students use crucial metacognitive strategies, such as self-monitoring, less often than cognitive ones and are limited in their range of such strategies. This brief review of studies indicates the paucity of work on the impact of metacognitive strategy instruction on writing and provides a good justification for more research in the area.

The current study

The following social/affective and metacognitive strategies from Oxford's (1990) *Taxonomy of Language Learning Strategies* and O'Malley and Chamot's (1994) *Taxonomy of Learning Strategies in the Classroom* were selected for instruction: cooperation through peer feedback (peers coaching each other to get feedback on writing), and self-monitoring (checking one's written production while it is taking place by identifying errors and trying to eliminate them).

Materials and methods

The context of this study was the School of Languages, National University of Córdoba. The sample consisted of 40 students belonging to two intact classes enrolled in English Language IV, an advanced course belonging to the fourth year of five-year English Language Teaching, Translation Studies and/or Licentiate programmes. Two EFL teachers that received special training in how to conduct strategies-based instruction also participated in this study.

A multi-method approach to assessing the effects of strategy instruction was used. The following strategy assessment tools were employed: (a) writing tasks to measure changes in observable strategy use, (b) written surveys to assess students' self-perceptions of their use of peer feedback and self-monitoring, and (c) self-observation strategy checklists to help students reflect on the strategies used after the writing tasks.

The strategy assessment tools were administered to the group of students at the beginning and at the end of the first term. The aim was to determine if there were changes in their observable strategy use and self-perceptions after they received strategies-based instruction.

The group followed the *English Language IV* course syllabus and also received social/affective and metacognitive strategy instruction in online peer feedback and self-monitoring for three months. The instructional approach adopted was explicit strategy instruction. The research consisted of the two major components suggested by Weaver and Cohen (1996):

Strategy training: The first month of the course was devoted to raising students' awareness of the relevance of using social/affective and metacognitive strategies for the writing skill. Students were taught how, when and why the strategies chosen could be used. The teacher described, modelled and provided examples of the strategies. Students were encouraged to make annotations on the margins of their writing tasks identifying strengths and weaknesses in order to self-monitor their production and give feedback on that of their peers.

Strategy integration: After the first month of strategy training, the strategies were integrated into writing tasks related to the course content to provide for contextualised strategy practice. For the remaining two months, strategy integration activities helped students put the strategies into practice.

The writing tasks in the pre- and post-test were analysed to assess the effects of strategy instruction by measuring changes in observable strategy use in students' essays. The annotations

made by the subjects while giving peer feedback and self-monitoring were classified into three categories: content, organisation and language. This information was used to determine differences in the use of the strategies between the pre- and post-test.

Data obtained from the written surveys and self-assessment checklists administered before and after strategy training were compared to determine if there was an increase in the students' use of social/affective and metacognitive strategies for the writing skill according to their self-perceptions. Students' self-ratings of the frequency of their use and the usefulness of the strategies were transformed into quantitative data. The open-ended questions in the less structured sections of these tools provided qualitative data analysed through content analysis procedures and summarised to establish patterns of strategy use reported by the students before and after strategy training.

These data were triangulated to determine whether changes in students' observable strategy use in the post-test writing task were also reflected in changes in their self-perceptions (revealed in the written surveys and self-observation checklists) after social/affective and metacognitive strategy instruction.

Results

The comparison of observable strategy use in the pre- and post-test reveals that most of the students' productions in the post-test evidenced greater strategy use and improvements in context, overall organisation and language. These findings seem to indicate that social/affective strategies such as peer feedback and self-monitoring are conducive to language learning, especially to greater learner autonomy, which, as research suggests, contributes to improved performance in the editing stages of the writing process (Peñaflorida, 2002).

The results obtained from the analysis of the written survey show that 70% of the students believed that online peer feedback *always* helps them to revise and rewrite their essays, 25% considered that peer feedback is *almost always* helpful and 5% said that it is only *sometimes* useful. For instance, a student pointed out: "it is easier to see other people's mistakes than my own. Giving feedback helped me to become aware of the mistakes I make in my own writing." Nonetheless, these findings also revealed that, sometimes, students feel they cannot fully rely on their classmates' comments because they do not consider them as an authority to assess their writing or because the corrections made by their classmates do not coincide with those made by the instructor. Despite this, most students said that receiving feedback from a classmate was useful since they could revise their essays considering different perspectives instead of only their own.

The self-observation strategy checklist was used to get students to reflect on the type of comments made by their peers and on their own application of these comments and corrections in the process of rewriting their essays. The checklist included questions to help students focus on their peers' comments related to the content and organisation of the essay and to specific aspects of language use such as lexis, syntax, punctuation, register and style. The results show that, overall, most students (83%) considered that their peers' comments were *very useful* when revising and rewriting their essays. In relation to content and organisation, almost all of the participants seemed to value their classmates' comments and acknowledged that they used their peers' suggestions in the revision and editing stages. Some students referred to the structure of argumentation and many of them said

that peer feedback helped them to become aware of ineffective refutation techniques and unclear development of ideas. One of the participants also said that his classmate's comment regarding wordiness helped him to rewrite his composition more effectively. Furthermore, some of the participants pointed out that, as a result of receiving peer feedback, they made adjustments to the title of the essay, and some of the evidence to support their claims.

As regards language, most participants said that their peers made corrections that helped them to improve their essays. For instance, they provided feedback related to lexis (i.e., collocations and prepositions). All of the participants said that they received corrections related to syntax and that they could use most of them to rewrite their essays. For example, the students' corrections almost always addressed problems with agreement, word order, verb form, modals, and pronoun reference. Only a few students mentioned issues related to punctuation and said that they do not always consider this type of feedback as relevant and, therefore, they do not take these corrections into account when revising their compositions. Finally, as regards register and style, the data showed that, in general, students do not provide feedback on these issues and, when they do so, their comments are not always taken into account by their peers.

The findings of this study suggest that social/affective and metacognitive strategy training encourages learners to take control of their learning processes by evaluating their own and their peers' writing performance, as the students' observable strategy use and self-perceptions seem to suggest. Therefore, it can be said that this learner-centered approach to teaching EFL academic writing may contribute to greater learner autonomy, which may eventually lead to "the effective management of learning" as Peñaflorida (2002) holds. Even if it is often assumed that students can become autonomous on their own without any kind of scaffolding on the part of the teacher, this is not always the case. As a result, encouraging learners to use social/affective and metacognitive learning strategies may contribute towards fostering their autonomy.

Conclusion

Social/affective and metacognitive strategy instruction had positive effects on the writing skill as revealed in changes in students' observable strategy use in writing task performance and in their self-perceptions. Finding out the aspects students notice as they self-monitor their writing and give peer feedback and the value they attribute to those aspects has potential as a pedagogical tool since teachers can develop an informed basis to individualise instruction and tailor a course to students' needs. Besides, the use of these strategies provides opportunities for empowering students to develop autonomous writing skills.

As regards the limitations of this study, although the participants can be considered representative of the population under analysis, the results may not be generalisable to a population outside this context. Therefore, the findings should be viewed as hypotheses to test with other groups of students. Moreover, the value of this work must be confirmed by larger studies that trace students' strategy use over a longer period of time.

The outcome of this initial project could be used to outline more comprehensive research aimed at assessing whether students' use of social/affective and metacognitive strategies in writing tasks leads to higher scores in such tasks. Further studies could also focus on strategy transfer, on

variation in strategy use by proficiency level, and on the new roles of teachers and students when involved in strategies-based instruction. The potential of providing training in a wider range of strategies aimed at enhancing the writing skill and promoting learner autonomy should be explored. We expect that a strategies-based approach to teaching, namely, a learner-focused method of instruction that emphasises both the what and the how of learning, will eventually become the norm in the teaching of English as a foreign language.

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12

Teacher education in the digital literacy era

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Introduction

The impact that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has on both our personal and professional lives has a bearing on education that cannot be underestimated. Technology is becoming increasingly important in our society and culture, and ubiquitous learning --learning outside the classroom context (Burbules, 2000)-- may help our learners become more motivated and autonomous.

Political decisions around the design and the implementation of programmes related to the incorporation and use of new technological devices in the teaching context, such as “Conectar Igualdad” in Argentina, based on the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) programme, contribute to the development of new conditions for teaching and learning that may help bridge the digital gap in educational opportunities among different groups in our society (Dussel, 2011).

However, a critical view of this process should enquire whether teachers and students have developed the necessary social, cultural and technological competencies needed to make the most of this change. According to Hockly (2012), computers at school are frequently used as word processors or online libraries, without focusing on the advantages for education of a new online participatory culture. The development of digital literacies is based on traditional literacy, research skills and critical analysis skills, but goes further, from a focus on individual expression to one of community involvement. Sancho Gil (2008) suggests that we should change the perspective as regards the concept of technologies from tools necessary to access information and communication, to the idea of technologies that may be used as useful resources to enhance learning and to construct knowledge in a cooperative way. Thus, the use of technology in higher education is of paramount importance for future teachers and should be included in any teaching programme (Burbules, 2000; Martin, 2008).

The education of future English teachers, in particular, should contemplate the new characteristics and conditions in which students access and process information. These conditions are enhanced by the possibilities offered by technology. The constant evolution of technology demands teachers' continuous professional development in order to update their technological skills and revise the pedagogical implications of their use. The use of ever-changing technological tools implies new contexts for learning, different types of interaction --from individual-to-individual to cooperative and

collaborative ones--, new ways of problem resolution, and new roles for teachers and learners. Providing future English teachers with digital education may help them make a fruitful use of ICT at the practicum level, and may prepare them for their future professional development.

Blended-learning (Sharma & Barrett, 2007) offers the possibility of combining face-to-face classes with extra technological resources which enable teachers to enrich their courses with the addition of virtual learning environments. In this paper, we will show how the use of Web 2.0 applications such as blogs in Practice II, Didactics of ELT, and the implementation of the Moodle Platform in Practice III, Practicum at High School level, contributed to the student teachers' motivation and helped develop strategies for teaching and learning with ICT.

The use of edublogs

The need to incorporate technology into the course Practice II: Didactics of ELT and Practicum at Primary School Level, at UNLPam, led us to experiment with different aspects of technology such as the use of CD-ROMs, the Internet, Web 2.0 tools and Interactive Whiteboards in the language classroom. However, we wanted to offer other resources that could be used to complement the face-to-face classes, so we implemented an edublog in the year 2009 (<http://www.practicaeducativaunlpam.blogspot.com.ar/>) with the aim of including a parallel self-study component.

Although blogs are a well-known resource for teachers it is necessary to describe their characteristics. The name *blog* is a shortened form of *Weblog*. According to Sharma and Barrett "blogs are defined mostly as online diaries" (2007, p.19). They consist of an easily created, easily updateable Website in which an author (or authors) publishes written postings, which can include pictures and sometimes audio and video clips arranged in chronological order and automatically archived. Among them, edublogs are used for educational purposes. Dudeney and Hockly (2007) state that blogs can be set up and used by a teacher (a tutor blog), by individual learners (student blog) or by a class (a class blog). Any of these are highly motivating for students, as they offer excellent opportunities to read and write for authentic purposes and to interact in discussions through comments posted for each entry. Students can be engaged in ongoing conversations about their ideas and thoughts because blogs are collaborative spaces and powerful tools to enable scaffolded learning or mentoring to occur (Dudeney & Hockly, 2007).

In our blog student teachers are informed of class requirements and teachers post entries that include handouts, notices, homework assignments. Teachers can also archive course materials and resources (such as PowerPoint presentations used in class, pdf or Word files, extra links, and videos) to prompt discussion and supplement the activities done in the classroom.

We carried out some research about the use of the blog by our students following the hypothesis that it could enhance students' participation (Braun & Monserrat, 2011). We surveyed students to assess the impact of the blog on their learning and to evaluate its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool. Surveys were conducted online (www.surveymonkey.com) in late 2010. The information collected included data on the allocation of resources for students (PCs, notebooks and

Internet access --from home, libraries or Internet cafés), the use of social networks, the students' knowledge about Web 2.0 and an evaluation of our blog as a teaching tool. Survey results indicated that all the students felt from comfortable to very comfortable using computers and that all of them were able to access the Internet with high frequency as a hundred per cent had home Internet access. While they all made use of social networks, 80 percent did not know about other uses of Web 2.0. Their evaluations of the blog were highly positive and criticism was provided in a constructive way.

The use of Web 2.0 tools

Apart from the use of the blog, student teachers are taught about several other Web 2.0 tools with the aim of empowering them to produce their own digital materials. They learn about how to work with images and capture them, how to use Paint, how to make effective use of PowerPoint presentations and how to create interactive games with this programme. They make use of CmapTools, and they produce their own videos with Movie Maker. In Practice II, they also learn how to design Webquests and make use of podcasts. As from this year we will carry out a project to design e-books for digital short story telling with young learners. Some of these resources created by the student teachers are uploaded to the blog to be shared and used during their practicum.

On the whole, we may assume that the blog has become an interactive and collaborative space and the practice provided in the use of other Web 2.0 tools is having an impact on their practicum, where trainees also help mentor teachers to incorporate ICT tools at school.

Moodle Platform use

Since 2010, the use of Moodle Platform (<http://www.educavirtual.humgp.unlpam.edu.ar>) has been implemented in the Practice III course, at UNLPam, as a blended-learning component. Through this platform, teachers offer student teachers the possibility to access a website where they can continue the debate and reflection upon the topics dealt with in class. The platform provides the teacher educators the possibility to upload materials and resources the student teachers may find useful, such as PowerPoint presentations used in class, pdf and Word files about articles and official documents, and links and videos to watch and discuss. Moreover, the platform includes a set of tools which are meant to be used in more interactive ways.

One of these tools is the forum, which can facilitate and enrich conceptualization processes by allowing the interaction among all participants, i.e., teacher educators, student teachers and classmates. The student teachers' motivation seems to be enhanced as evidenced by their active participation in the forums available, where they discuss the theory studied, carry out the analysis of situations and reflect upon their instances of class observation and practice. The forums are also useful because they allow student teachers to gain autonomy as they can manage their own time. On some occasions, however, difficulties as regards Internet connectivity prevented some student teachers from participating in the forums, though such obstacles were sorted out when a multimedia room was set up at our college in 2011.

One more tool used from the Moodle Platform is the wiki. "A wiki is a public website, or public web page, started by one person, but which subsequent visitors can add to, delete or change as they

wish” (Dudeny & Hockly, 2007, p. 93). As the process of building a wiki is not linear, the productions constantly change and evolve with each participant’s contribution. Student teachers usually work on wikis, following assignments which also enhance collaborative work through instances of negotiation of meaning. The fact that a wiki is a collaborative tool can help develop bonds between members of the class and create community spirit. The premise here is that the learners “can learn from each other, and learn through their interactions with other group members” (Sharma & Barrett, 2007, p. 123). This tool helps the student teachers gain experience in the collaborative learning process and provides them with strategies to continue their own professional development in the future.

Conclusion

The employment of technology in the contexts described above aims at empowering future English teachers so that they can make use of online tools for professional as well as pedagogical purposes. At the end of each practicum, the student teachers were surveyed to assess the implementation of the blog, the Moodle platform and other Web 2.0 tools used in both subjects. Results have been highly positive for both courses. As we know, technology changes and develops quickly, and future teachers and learners will be using technologies that do not exist today (Sharma & Barrett, 2007). Still, it is our role as teacher educators to provide them with tools to become autonomous ELT professionals, able to adapt to changing contexts.

The incorporation of blended learning through blogs and the Moodle platform changes student roles from passive consumers of information to *prosumers* or proactive agents. These tools can also be used to produce a sense of community of practice, where novice teachers do not merely copy experts’ techniques, but rather through dialogic mediation “they transform what the experts offer them as they appropriate it” (Johnson 2009, p.40).

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13

When academic literacy is taken for granted

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Introduction

In higher education, students' autonomy is very much related to their ability to read academic texts since academic development is mainly based on reading materials of different kinds and with different purposes. Undoubtedly, the reading of disciplinary texts is a central activity in the process of becoming a professional.

Little (2007) claims that "In formal educational contexts, learner autonomy entails reflective involvement in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating learning." and in relation to language learners in particular, he adds that [...] in formal language learning, the scope of learner autonomy is always constrained by what the learner can do in the target language; in other words, the scope of our autonomy as language learners is partly a function of the scope of our autonomy as target language users" (Little, 2007, p. 2)

From this perspective, this paper delves into the challenge faced by students who enter higher education in order to get a degree as English language teachers or translators, and, therefore, become users of English in the way it is used in ELT (English Language Teaching) academic circles. What they are expected to do in the target language is mainly to read and write following the rules of a genre that is unknown to them. We claim that academic reading ability cannot be taken for granted, and that higher education institutions should take responsibility for students' reading competence.

The research project "La lectura de textos disciplinares en la formación de los profesores de inglés" (Reading comprehension of disciplinary texts in the English Teacher Education Programme) explores the academic reading abilities of students of the English Teacher Education Programme at Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata. The aims of the project are:

- to study the development of the students' reading comprehension of disciplinary materials,
- to explore the way in which teachers deal with disciplinary materials,
- to promote reflection among teachers upon the reading of disciplinary materials

This paper relates to the last objective since its aim is to share our experiences and views on the topic and encourage reflection upon the fact that academic literacy is many times taken for granted. We will also consider the implications that this has for the development of higher education students.

Academic Literacy

The students' lack of suitable reading abilities has been a longstanding concern in higher education circles in Argentina. Carlino (2003) argues that when a student starts university he/she needs, among other things, to modify his/her identity as thinker and analyzer of texts and adapt his/her nature as a reader to become a member of a new discourse community. In this light, literacy is understood as a continuum that goes from infancy to adulthood, and not as a static ability that is acquired once and forever and that helps to understand any type of text in any context. It is argued here that there are many different ways of reading and understanding, ways that are defined by specific reading cultures and that are different from the ways students used to read before entering university.

It is usually assumed that the students who start higher education should be able to read any type of text. However, this assumption ignores the fact that academic reading practices are complex and related to the specific forms that each discipline has developed to communicate knowledge. The conventions that govern the production of a research paper in the field of ELT are not the same as those that govern the production of a text in the field of economics or medicine. Even within the field of ELT, the papers or texts that students read for their Literature lessons are quite different from the ones they read for their Pedagogy lessons, for example in terms of discourse organization, choice of lexis and syntax, length and overall presentation, etc.

Also, what higher education students are expected to do as academic readers and users of information differs substantially from what they most commonly did during their secondary education. At university, students are asked, for instance, to identify authors' stances or proposals and compare them to those of other authors, to establish links with other texts on the topic, to make complex inferences and to use their understandings to construct and support their own perspective on the topics. This way of reading assumes that students can go beyond the texts and the manipulation of information, in order to develop a personal view. In fact, higher education students are expected to develop this reading ability not just to be successful in their studies but also as a tool for their future professional careers.

It is not difficult to realize that developing this kind of reading competence is even more difficult for those students who enter the ELT academic world with a limited knowledge of the target language, and want to become, for example, teachers or translators. Their challenge is not just to understand the new reality of higher education institutions (new regulations, new expectations, new demands, etc.), but also to develop a new relationship with the language they are still trying to learn, i.e. English. Because the texts students are expected to read and produce represent a genre that students are not familiar with, the possibility of developing autonomous attitudes towards their learning is hindered.

Autonomy is defined by Benson (2001) as the capacity to take control over one's own learning. In his definition the author covers three interdependent aspects of the nature of autonomy: control

over learning management, control over cognitive processes, and control over learning content. Control over learning management refers to the decisions concerning all aspects of learning, such as determining objectives, defining the contents and progressions, selecting methods and techniques and monitoring and evaluating what has been acquired. Control over cognitive processes is the psychological dimension of autonomy which refers to the kind of relation to the process and the content of learning. The last dimension, control over learning content, involves control over the learning situations and the interactions with others that the learner needs to establish in the process. Considering the central role of reading in higher education, we believe that in order to take control over these three dimensions students need to understand first the writing culture intrinsic to their field of study.

We agree with Carlino (2003) when she states that the specific values and norms of academic communities are not usually taught. The implicit characteristics of university reading practices and the tacit nature of the knowledge referred to in texts, constitute an obstacle for students who lack the necessary tools to cope with the challenge.

An academic text is produced in the framework of a scientific activity, with the aim of producing or transmitting knowledge. The writer uses the appropriate language for the targeted audience, and manages to establish a dialogue with the reader, in the belief that they share the same code. The fact that the targeted academic audience shares basic ontological and gnoseological principles implies that what is referred to in texts need not to be specified and explained.

In Swales' words, an academic text is "a recognizable communicative event characterized by a set of communicative purpose(s) identified and mutually understood by the members of the professional or academic community in which it regularly occurs. Most often it is highly structured and conventionalized with constraints on allowable contributions in terms of their intent, positioning, form and functional value. These constraints, however, are often exploited by the expert members of the discourse community to achieve private intentions within the framework of socially recognized purpose(s)." (Swales, in Bhatia 1993, p.13)

The texts students read at university are scientific texts which have not been written for them but for people who are acquainted with the main lines of thought and discussion within the discipline. They are texts that assume as known what students do not know.

Is academic literacy part of our teaching agenda at university?

No, it is not. Although teachers at university or tertiary level usually acknowledge their students' difficulties in reading comprehension, they claim it is not their responsibility to teach students how to read at this level. Academic literacy is taken for granted, in the same way autonomy is taken for granted. Teachers seem to believe that in higher education students should be autonomous enough to cope with their problems and solve them on their own. However, there are other ways of looking at this issue.

Carlino (2011) defines the development of academic literacy as the attempt to incorporate students to the culture of each field of study, as the actions that teachers should put into practice to prepare students to be able to read, write, study, understand, argue, debate, etc. according to the

specific ways of each discipline. It is clear, then, that teachers have a relevant role to play in this process.

There are several ways in which academic literacy can be achieved. First, teachers can reflect upon the reading and writing practices of their own disciplines in order to consider how to disclose them to their students.

Also, evaluating one's own teaching practices as regards reading may be useful. Here follows a set of questions meant to help teachers reflect on these practices:

- Do we help our students to become the protagonists of the act of reading for learning?
- Do we encourage discussions prior to reading in which the students' background knowledge on the topics of the texts is shared and analyzed so as to aid comprehension of references to unknown issues?
- Do we explain to the students what is expected of them as regards how to read in order to solve the tasks assigned? Do we explain, for instance, how to identify the author's position or the debate presented in the text?
- Do we anticipate the problems students may have with each text we give them and provide suitable tasks to ease students' reading? Do we help students use the right strategies according to the texts they read?
- Do we foster critical reading by encouraging the students to challenge the content of the texts and to contrast the writer's position on the topic with other proposals? Do we allow students to air their views about the content of the texts to help them build a personal point of view?
- Do students have access to the original sources of the texts (books or journals) or do they only read photocopies of texts selected by the teacher? Do they have the chance to look at the tables of content, the rest of the chapters or articles of the books or journals, the introductions, or other parts of the original sources? How are they guided to contextualize the texts and handle the characteristics of different types of sources?

Final reflections

Reading and writing can be excellent ways of learning about a field of knowledge, but they can also be great obstacles to approach and access scientific content. Higher education teachers can do a lot from their specific courses to help students cope with this challenge and succeed in their studies.

Academic literacy is intrinsic to each discipline and implies quite a long formative process that cannot be approached from only one course. For students to become autonomous learners within a culture that is new to them, they need to be taught how knowledge is communicated among the members of their new discourse community. It is the responsibility of all higher education teachers to integrate the reading and writing practices of their discipline to the contents to be taught.

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14**Interactive narratives as a pedagogical means to develop motivation, autonomy, and sociocultural comprehension****Myriam Arrabal****Ana Irene Atienza****Silvia Castro****Graciela I. Manzur**

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Introduction

Narrative discourse, with its expressive and exploratory nature, is an essential element of learning since it provides the framework through which human beings interpret reality and give meaning to their experience of temporality and personal activities. In so doing, narratives allow for a semiotic, anthropological and sociological intelligibility. With the advent and rapid development of ICT, interactive narratives --i.e. narrative discourse mediated by hypertextual and multimedia technologies-- have strongly influenced individuals' meaning construction and negotiation.

As Castells (2001) states, the Web as a complex global space, reshapes social action, and by extension, it constructs learning experiences and pedagogical practices from a myriad of voices and views. In cyberspace the culture of sharing is strengthened, thus, giving coherence to social, cultural and educational practices and encouraging participants to meet in affinity spaces. According to Gee (2005), affinity spaces are relevant because they shape individuals' visions of learning, affiliation and identity. In this respect, we maintain that affinity spaces in educational contexts can serve the purpose of providing the grounds for the exploration and analysis of individual learners' identity, autonomy and motivation, developed in a complex system of interrelations.

Scholars such as Little (1990), van Lier (1996) and Prince (2011) state that autonomy implies not only the ability to work individually but also to benefit from the social dimension of learning through interaction and collaboration. In regard to motivation, Ushioda's (2009) "person-in-context relational view" supports the exploration of motivation as actively shaped by self-reflective individual learners with a unique and contextually rooted nature.

The nature and interdependence of these features are redefined in teaching and learning practices that are technologically mediated. Thus, narrative discourse constructed through interactive, multimodal and hypertextual tools can help us gain insights into how interactive narratives can foster learners' autonomy and motivation. We believe that language teachers should reflect upon and exploit the potential of interactive narratives in education, particularly their power to provide opportunities

for independent learning as well as to shape and interpret reality in multiple ways. For this reason, we contend pedagogical practices can be enriched if educators learn from the experience of (re)constructing and deconstructing their own and others' narratives. Interactive narratives, based on hypertextuality and hypermedia, support the epistemological view that knowledge is provisional and socially constructed, and as such, it should be ethically used. To this end, we emphasise the need to develop an academic community capable of participating critically and taking decisions in new pedagogical scenarios that are permeated by the new technologies. This community should be able to construct models that help educators and learners interpret and respond to the changes that the advent of ICT has produced in communication, intersubjectivity, reality construction and representation, as well as in the organisation and exchange of knowledge.

Exploring autonomy and motivation in pedagogical practices

Autonomy and motivation have been approached and researched from different theory and practice perspectives, with the aim of establishing their ontological and epistemological principles and of explaining their interdependence. Since pedagogical practices involve educators and learners, research on autonomy and motivation concerns both. In addition, the emergence of new modes of learning (such as online learning, blended learning, ubiquitous learning, etc.), promoted by the development of new technologies, requires teachers to reflect on learners' role as well as on their own. Thus, with reference to autonomy, not only learners' autonomy but also teachers' autonomy should be revisited in the light of these changes.

Whether teacher autonomy and learner autonomy are bound together has not been agreed on. Smith and Erdogan (2008) argue for the need to approach teacher autonomy self-critically in order to clarify our values and goals as educators and research into the fulfilment of these goals. We adhere to these scholars' position that teacher autonomy should be analysed in connection with learner autonomy since awareness of the meaning and implications of teacher autonomy will contribute to a broader understanding of both teaching and learning processes in new pedagogical environments.

In order to shed light on the definitions and implications of teacher autonomy in the domain of second language learning, Smith (2003) specifies its different dimensions in relation to professional action and to professional development as well as its connection with learner autonomy. Thus, he analyses teachers' capacity to self-direct their professional action and professional development, and teachers' freedom from control over professional action and from professional development.

Involvement in and reflection on a pedagogy for autonomy that focuses on these dimensions can be a constructive resource not only to develop "teacher(-learner) autonomy" but also to value learner autonomy and help learners benefit from it (Smith, 2003, p. 6). Research findings indicate that teachers' abilities to self-direct their teaching and learning foster motivation for engaging in continuous professional and personal growth. In addition, teachers' values, beliefs and viewpoints may enhance or hinder their learners' autonomy and motivation. Thus, along with the study on autonomy, it is necessary for educators to explore the tenets underlying motivation theory and practice.

According to Ushioda's theoretical perspective, motivation is "an organic process that emerges through the complex system of interrelations" (Ushioda, 2011, p. 13), and it should be approached from a relational view. This implies that motivation is contextually grounded and dynamically

constructed through individuals' meaning negotiation, sense of purpose and reflexivity. In order to explain her "person-in-context relational view" of motivation, Ushioda (2011) resorts to the autonomy theory and practice that regards learners as individuals with intellectual, social and affective traits, who are embedded in a given context. In light of these assumptions, pedagogical practices involving reflection and intersubjective exchanges, such as interactive narratives or ePortfolios, should promote language learning experiences that allow learners to develop and express their identities.

With the aim of exploring motivation in language learning practices, Ushioda (2011) suggests engaging learners in voicing their identities and worldviews through the target language. She thus bases her approach to motivation on Richards' (2006) identity characterisation, which distinguishes three aspects of identity: *situated identities*, that is, identities shaped by a specific context, such as teacher-learner identities in pedagogical practices; *discourse identities*, which allude to the discursive roles participants adopt in interactions that, in our opinion, can be face-to-face or virtually developed (e.g. listener, reader, speaker, writer, inquirer, challenger); and most importantly, *transportable identities*, which refer to individuals' qualities and features that are part of their personal lives and can be purposefully mentioned during the interaction (e.g. personal interests, family background or past experiences that a teacher may invoke during a lesson).

It is the concept of transportable identities that can be a reliable means to foster motivation in pedagogical experiences since, by definition, this aspect of identity bridges the different spheres of life (private, public, academic, professional and family life). Sharing their transportable identities, teachers can value not only the cognitive but also the sociocultural and affective dimensions of teaching and learning processes. In so doing, it is possible to appreciate the value of education as integral to individuals' lives. In addition, in accordance with Richards, Ushioda emphasises that invoking transportable identities in pedagogical practices entails teachers and learners' readiness to engage in the emotional, moral and intersubjective experience of revealing their selves to others. That is why she suggests applying an essential principle of the autonomy theory and practice: that of empowering participants to choose which facets of their identities they are willing to share.

In our view, the strength of Ushioda's (2011) language learning model of motivation lies in its "value-based and identity-oriented" rationale. The author contends that every individual that approaches motivation in relation to the notions of self and identity, in particular, with regard to desires and ambitions helps individuals develop certain dimensions of their identities --namely, the linguistic, cultural, personal or professional dimensions. For Bruner (2002), the self is an entity in constant construction and reconstruction with the aim of meeting the needs and expectations of the situation individuals find themselves in. Hence, pedagogical practices that encourage participants -- teachers and learners-- to be aware of and engage their present selves and transportable identities may enable them to project and construct their potential selves as language users, on the basis of their capacities and value system. In this way, educational experiences can contribute to people's growth.

The implications and significance of interactive narratives in pedagogical practices

Interactive narrative is discourse constructed through ICT, such as 2.0 Web tools, and specifically, through the use of hypertext and hypermedia, which allow for multiple interconnections and for knowledge integration as well as for individuals' active participation and collaboration in the social

construction of meaning. Digital narratives are created through non-linear associations of links or nodes that may reflect semantic, causal, spatial or temporal interrelations among different fragments of texts. These fragments are coherently integrated in a variety of formats (words, images, sound, video, etc), which influence interpretation.

Narrative discourse in general, and interactive narratives in particular, shape our construction of reality as well as the way we organise and communicate experience. In other words, we construct our personal, social and cultural identity through narratives, which enable us to understand ourselves through the others and share with them what we are and have become. This perspective emphasises the dialogical nature of language, conceived not only as a linguistic system but also as a system whose ontological, social and cultural values explain how individuals construct meaning of the world and of themselves in and through discourse in intersubjective exchanges (Meza Rueda, 2008, p. 38).

New technologies and the Internet allow for the development of virtual communities, based on common interests and personal affinities from which webs of human relations emerge. In this context, narratives of social and cultural artifacts and of our own identities are constructed through cyberspace. For this reason, pedagogical practices rooted in interactivity, multimodality and hypertextuality --enabled by ICT-- are intended to strengthen sociocultural comprehension, knowledge construction and meaning negotiation. These features enable individuals to make their own associations, to develop their own mental constructs as well as to experience and act in coherence with their emotional and identity needs.

The integration of different means of expression (textual, visual and audio resources along with static or animate images) and access to them through coherent links are beneficial for the exploration of new ways of meaning-making and of creation. Because of this, interactive narratives impact on our understanding of reading and writing. Both can be regarded as multimodal practices in which different semiotic resources are articulated into a meaningful whole to communicate multiple meanings. As interactive narratives are based on a dynamic, flexible, non-linear structure with varied semantic and symbolic representations, they can reflect the complex nature of reality, thereby, allowing individuals to understand discourse as a web of interrelated elements and meanings.

Therefore, hypertextuality is not only a technological innovation, but also a pedagogical resource since its value does not lie in the hypertext as a finished product but in the process of creating it. This implies a reflexive and exploratory task grounded in the ability to innovate in a specific semiotic environment, i.e., in the ability to construct intelligible meanings in a novel or unpredictable way. As Rueda Ortiz (2007) states, interactive narratives are thought to help individuals to construct, and (de)-reconstruct discourse through articulated hypermedial resources. They are oriented towards interconnection and knowledge integration and are not centered on authorship. In hypertextual environments, we are able to work in different spaces at the same time. In this scenario, teachers and learners can understand their identities as the sum of their distributed and situated presence, which offers the possibility to think about and transform the relationship with themselves as well as with others (Rueda Ortiz, 2007, pp. 312-313). Thus, in the elaboration of their digital narratives, teachers and learners can resort to their personal experiences and worldviews, which may lead them to raise awareness of their identity traits and to decide which of them they are willing to share with others. In

turn, they are also engaged in comprehension through meaning negotiation, intentionality and reflexivity, thereby, becoming cognitively and emotionally involved.

Hence, using interactive narratives to reflect about their professional action and development can encourage teachers to exploit the potential of discourse for alternative interpretations as well as to engage in collaborative processes of communication. As reflective agents, teachers can get involved in the co-construction of discourse that is constantly written, interpreted and transformed. This reflexivity enables educators to retrospectively analyse their own and others' pedagogical practices from the social, cultural and interpersonal dimensions. In so doing, teachers can increase their autonomy, which is understood as the ability to work individually and also to benefit from the social dimension of learning through interaction and collaboration

In order to be recognised by others, it is essential to create our own narratives since narration expresses what we have become as individuals and as social agents. From a sociocultural perspective, the possibility of being taken into account and of participating in decisions that concern us depends on the ability of our narratives to reveal the tension between what we are and what we aspire to be (Martín-Barbero, 2010, p.143). Narrative discourse is then a powerful resource for a pedagogy of autonomy and of motivation, a pedagogy that pursues teachers' reflexivity and willingness to engage in meaningful teaching and learning experiences with their preferred transportable identities. Thus, we maintain that educators should explore the potentialities of interactive narratives in education, particularly their power to provide opportunities for independent learning as well as to shape and interpret reality in myriad ways.

Conclusions

Since narratives serve the purpose of comprehending our own and other people's actions, narrative discourse in general, and interactive narrative in particular, are fundamental to a deeper understanding of teaching and learning experiences. Through interactive narratives individuals can make sense of reality, thereby, developing their cognitive as well as their socio-affective and empathic abilities.

Intersubjective relations, knowledge construction and sociocultural comprehension have been transformed with the advent and rapid development of ICT. Hence, we believe teachers should study the influence narratives may exert on learners' autonomy and motivation, both of which are essential to their intellectual and affective growth. In order to understand learner autonomy and motivation, teachers should engage in pedagogical experiences that enable them to exercise their freedom of choice and develop their capacity to self-direct their own teaching and professional development.

Throughout the paper it has been claimed that autonomy and motivation theories and practices are powerful means to improve teaching and learning processes. In this respect, knowledge of the pedagogy for autonomy proposed by Smith (2003) can help teachers regard professional action and professional development as dimensions of their autonomy, which are interrelated with learner autonomy. And with regard to motivation, Ushioda's "person-in-context relational" perspective encourages educators to focus on self-reflective agents --not on abstract models-- and on individuals' sense of self by conceiving motivation as a contextually grounded process that is identity-oriented and value-based.

Due to hypertextuality, interactive narratives can be used in synchronic and/or asynchronous interactive spaces, which allow for individual and collective participation in different environments. Thus, teachers can resort to interactive narratives to critically reflect about their teaching practices in interaction with others. This can help them develop their capacity to self-direct their teaching and professional development, and thus gain autonomy in their teaching experiences. In turn, taking ownership of their own teaching actions may increase their motivation as well as their understanding of the intersubjective dimension of autonomy and motivation.

Our aim has been to emphasise the relevance of constructing an academic community capable of developing pedagogical practices and adopting theoretical perspectives that are not only meaningful to learners but also coherent with their viewpoints and values. Thus, if education is to be regarded as a constructive social practice, teachers should be able to respond to those cultural and social needs that they judge to be beneficial for intellectual and empathic development, and to challenge those that are not.

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15**Variability in reading performance as related to students' attitudes and motivation after failing an ESP course****Susana B. Tuero¹****Viviana Innocentini²****Ana Bárbara Forte²****Claudia Bruno²****Amelia Martínez¹**¹ Facultad de Humanidades, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata² Facultad de Ciencias Agrarias, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata**Introduction**

It is well known that English has become the *lingua franca* used all over the world. This language plays a vital role in communicating across different spheres. In academic or scientific contexts, the usefulness of English goes far beyond being a mere tool for world-wide communication; it is through research articles in English that researchers can read about the latest scientific advances and have their own findings published. For this reason, ESP and EAP courses have become part of the university curricula in the last decades, being the development of reading skills the main focus of such courses.

Success in FL reading comprehension is not the direct result of understanding the linguistic code of the foreign language; it is determined by a combination of factors present in the learner's mind when interacting with the text. Among them, attitudes and motivation play an undeniable and decisive role in fostering or hindering comprehension (Grabe & Stoller, 2002; Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). Both students' attitudes towards the foreign language and their attitudes towards reading in the target language will determine whether students succeed or fail in comprehending a written piece of discourse in the FL.

Based on research findings by Wigfield and Guthrie (1995; 1997), Mori (2002) has stated that motivation to read in a foreign language is a multidimensional construct, and has identified its four main constituents: the intrinsic value of reading, the extrinsic value of reading, the importance of reading, and the efficacy in reading. Erten et al. (2010) have drawn upon such findings and further in an attempt to explain both motivation and attitudes through the theories of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985), Expectancy Value Theory (Rosenberg, 1956; Rotter, 1954; Wigfield, 1994), and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1989).

According to Petscher (2010), attitudes are major psychological constructs due to the vital role they play on the learners' motivation and their intention to read; they mediate between the students' beliefs and their reading practices. The more motivated the students are, the higher their FL reading performance should be. At Facultad de Ciencias Agrarias (UNMdP), a considerable number of students are only able to pass the compulsory ESP reading comprehension course after having taken it for a second or even third time. Not only these students' command of English but also their attitude towards the FL may affect their reading comprehension performance. We expect that those students who have failed the course may become less motivated. This might undermine students' attitude and, consequently, lead to a poorer performance. The objectives of this study were to assess whether there is an attitudinal difference between students who are taking the course for the first time and those who have previously failed it, and to determine whether a correlation exists between such variability and students' performance in the ESP course.

Materials and Methods

Subjects

This study was carried out with university students taking the sixteen-week course Nivel de Idioma Inglés at the Facultad de Ciencias Agrarias (UNMdP) during the first term in 2012. Out of the total number of 65 subjects, 29 were taking the course for the first time (G1), whereas the remaining 36 had previously failed the course and were taking it for the second time (G2). Although all the learners agreed to participate in this study, only the data provided by 54 of them were considered for the analysis since the remaining 11 students either dropped the course or were absent at the moment of data collection.

Instruments

Three instruments were used for data collection in this study: a demographic questionnaire, a questionnaire based on The Foreign Language Reading Attitudes and Motivations Scale (FLRAMS) developed by Erten et al. (2010) and a set of reading comprehension tasks (Appendix 1).

Procedures

Data were collected in two phases. At each stage, students were informed about the nature of the study and the importance of their participation. They were told that their responses would not be published or have any impact on their final grade in the course. During the first phase, both the demographic questionnaire and the FLRAMS were administered in order to determine the learners' command of the FL before taking the ESP course and the students' attitudes towards the FL and the reading of field-specific texts in the FL, respectively. In the second phase of the study, the learners were given several reading comprehension tasks to complete so as to obtain information about their performance. These activities were specially designed for the study and they were similar to the ones used throughout the course. The data obtained from the three instruments were correlated and the average results from both G1 and G2 were compared.

Results

Information from the FLRAMS was analyzed on a scale from 1 (the least positive attitude) to 5 (the most positive attitude) and interpreted as follows: an attitudinal average score between 1 and 2 was considered 'negative', an attitudinal average score between 2.1 and 3 was considered 'relatively negative', an attitudinal average score between 3.1 and 4 was considered 'relatively positive', and an average attitudinal score between 4.1 and 5 was considered 'positive'. Accordingly, the learners' attitudes in both groups were relatively positive, with overall average scores of 3.26 and 3.18 for G1 and G2, respectively. Concerning each of the four factors measured on this instrument, a similar trend was observed when comparing G1 and G2. Higher scores were identified for factors 3 (extrinsic utility value of reading) and 4 (foreign language linguistic utility), both of which measure the extrinsic usefulness attributed to the FL for personal and professional development, as well as the linguistic utility of reading in English, than for factors 1 (intrinsic value of reading) and 2 (reading efficacy) on the scale, which deal with the intrinsic utility and the students' self-perceived efficacy of reading in the FL. Average scores for factors 3 and 4 in G1 were 4 and 4.39, whereas about half the scores were identified when analyzing factors 1 and 2, with averages of 2.59 and 2.44. In the second group of this study, factors 3 and 4 averaged 3.88 and 4.13, whereas factors 1 and 2 got an average of 2.46 and 2.20 on the scale (Figure 1). A slight difference was observed regarding the attitudinal variability expected between students taking the ESP course for the first time and those who had previously failed it.

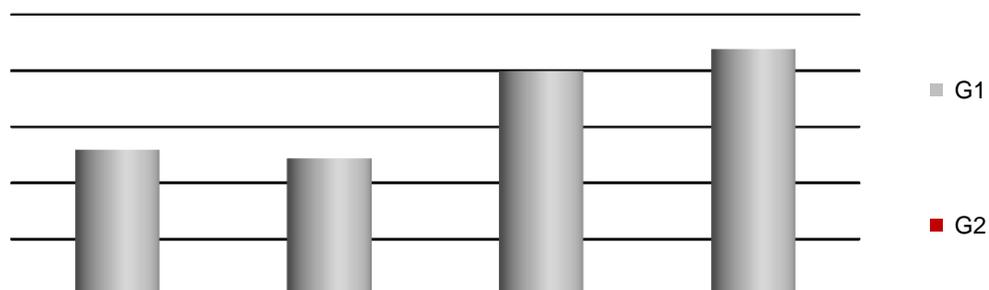


Figure 1: Comparison of the learners' average scores in G1 and G2, as reflected on the FLRAMS

Once the attitudes of the students were measured through the FLRAMS, their performance in ESP reading comprehension was assessed through a battery of reading comprehension tasks created for such purpose, and an attempt was made at correlating the data provided by both groups. Figures 2 and 3 illustrate our findings regarding the relationship between individual students' attitudes and performances, as well as the average relationship established between both variables.

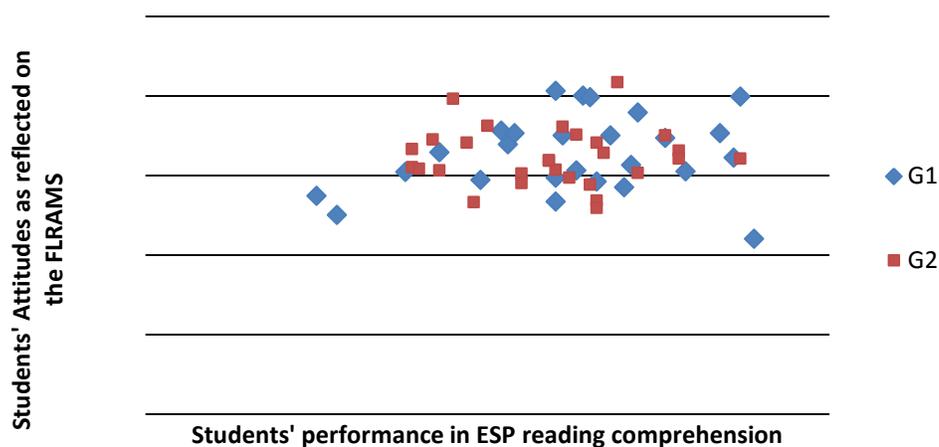


Figure 2: Correlation between the learners' attitudes and their performances in G1 and G2

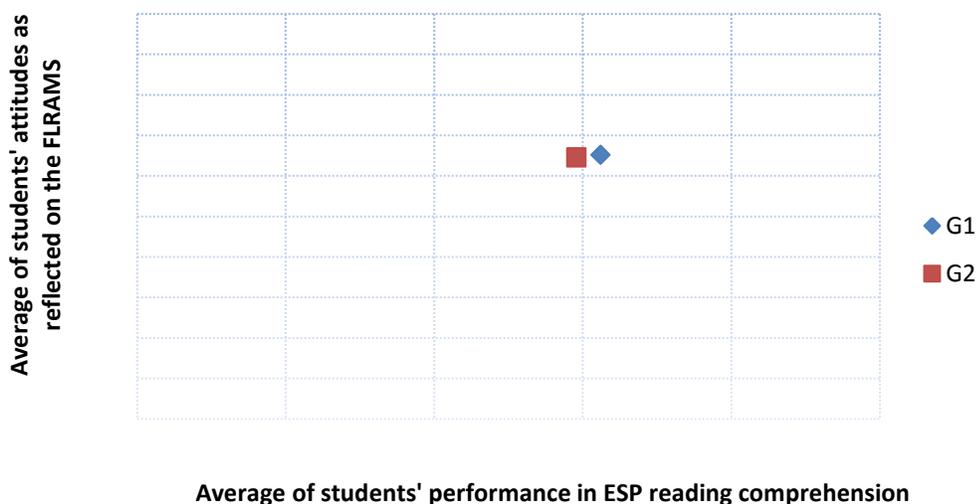


Figure 3: Average correlation between the learners' attitudes and their performances in G1 and G2

No significant differences were observed between both groups (Figures 2 and 3). The most positive attitudes were 4.06 and 4.17 in G1 and G2, respectively; the least positive attitudes were 2.2 in G1 and 2.59 in G2. Overall, the attitudes identified in both groups were relatively positive, according to the values suggested by the author. Concerning the students' performance in the reading comprehension tasks, no significant variation was perceived either. There seemed to be no correlation between a prior negative experience with the ESP course and the students' performance in it. On average, there was a correlation of 3.26, 62.42 between attitudes and performance in the first group of students, and a correlation of 3.22, 59.17 in the second group. Although a slight difference is seen in the data provided, such variability is not statistically significant. It is worth mentioning that out of the total number of students sampled in the first phase of the study, only fifty-four were considered during

the second phase, twenty-six students in G1 and twenty-eight in G2, respectively. The data provided by the remaining eleven participants were not considered for the correlation between attitudes and performance between both groups since those students either were absent when completing the reading comprehension tasks or decided to drop the course.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether there existed an attitudinal difference between students who were taking the ESP reading course for the first time, and those who had previously failed it. We were also interested in analyzing whether there was a significant correlation between such variability and students' performance in the ESP course. Even though there are some differences in the attitudes of each student group, no strong claim can be made. Therefore, it cannot be concluded from this study that the negative attitude resulting from a prior negative experience in learning the foreign language adversely affected the students' performance,

It is clear from our findings that both the students taking the Nivel de Idioma Inglés for the first time, and those taking it for a second time consider reading field-specific texts in English to be a major tool for academic and professional growth. The recurrent tendency observed in the extrinsic value attributed to reading in English for personal and professional development clearly calls for adjusting our teaching practices in order to cater for our students' future needs. It is clear that we do need to help our learners develop their reading comprehension skills as most of these students acknowledged they lacked reading efficacy.

One of the limitations of the present study was the low number of students who participated in this research. Further studies should be carried out with more participants what would allow us to make stronger claims. In addition, similar investigations should be conducted with students majoring in other disciplines to better understand some other variables that may affect students' performance in ESP reading comprehension course.

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Appendix 1

ESCALA DE ACTITUDES Y MOTIVACIÓN HACIA LA LECTURA EN LA LENGUA EXTRANJERA					
Factores / ítems	Escala:				
	5 Muy apropiado para mí	4 Apropiado para mí	3 Indeciso (no sabe, no contesta)	2 Inapropiado para mí	1 Definitivamente inapropiado para mí
Factor uno: valor intrínseco de la lectura					
1. Leer en inglés es placentero					
2. Me gusta leer en inglés					
3 Leer en inglés es aburrido					
4 Me siento tranquilo / relajado cuando leo en inglés					
11. Tengo un gran deseo de leer en inglés					
12. Nunca leería en inglés si no fuera obligatorio para mis cursadas					
13 Nunca leo en inglés a menos que tenga que hacerlo					
15. Me disgusta leer en inglés					
16. Leo en inglés aún cuando no tengo que hacerlo					
17. Preferiría hacer otra cosa en lugar de leer en					

inglés					
18. Dedico tiempo a leer en inglés					
19. Leer en inglés parece una tortura					
20. No leo en inglés, ni siquiera cuando tengo tiempo					
21. Me encanta leer en inglés					
22. Leer en inglés me hace feliz					
23. Mientras más leo en inglés, más quiero leer					
Factor dos: eficacia de Lectura					
43. Puedo leer en inglés con fluidez					
45. Puedo comprender la mayor parte de lo que leo en inglés					
47. Comprendo los textos en inglés con la primera lectura					
48. No tengo problemas en comprender un texto en inglés					
50. Tengo un nivel avanzado de habilidad lectora en inglés					
51. Logro leer con éxito en inglés					
Factor tres: valor de utilidad extrínseca de la lectura					
37. Leer en inglés es beneficioso para mi desarrollo personal					
38. Leer en inglés ayuda a conseguir un mejor trabajo					
39. Leer en inglés ayuda a prepararme para un mejor futuro					
40. Leer en inglés ayuda a ser mejores individuos					
41. Leer en inglés nos provee una mejor educación					
Factor cuatro: Utilidad lingüística del idioma extranjero					
27. Leer en inglés ayuda a tener fluidez en el habla en esa lengua					
33. Leer en inglés es un instrumento esencial para					

ampliar el vocabulario					
35. Leer en inglés contribuye al desarrollo de la escritura en esa lengua					
36. Leer en inglés contribuye al desarrollo de la gramática de esa lengua					

CUESTIONARIO DEMOGRÁFICO

Nombre y apellido: Edad:

Marque con una cruz la opción que corresponda:

1. ¿A qué campo disciplinar pertenece?

Letras	Historia	Agronomía

2. ¿Qué carrera estudia?

Prof. en Letras		Prof. en Historia		Licenciatura en Prod. Vegetal	
Licenciatura en Letras		Licenciatura en Historia		Licenciatura en Prod. Animal	
				Ing. Agronómica	

3. ¿A qué año de la carrera pertenecen la mayoría de las asignaturas que está cursando?

1ero	2do	3ero	4to	5to

4. ¿Cuántas materias tiene aprobadas (con final)?

Hasta 5	Entre 5 y 10	Entre 10 y 15	Entre 15 y 20	Entre 20 y 25	Entre 25 y 30	Más de 30

5. ¿En qué año ingresó a la facultad?

Hasta el 2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012

6. ¿Trabaja?

Si	No

7. ¿Estudió inglés antes de ingresar a la facultad?

Si	No

Si su respuesta es **SI**, indique:
¿Por qué?

Utilidad	Necesidad	Gusto	Obligación	Otro motivo

¿Cuánto tiempo?

Menos de un año	1-2 años	3-4 años	Más de 5 años

¿En qué tipo de institución?

Escuela pública	Escuela privada	Escuela bilingüe	Instituto de idiomas	Otro

8 ¿Rindió algún examen internacional?

Si	No

Si su respuesta es **SI**, indique:

¿Cuál?

KET	PET	FCE	CAE	TOEFL	PCE	IELTS	Otro (especificar)

9 ¿Visitó o vivió en algún país de habla inglesa?

Si	No

Si su respuesta es **SI**, indique:

a) ¿Cuánto tiempo?	Menos de 1 año	1-2 años	2-3 años	3-4 años	Más de 4 años
b) ¿Por qué?	Intercambio	Estudio	Vacaciones	Trabajo	Razones familiares

10 En la facultad, ¿Se le propuso la lectura de bibliografía en inglés en alguna de las materias cursadas?

Si	No

11 ¿Cuál es el nivel máximo de educación alcanzado por sus padres?

Madre		Padre	
Primario incompleto		Primario incompleto	
Primario completo		Primario completo	
Secundario incompleto		Secundario incompleto	
Secundario completo		Secundario completo	
Terciario incompleto		Terciario incompleto	
Terciario completo		Terciario completo	

Universitario incompleto		Universitario incompleto	
Universitario completo		Universitario completo	
Postgrado		Postgrado	

12 ¿Lee habitualmente en español?

Si	No

Si su respuesta es **NO** indique:

¿Por qué?

No le encuentra utilidad	No tiene tiempo suficiente	No tiene interés	No encuentra material de su interés	Otro motivo (especificar)

Si su respuesta es **SI** indique:

¿Por qué?

Por placer	Por necesidad	Otro motivo (especificar)

¿Qué tipo de material?

Diarios y revistas de interés general	
Artículos científicos	
Obras literarias	
Otros (especificar)	

16

EAP students' motivation to learn English: What do they believe in?

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Introduction

Motivation seems to be present in almost all aspects of our everyday lives, from daily conversations on topics of interest to work expectations. In the context of learning English for academic purposes (EAP), motivation is an intervening variable in the learning process and can affect achievement. Several studies (Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels, 1994; Gardner, 1985; Olshtain, Shohamy, Kemp, & Chatow, 1990) show that in the classroom, variables such as teacher attitudes, teaching styles, materials, means of assessment, and individual vs. group work, among other factors, influence not only achievement, but also many aspects of motivation, including goal orientation, self-efficacy, task value, and integrative vs. instrumental orientations.

Motivation is a hard notion to define due to its complex nature. Dörnyei (2001) states that the only aspects most researchers agree on when they define motivation are those of *choice* of an action, *persistence* and *effort*; that is, motivation is the driving force behind the reason *why* people do something, *how long* they do it, and *how hard* they try. In general terms, motivation can be defined as “the dynamically changing, cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates and evaluates the cognitive and motor process whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalised and (successfully or unsuccessfully) acted out” (Dörnyei & Ottó, 1998). Restall (2004) has more recently stated that “motivation is the internal release of energy to achieve some desired result. It is the reason, purpose or cause of starting, maintaining, or stopping something” (p. 3). It should not be surprising then, that motivation has become an important topic of study and one of the main concerns in the processes of teaching and learning a foreign language.

Dörnyei (1994) developed a framework for L2 motivation with three levels: *Language*, *Learner* and *Learning Situation*. The *Language level* includes an integrative motivational subsystem (characterized by a positive attitude towards the speakers and culture of the target language) and an instrumental motivational subsystem (characterized by learning the language for practical purposes, such as gaining employment or passing a test). The *Learner level* involves individual differences and it includes the following subsystems: need for achievement and self-confidence (for example, language

use anxiety, perceived L2 competence, causal attributions, and self-efficacy). And the *Learning Situation level* is related to the classroom setting and encompasses the following motivational components: course specific subsystem (such as interest in and relevance of the course), teacher specific subsystem (such as affiliative motive and authority type) and group specific subsystem (such as goal-orientedness, norm and reward system, and classroom goal structure).

Aware of the fact that motivation is an unstable and fluctuating factor in student learning and because it plays an essential role in the process of learning a foreign language, we believe that it should be attended to within the EFL classroom context. With this in mind, we decided to carry out an exploratory study with college level students in two different EAP reading courses at the National University of Río Cuarto: one in the Humanities (in the fields of Education and Social Sciences) and one in Natural Sciences (in the field of Microbiology). We were particularly interested in exploring their level of motivation to learn English and, given their different disciplinary orientations, observing whether their motivation differed in any way.

Methodology

Fifty-three college students from two intact classes volunteered to participate in the study: twenty one from the School of Humanities and thirty two from the School of Natural Sciences. In order to measure the students' level of motivation in their EAP classes, we used an ad hoc 5-point-Likert scale previously designed and piloted by our research group (Longhini, Chiappello, Valsecchi, Barbeito & Placci, 2006), which yielded a high item internal consistency (alpha coefficient of .88). The motivation scale included 20 items grouped in three main sections which, respectively, addressed the three levels of motivation proposed by Dörnyei (1994): 7 items for *Language level*, 8 items for *Learner level*, and 5 items for *Learning Situation level* (See Appendix A).

The 53 participants were asked to complete the motivation scale in Spanish in their EAP reading classes. The teachers in charge of the 2 courses voluntarily accepted to administer the scale to their students. The data were analyzed with the statistical program for the social sciences, SPSS, 11.5 version. First, the minimum and maximum values, the mean and the standard deviation were estimated for the overall population (N= 53) on the basis of the three levels in the motivational scale: *Language*, *Learner*, and *Learning Situation*. Then, the same statistical analyses were carried out for each group separately (Humanities, N = 21; Natural Sciences, N = 32). Finally, results were compared between the two groups for each of the three levels in the scale. In order to be able to interpret the participants' level of motivation, we identified three bands (low motivation= 20 to 46; moderate motivation= 47 to 73: and high motivation = 74 to 100) ranging from 20 (the minimum possible value to obtain in the scale) to 100 (the maximum possible value). The minimum and maximum values were estimated in relation to the participants' possibility of responding to the 20 items of the scale with the lowest (1) and maximum value (5) of the Likert scale.

Results and Discussion

In general terms, students' motivation in the two groups was considerably high, given the fact that the mean for overall motivation among the 53 participants was 76.15, with 29 participants scoring above the mean and 24 scoring below the mean. As regards the analyses of the three levels of motivation,

the *Learner level* showed the highest mean (29.7) whereas the *Learning Situation level* scored the lowest (19.3) (See Table 1).

	Min. value	Max. Value	Mean	SD
TOTAL	34	99	76,15	12,91
Learner Level	12	39	29,7	5,24
Language Level	9	35	27,1	6,80
Learning Situation Level	11	25	19,3	3,42

Table 1: Frequency distribution for the overall motivational scale (N=53)

The between group analysis of the three levels indicated that the only difference in levels of motivation was found in the *Language level* with a mean of 28.5 for the Natural Science group and a mean of 24.9 for the Humanity group (See Table 2). An interesting finding was observed in one of the items of the sub-component *Learner level*, namely, “*language use anxiety*”, which was low in both groups. Interestingly, none of the groups reported having high or moderate anxiety. This may be due to the fact that this exploratory study dealt with the reading skill, which allows students to read at their own pace and have access to many different resources, such as dictionaries and glossaries.

In relation to the first level in the scale, *Language level*, both groups showed high motivation as expressed in the participants’ answers to the item “I am interested in learning English”: 81% for the Humanity students and 87.5% for the Natural Science students. Similarly, the two groups showed high motivation regarding their “intention to study English elsewhere” if the students did not have a compulsory course at university: 81% for the Natural Science group and 62% for the Humanity group. Yet, though both groups scored high in this item, results showed that “intention” seemed to be considerably higher in the Natural Science group in relation to two main aspects: this group considered English “a priority” (80% versus 68% in the Humanity students) and showed more “personal interest to learn English” (78% and 48% respectively). With respect to the item about learning English for instrumental purposes with a view to “getting better job opportunities”, again, the higher percentage (78%) corresponded to the Natural Science group, as compared to that of the Humanity group (57%). Similarly, their “intention to continue studying English after graduation” was higher in the Natural Science group (62% vs. 43%).

Sub-components	Participants	N	Min. value	Max. value	M	SD
TOTAL	N. S.	32	34	99	77,3	14,7
	Hum.	21	52	92	74,3	9,7
Learner Level	N. S.	32	12	39	29,6	5,9
	Hum.	21	21	38	29,8	4,1
Language Level	N. S.	32	9	35	28,5	7,0
	Hum.	21	11	34	24,9	5,9
Language Situation Level	N. S.	32	11	25	19,1	3,7
	Hum.	21	11	23	19,5	2,9

Table 2: Comparison between groups at the three levels of motivation

As for the second level, *Learner level*, participants in both groups obtained high percentages in the item “I always pay attention to my mistakes when I get a test back”: 100% in the Humanity group and 81% in the Natural Science group. Participants in the Humanity group scored higher in the following two items: “I like learning English” (90.5% vs. 75%) and “I like revising what I learnt in class” (38% vs. 12%) though, in the latter item, motivation seemed to be low in both groups. However, in the item “I want to become competent in English”, higher percentages were found in the Natural Sciences group (90% as compared to 71% in the Humanity group). As reflected in the results of this section of the scale, participants’ perception about their self-confidence as a foreign language learner differed in both groups: almost half of the Natural Science group reported high self-confidence while in the Humanity group self-confidence was low.

Regarding the third level, *Learning Situation level*, both groups scored high in the item eliciting the participants’ opinions about the “usefulness of attending classes”: 90% in the Humanity group and 75% in the Natural Science group. In relation to their concern to get good grades in their evaluations, both groups reported “working hard” (62% and 56% in the Humanity and Natural Science groups, respectively) and “caring about getting high grades” (66% and 72%).

The findings suggest that both groups were motivated to study English. Nevertheless, students in the Natural Science group showed higher motivation specifically in relation to academic aspects as well as to professional goals, as shown in their answers to some of the items belonging to the *Language* and *Learner Levels* sub components.

Conclusion

It may be concluded that both groups of EAP students showed a high degree of motivation to learn English as a foreign language. As for integrative motivation, participants in both groups seemed to share a similar general attitude towards, for example, self confidence, and self-efficacy (*Learner level*) and interest in the course, expectancy of success and satisfaction in the outcome (*Learning Situation level*). However, the Natural Science group showed higher levels of instrumental motivation, as reflected in those statements of the scale aimed at eliciting their motivation to learn English for occupational and instrumental purposes.

Keeping motivation high in our classes should be a goal to strive for and a concern of every teacher since it will help improve the effectiveness of our pedagogical practice and, thus, make learning easier. Besides, being aware of our students’ beliefs about what motivates them to study English is vital to understanding learners and their approaches to learning (Gabillon, 2005). As stated in a previous paper by Barbeito and Placci (2008), this knowledge can offer insightful information at the moment of designing activities that motivate students and, at the same time, foster reflection upon their beliefs.

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Appendix A

Level	Sub- systems*	Items in the EMOT Scale**
LANGUAGE	Integrative motivational subsystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Todos los argentinos deberíamos aprender inglés. - Me interesa muy poco aprender inglés. - Si en mi escuela no hubiera inglés, me gustaría estudiarlo en un instituto/academia. - Después de terminar el secundario quiero seguir aprendiendo inglés. - Si no tuviera inglés en la escuela no lo estudiaría en otro lado.
	Instrumental motivational subsystem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Las personas que hablan inglés pueden conseguir mejores trabajos. - Me interesa aprender inglés para tener un trabajo mejor en el futuro.
LEARNER	Need for achievement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aprender inglés me resulta pesado.
	Self-confidence (language use anxiety, perceived L2 competence, causal attributions, self- efficacy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Me gusta aprender inglés. - Soy bueno para aprender inglés. - Estudio solamente lo necesario para aprobar la materia inglés. - Aunque no tenga deberes de inglés igual me gusta ver lo que dimos en clase. - Cuando me devuelven una prueba de inglés siempre me fijo en los errores que cometí. - Quiero aprender inglés hasta conseguir un buen nivel.

LEARNING SITUATION	<p>Course-specific motivation (interest in the course, relevance, expectancy of success, satisfaction)</p> <p>Teacher-specific motivation (affiliative motive, authority type, direct socialization of motivation)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No me ofrezco voluntariamente a participar en la clase de inglés. - Me esfuerzo para sacar buenas notas en inglés. - No me importa sacarme notas bajas en inglés porque de alguna manera al final apruebo. - Estoy satisfecho con lo que aprendo en la clase de inglés. - Aprendo mejor porque la profesora de inglés explica todas las reglas gramaticales. - Pierdo interés cuando la profesora explica las reglas gramaticales y no me deja descubrirlas a mí solo.
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* Dörnyei's framework of L2 motivation (1994). This chart includes only the sub-systems reflected in the EMOT scale.

** Longhini et al (2006).

17

The study of macrostructure as a way to develop student autonomy in reading research articles

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Introduction

This paper looks at an alternative teaching and learning approach to reading comprehension of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in an adult education course and examines how it develops student autonomy by fully engaging students in critical reflection. When they read in a linear mode, unaware of the larger picture of textual organization, their sentence-by-sentence analysis of the text does not allow them to reflect upon what they are reading. University students and graduates are expected to be able to read critically and strategically in their mother tongue. However, when reading in the foreign language, worried as they usually are by vocabulary and structure, readers tend to overlook the text as a whole and read linearly.

First, we will attempt to define the reach of autonomy in Foreign Language Teaching (EFL) and how it relates to reading comprehension. Later, we will refer to the pedagogical decisions and actions we have taken in order to develop reading autonomy in our students by using a macrostructural perspective.

Autonomy in EFL and reading comprehension

Hammond and Collins (1991) claim that the ultimate purpose of education is the betterment of society and that critical awareness is one of its desirable outcomes. While some authors regard learner's autonomy from a more political perspective as an element of social change, others focus their attention on how teachers can actually promote learners' independence in the classroom.

Learner's independence or learner's autonomy has become widespread in terms of what is desirable and expected in the field of language teaching in general and in communicative foreign language teaching in particular. Autonomy has been defined by Holec (1989, p.31) as "the ability to

take charge of one's learning", which in Foreign Language Learning involves, among other characteristics, a disposition to take risks, the ability to develop the target language into a separate reference system and the capacity to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply. In a study carried out by Dafei (2007) "students' language proficiency has been shown to be significantly and positively influenced by learner autonomy". Little (1999) states that students must develop their meta-cognitive skills — among which he mentions: power of reflection, aptitude for decision-making and the ability to act independently— in order to increase their autonomy.

Reading is one of the most effective ways to develop learners' autonomy (Maley 2009) as it is the most easily available form of internalizing comprehensible input, consolidating what they already know and extending it. This applies even where there is hardly any face-to-face contact with the target language as is the case in our country, thus making reading comprehension a very apt resource for the development of learners' independence.

ESP and reading comprehension and research

The theoretical underpinnings of the reading-only courses taught at the Facultad de Ciencias Agropecuarias, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba can be found in an interactive model of reading comprehension proposed by Grabe & Stoller 2002. This model views the reading process as the result of both bottom-up and top-down processes which interact. The former, also known as lower level or text-driven processes, involves the following processing skills: lexical access and automatic word recognition, syntactic parsing, semantic proposition formation and short term memory activation. The latter, also called higher level or concept-driven processes comprises these comprehension processes: inferencing and the use of background knowledge, monitoring and building a text model of comprehension and a situation model of reader interpretation.

Research shows that explicit instruction in comprehension strategies is highly effective in enhancing comprehension. For over two decades, research (Carrell 1985, McCarthy & Carter 1994, Meyer 1985) has been carried out on the importance of instruction on macrostructure, more specifically on logical patterns of textual organization, on reading efficiency. These clause relational patterns belong in what Hoey (1979, 1983, 2001) refers to as culturally popular textual patterns due to their frequency of occurrence in discourse, and in our field, academic texts. More recently, Pérez de Pereyra et al. (2010) carried out two successive studies on two logical patterns — Problem-Solution and Hypothetical-Real (HR)— in which systematic instruction on the recognition of logical patterns proved to be effectual in making students aware of a different approach to reading. Several studies have dealt with the characterization of these patterns such as Winter's (1974, 1977, 1994), Williams' (1984), among others.

In the context of the above-mentioned ESP reading comprehension courses, we have chosen to teach students how to access research articles (RA) in their field of specialization. These texts are selected taking into account the context of the publication, that is, mostly up- to-date indexed publications of specialized journals directed to adult readers, as well as the style of text which is expository formal prose. We teach both graduate and undergraduate university students whose proficiency level of English is heterogeneous. In general, they can be said to have a basic command of

the language which loosely corresponds to levels A1 and A2 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. They are expected to read texts which are similar to those they are likely to come across in the course of their professional lives.

Instruction on textual patterns as a way towards reading autonomy

Based on our research on the most usually used signaling devices for the above-mentioned patterns, we found that most authors of research papers in the field of Agricultural studies convey meaning implicitly rather than explicitly, thus calling on readers' inferencing skills. The common assumption that these texts will contain specific vocabulary and that this lexicon will be better known by people with greater topic knowledge is unassailable according to Stahl (1990). In general, vocabulary and prior knowledge seem to function separately. Freebody and Anderson (1983), Stahl and Jacobson (1986), Stahl, Jacobson, Davis and Davis (1989), and Stahl, Hare, Sinatra and Gregory (1990) all found that vocabulary knowledge and prior knowledge had specific effects on comprehension, but that these effects did not interact with each other.

Our approach to teaching ESP reading comprehension in the context described above involves an interactive perspective, which includes a macrostructural dimension meant to preclude students from an over dependence on linear reading and on the use of the bilingual dictionary. This approach starts from an initial consideration of the macrostructure by means of which students become aware that every text has been written with a specific goal in mind, such as making a comparison or posing a problem, which will influence the text structure accordingly and will largely determine the manner in which it has to be tackled.

In order to strengthen our students' capacity to recognize the textual patterns and read the texts accordingly, we have designed pedagogical interventions for the teaching of the patterns by training them in their perception of the different ways in which authors organize the information and signal that organization. The pedagogical intervention designed to teach the Hypothetical-Real pattern consisted of a pre-test, a presentation class and a post-test. These activities were implemented during 2011 with a group of 60 students of the Agriculture Schools of the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba and the Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto.

The initial step to find out whether our students were able to recognize the pattern intuitively or based on their previous knowledge was to administer a mock test which served the purposes of both a pre-test and practice for the first term-test. In this instance, they were given three statements extracted from the text provided and were asked to choose the sentence indicating a probability. The answers showed that around 40% of the students could not recognize the pattern. As a result, we proceeded as planned: in the first place, we introduced a video which contained instances of epistemic modality to convey probability. Students were given a task sheet with video-comprehension activities which included prediction questions, comprehension exercises and an awareness-raising task on the components of the pattern. The next activities in the sequence were carried out in a 120 minute-class by means of a Power-Point presentation and a task sheet containing three texts and varied tasks to be completed in class and at home.

Abstracts were chosen to contextualize the use of epistemic modality — probability— within the HR pattern, on account of our students' basic level of proficiency to read full research articles in a

two-hour class. The class consisted of the analysis of two abstracts related to the students' knowledge domain. Each reading comprehension task sheet included a pre-reading task and content-related comprehension questions and awareness-raising activities aimed at the identification and comprehension of the pattern. Students' answers regarding the identification of the HR pattern were shared with the whole class. After discussing the linguistic signals they had identified as markers of the patterns, we presented some lexico-grammatical clues —such as modal verbs and expressions, lexical verbs, adverbs and adjectives— that would presumably help students identify conjectures (Hypothetical element). The same was done for the expected signaling clues of the Real element. A similar sequence of activities was used for the second text. A third abstract with a similar set of exercises was assigned as homework. After applying this pedagogical sequence, a post-test was administered in order to determine whether students recognized the pattern after the instruction period. A survey was also given to students after the test, in order to obtain information about their perceptions regarding their own ability to recognize the pattern, its typical linguistic signals and the usefulness of the pedagogical intervention applied.

The analysis of the results in the post-test clearly indicated that while more than 80% of the students recognized conjectures successfully, only 10% was able to identify instances of assertion (Real element). We believe that this low performance in the recognition of assertion elements as contrasted to the high performance in the recognition of conjectural elements may reflect, on the one hand, the elusive nature of the linguistic markers that signal the Real component of the pattern and the need to do further research into this area in order to help students better understand the nature of the pattern. On the other hand, the results seem to reveal students' need for a greater and more efficient use of strategies to read texts autonomously and critically. This, in turn, calls for further work in the field.

Concluding remarks

There may exist varied routes towards autonomy in reading comprehension. Approaching texts from a macrostructural perspective is, in our view, one possible way of attaining this goal. In the ESP context, as in many EFL contexts, the time constraint is a crucial limitation that has to be reckoned with. Effective instruction in the recognition of textual patterns may be one way of enhancing our readers' capacity and strategies to read texts critically and autonomously. We believe that it is largely in the hands of the teacher to make informed decisions regarding autonomy-oriented learning. In Holec's words, "it is a matter of determining those types of intervention which are conducive to the learner's acquiring those capacities" (Holec, 1985, p.180).

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18

Meeting the needs of EFL learners is crucial for motivation

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Introduction

Numerous approaches to educational psychology present the humanistic school of thought as highly influential in the learning process due to the emphasis that it places on the individual as a whole rather than focusing merely on the development of his/her separate cognitive skills. Regarding language teaching, such influence results in successful learning processes because the student's feelings, emotions and thoughts can be considered as instruments to motivate learning. Abraham Maslow, the American psychologist, developed his hierarchy of needs (HN) theory, based on motivational theories. He posits that human needs can be categorized as Deficiency Needs (D-Needs) and Being Needs (B-Needs). He claims that, as far as one need is met, individuals become ready for the following one in the HN.

This paper analyses the validity of Maslow's HN in connection with motivation. Due to space limitations, only three cases of EFL students are examined. The analysis aims to demonstrate that only those learners whose needs are met are able to reach the following higher category in Maslow's HN, becoming in this process "self-motivated independent learners" (Gross Davis, 1999, p.22).

Objective

The validity of Maslow's theory about the satisfaction of needs and motivation is examined in relation to a group of 3 EFL students (nowadays 20-35 years old) who started their learning experience when they were 5-6 years old. It is important to state that the three students had met their physiological needs at home, when they started their EFL experience; that their families always provided them with all the items requested (textbooks, reading materials, etc.) and that they gave constant support to teachers (attendance to meetings, open minds to creative proposals, etc.).

Theoretical Framework

As a humanistic psychologist, Abraham Maslow held that human beings are capable of reaching their full potential if we "emphasize the importance of the inner world of the learner and place the individual's thought, feelings and emotions at the forefront of all human development" (Williams & Burden, 1997 p. 30).

Maslow carried out his research on the basis that human beings have to be considered as a whole and developed his theory known as Hierarchy of Needs. To explain the classification, Maslow designed a pyramid. At the base of Maslow's pyramid we find the D-Needs, divided into four groups:

- *Physiological Needs*, which include the needs of oxygen, water, food, relatively constant body temperature, and so on
- *Safety Needs*, which include the need of being safe from harm and danger in a permanent and stable way
- *Belongingness and Love Needs*, which are reached once the person feels in a permanent safe state and is able to affiliate with others and be accepted (Huitt, 2004).
- *Esteem Needs*, which involve self-esteem and the esteem the individual gets from others.

Once all the D-Needs are met, the person is ready to act upon the B-Needs at the upper level and Maslow sorts them out as follows:

- *Cognitive Needs*, which consist of the needs to know, to understand and to explore
- *Aesthetic Needs*, which include the needs of perception of symmetry, order and beauty
- At the zenith of the pyramid, Maslow places the following:
- *Self-Actualization Needs*, which consist of a person's discovery to do that which he or she was born to do
- *Transcendence Needs*, which are reached only by self-actualizers who transcend their own ego to a superior dimension or to society to help others find self-fulfillment and realize their potential (Huitt, 2004).

Abraham Maslow's HN is applied in many fields. In education, it is considered as a mechanism to develop learners' full potential by means of a driving force or motivation drive to learn (Maslow, 1954).

Case study descriptions

Student 1 (S1) was a young male who had a loving family that always monitored and stimulated him. He started his EFL learning process as a 6-year-old child. At university level, his academic performance was outstanding. He continued with regular classes to obtain international qualifications in English and took up two other foreign languages. Nowadays, in his free time he performs and directs plays in English in his country of residence, where he works as Head of the Foreign Office in an English speaking country.

Student 2 (S2) was the son of a very busy couple. He began learning EFL when he was 6 years old. As an adolescent, he obtained his Advance Certificate of Competence in English with average qualifications. Later, his university career compelled him to learn a second foreign language, developing average competence in it. Nowadays, his position at an international company demands fluency in the foreign languages that he has learned.

Student 3 (S3) was a girl who started her EFL learning process when she was 5 years old. Her performance in English ranged from below average to average and her mood during classes was always unstable. As she reached her pre-intermediate level of competence, she dropped off the course and never took up any foreign language again.

Case study analysis

In order to examine the validity of Maslow's HN in the learning process of EFL, *Physiological Needs* satisfaction in the classrooms was assessed by means of a formative feedback 5-minute paper survey (Murphy in Celce-Murcia, 2001). The results are shown in Table A (Appendix) and reveal that Student 1's physiological needs are well gratified and he is in good conditions to let a new set of needs emerge. Student 2's physiological needs show standard level of satisfaction, so we can conclude that he feels gratified and ready to let the higher category of needs emerge. On the other hand, Student 3 shows 60% of dissatisfaction, thus she is not well prepared to let the following category of needs emerge.

Maslow's *Safety Needs* in the EFL classroom are considered in Table B (Appendix), where data obtained from retrospective summative feedback from learners (Murphy in Celce-Murcia, 2001) is shown. The results show that S1 has satisfied 67% of his safety needs in *most of his classes*. As far as S2 is concerned, we can see that 83% of his needs have been met in *some classes*. S3 shows that *some classes* have satisfied 50% of her safety needs, so it may be inferred that some kind of interference in her EFL motivation took place.

Regarding the level of *Belongingness and Love Needs* in connection with teacher-student relationship, Table C (Appendix) shows data collected from retrospective summative feedback from learners (Murphy in Celce-Murcia, 2001) and shows that S1's answers are always in the upper part of the scale. S2's answers range in the middle of the scale while S3's information shows a low rating.

Self Esteem and Respect from Others Needs are analysed in Table D (Appendix). We collected the data using old classroom observation and retrospective field notes (Murphy in Celce-Murcia, 2001). The results show that S1 has had 87,5% of his esteem needs satisfied, while S2 has met only 62,5% of his needs and S3 has only met 50% of hers.

Cognitive Needs are assessed using stimulus recall from students (Murphy in Celce-Murcia, 2001). The results --in Table E (Appendix)-- show that S1 has met 71.43% of his needs to know and understand, S2 has satisfied 57.14% of his cognitive needs while S3 has met only 42.86% of hers. Regarding the *Aesthetic Needs*, students assess their EFL learning experiences by means of stimulus recall (Murphy in Celce-Murcia, 2001). The collected data shown in Table F (Appendix) reveal that S1 has met 60% of his aesthetic needs; S2 has satisfied 40% of his while S3 has only met 20% of her needs.

As to the satisfaction of *Self-Actualization Needs*, the tool employed is an informal interview (Murphy in Celce-Murcia 2001). The results, shown in table G (Appendix), reveal that S1 has met 83.33% of his needs of self-actualization; S2 has satisfied 33.33% of such needs, but S3 has only satisfied 16.66% of hers.

Assessment

The data obtained on the three chosen students allow us to observe that:

- The satisfaction level in the HN in each student stays mostly within the same scope along his or her learning experience;
- The outstanding learner (S1) keeps his ranking at the top of the scale reaching values higher than 60%;

- The student who fails in his EFL learning experience (S3) always keeps her ranking at the bottom of the scale, getting values below 50%;
- The average student (S2) keeps values that range in the middle of the scale while, at the top of the HN, his figures abruptly descend. This fact is in full agreement with Maslow's principle which states that "a more realistic description of the hierarchy would be in terms of decreasing percentages of satisfaction as we go up the hierarchy" (Maslow, 1954, p. 28).

Conclusion

Considering Abraham Maslow's contribution to education, this paper has dealt with his HN theory in the EFL learning experience as a mechanism to develop the student's full potential and self motivation. After the qualitative and quantitative analyses, we find full validity of Abraham Maslow's HN in the EFL learning process of the three students surveyed in this study because only those learners whose needs have been met were able to reach the following higher category in the hierarchy. This happens due to the fact that "humans strive to reach the highest levels of their capacities" (Huitt, 2004) if they have motivational determinants (Maslow, 1954). Moreover, the analysis has revealed that precisely those individuals in whom a certain need has always been satisfied are best equipped to succeed, as is the case of Student 1 who according to Gross Davis can be considered a "self motivated independent learner" (p.22).

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Appendix

Instruments for Data Collection: Due to space limitations, all the instruments used in this paper cannot be included. Nevertheless we include a sample of the most significant ones.

TABLE A	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
ROOM TEMPERATURE	S	S	U
BATHROOM BREAKS	HS	S	S
DRINK BREAKS	HS	S	U
COMFORTABLE FURNITURE	S	S	S
ROOM VENTILATION	S	S	U

TABLE B	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
WELL PLANNED LESSONS, CARRIED OUT IN AN ORDERLY FASHION	MOST CLASSES	MOST CLASSES	SOME CLASSES
CONTROLLED CLASSROOM BEHAVIOUR	SOME CLASSES	SOME CLASSES	SOME CLASSES
FAIR DISCIPLINE	SOME CLASSES	FEW CLASSES	FEW CLASSES
CONSISTENT EXPECTATIONS	MOST CLASSES	SOME CLASSES	SOME CLASSES
ACCEPTING & NON-JUDGMENTAL, PLEASANT, NONTHREATENING TEACHER	MOST CLASSES	SOME CLASSES	FEW CLASSES
PRAISE FOR CORRECTION INSTEAD OF PUNISHMENT FOR INCORRECTION	MOST CLASSES	SOME CLASSES	SOME CLASSES

TABLE C	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
TEACHER PERSONALITY: EMPATHETIC, CONSIDERATE & INTERESTED IN THE INDIVIDUAL, PATIENT, POSITIVE ATTITUDE, GOOD LISTENER	MOST TEACHERS	FEW TEACHERS	FEW TEACHERS
ONE-ON-ONE INSTRUCTION	SOME TEACHERS	SOME TEACHERS	FEW TEACHERS
AVAILABLE FOR STUDENTS IN NEED	SOME TEACHERS	FEW TEACHERS	FEW TEACHERS

TABLE D	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
PACE INSTRUCTION TO FIT INDIVIDUAL NEEDS	NO	YES	YES
TAKE INDIVIDUAL NEEDS & ABILITIES INTO ACCOUNT WHEN PLANNING LESSONS	YES	NO	NO
TEACH TO MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES	YES	NO	NO
BE ALERT TO STUDENT DIFFICULTIES	YES	YES	YES
INVOLVE ALL STUDENTS IN CLASS PARTICIPATION	YES	YES	YES
RECOGNITION FOR SPECIAL EFFORT	YES	YES	NO
EMPLOY COOPERATIVE LEARNING TO DEVELOP TRUST	YES	NO	NO
INVOLVE STUDENTS IN ACTIVITIES OF IMPORTANCE AND WORTHINESS	YES	YES	YES

TABLE E	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
STUDENTS ALLOWED TO EXPLORE AREAS OF CURIOSITY	YES	YES	YES
INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGING LESSONS	NO	NO	NO
LESSONS CONNECTING AREAS OF LEARNING AND SEARCHING FOR RELATIONSHIPS	YES	NO	YES
DISCOVERY APPROACHES TO LEARNING	YES	YES	NO
TOPICS OF LEARNING PRESENTED FROM VARIOUS ANGLES	YES	YES	YES
OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION	NO	NO	NO
INTELLECTUALLY CHALLENGING PROGRAMS	YES	YES	NO

TABLE F	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
STUDENTS' ART WORK DISPLAYED IN AN APPEALING MANNER	YES	NO	NO
APPEARING AND INTERESTING LEARNING CENTRES	YES	YES	NO
PLEASING COLOURS IN CLASSROOMS	NO	YES	YES
WELL MAINTAINED PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS	YES	NO	NO
CLEAN AND FRESH SMELLING CLASSROOMS	NO	NO	NO

TABLE G	STUDENT 1	STUDENT 2	STUDENT 3
STUDENTS WERE EXPECTED TO DO THEIR BEST	YES	YES	YES
STUDENTS WERE GIVEN FREEDOM TO EXPLORE AND DISCOVER ON THEIR OWN	NO	NO	NO
LEARNING WAS CONNECTED TO REAL LIFE	YES	NO	NO
METACOGNITIVE ACTIVITIES WERE INVOLVED IN LESSONS	YES	YES	NO
STUDENTS WERE INVOLVED IN SELF-EXPRESSIVE PROJECTS	YES	NO	NO
STUDENTS WERE ALLOWED TO OUTPUT THEIR CREATIVE DRIVE	YES	NO	NO

Formative Feedback from Learners: 5-Minute-Paper. Target: Physiological Needs Satisfaction

Please remember your English classrooms, recall how you felt there and rate them according to the following scale: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory.

* Classroom Temperature (warm in Winter, cool in Summer).....

* Bathroom Breaks (you were allowed to have when you need them).....

* Drinks Breaks (you were allowed to have when you need them).....

.....

Retrospective Summative Feedback from Learners: Survey. Target: Belongingness and Love Needs Satisfaction (with regard to Teacher-Student relationship)

Please remember your EFL learning experience, then tick how many teachers showed the following characteristics:

* Personality (considerate and interested in students, patient, good listener, empathetic, positive in attitude) Most Teachers..... Some Teachers..... Few Teachers.....No Teacher.....

* Availability for one-on-one instruction (specially helped you with difficult contents or tasks) Most Teachers.....Some Teachers.....Few Teachers.....No Teacher.....

Stimulus Recall from Learners: Self Generated List. Target: Cognitive Needs (Knowledge and Understanding)

Please recall your EFL learning experience, say whether your classes included or not the following items:

* Students were allowed to explore areas of curiosity:

YES/NO

* Lessons were intellectually challenging: YES/NO

* Lessons connected areas of learning and searched for relationships: YES/NO

* Lessons presented different approaches to learning:

YES/NO

* Topics of learning were presented from various angles:

YES/NO

.....

Tables

Table A: Physiological Needs. Scale: HS (Highly Satisfactory); S (Satisfactory); U (Unsatisfactory). Data obtained from 5-minute-papers.

Table B: Safety Needs. Scale: Most Classes; Some Classes; Few Classes; No Class. Data obtained from retrospective summative feedback from learners.

Table C: Belongingness and Love Needs. Scale: Most Teachers; Some Teachers, Few Teachers; No Teacher. Data obtained from retrospective summative feedback from Sts.

Table D: Esteem Needs. Scale: Yes (it was a teaching practice); No (it was not a teaching practice). Data obtained from old classroom observation reports & retrospective field notes.

Table E: Cognitive Needs. Scale: Yes (classes included it/them); No (classes did not include it/them). Data obtained from Stimulus Recall.

Table F: Aesthetic Needs. Scale: Yes (it was). No (it was not) Data obtained from Stimulus Recall.

Table G: Self-Actualization Needs. Scale: Yes (it was included in the teaching practice); No (it was not included in the teaching practice). Data obtained from informal interview

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Identifying social actors: A pedagogical tool to develop students' autonomy and critical thinking

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Introduction

This chapter presents a pedagogical tool for the identification of social actors as they are represented in written texts. Through the use of this resource, we intend to help students in the process of discovering meaning on their own, and developing a critical attitude towards the texts they read.

The tool presented, which consists of a table (Table 1, with potential adaptations) to identify and classify human participants in a given text, was originally devised as a research instrument within a project called *"The representation of Argentina and its people in the discourse of English-speaking media"*, currently being conducted at Universidad Nacional de San Juan's School of Philosophy, Humanities and the Arts. As we applied this instrument for our research purposes, we realized that the same (or slightly adapted) instrument could become a pedagogical tool to help students in the process of discovering meaning/s. We believe that in this way, a bridge can be built between linguistic research and classroom applications. Once students are instructed in the use of this tool, they will be able to bring their own questions to the text, and thus become more autonomous in their learning process.

'Social Actor' research as a starting point

Our research project is inscribed within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and explores the representation of our country and its citizens in newspaper articles published between 2007 and 2011 in English speaking countries. On the basis of different tools and resources provided by SFL, the project addresses ideational, interpersonal and textual aspects of the corpus selected.

The pedagogical tool we propose was devised as part of our exploration of ideational meanings, more specifically, of human participants or 'social actors'. This type of exploration seemed central to the study of the way Argentine citizens are represented in the media. For our research purposes, we adapted the categories proposed by van Leeuwen in his Social Actors theory (1996-2009). In this theory, the author develops a set of socio-semantic categories in an attempt to answer two questions: *What are the ways in which social actors can be represented in English discourse?* and *Which choices does the English language give us for referring to people?* (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 32). Partly inspired by a Hallidayan view of grammar as 'meaning potential' (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004),

van Leeuwen seeks to construe “a ‘socio-semantic’ inventory of the ways in which social actors can be represented”. By defining his categories as *socio-semantic*, he proposes a view of meaning as tied to culture rather than to language itself, and promotes his belief in the lack of “*bi-uniqueness*” (1996, p. 32) in language, i.e., the lack of correspondence between form and meaning. In this way, the author imbues the categories with a “*sociological and critical relevance*” (1996, p. 32).

Van Leeuwen’s classification is presented in the form of a system network, with the inclusion/exclusion categories as the main entry points. The entire system contains over twenty different categories for the representation or description of social actors. Although all the classification criteria are relevant and worth studying, we make use of a limited number of categories and suggest some small adaptations. Table 1 below presents our selection and adaptation of van Leeuwen’s socio-semantic categories.

Activation Passivation	<p><u>van Leeuwen’s definition:</u> Social actors can be activated or passivated according to ‘<i>the role they are given to play in representations. Activation occurs when social actors are represented as the active, dynamic forces in an activity</i>’ (doers); ‘<i>passivation when they are represented as ‘undergoing’ the activity or as being ‘at the receiving end of it’</i>’ (beneficiaries) (van Leeuwen, 1996, pp. 43-44).</p> <p><u>Our version:</u> We use this category without any changes, with particular emphasis on the idea that being activated or passivated in this classification has little to do with active or passive voice in more traditional approaches. For instance, in this example taken from our corpus, “<i>Cristina Fernández, Argentina’s president, has benefited from a wave of public sympathy</i>”, the social actor is, from a formal perspective, the subject of an active sentence, but from a socio-semiotic perspective, the actor is <i>at the receiving end</i> of the action and is, in that sense, passivated. (www.economist.com/node/17627955?story_id=17627955 Argentina’s president-Tiptoeing to the centre. <i>The Economist</i>, December, 2nd 2010)</p>
Nomination	<p><u>van Leeuwen’s definition:</u> Social actors can be realized by proper nouns which can be <i>formal, semi-formal, informal</i> and <i>honorific</i>. Proper nouns starting with Mr, Mrs or Ms plus the surname, or the surname alone, are considered <i>formal</i> realizations; given names plus surname <i>semi-formal</i>; given names, <i>informal</i> and standard titles and ranks, <i>honorific</i>. (van Leeuwen, 1996).</p> <p><u>Our version:</u> We use this category without any modifications.</p>
Functionalisation	<p><u>van Leeuwen’s definition:</u> Social actors “<i>are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for instance an occupation or role.</i>” (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 54)</p> <p><u>Our version:</u> We use this category without any modifications.</p>
Appraisalment	<p><u>van Leeuwen’s category:</u> ‘<i>Social actors are appraised when they are referred to in terms which evaluate them as good or bad, loved or hated, admired or pitied</i>’. (van Leeuwen, 1996:58)</p> <p><u>Our version:</u> We propose the use of two categories, Intrinsic and Extrinsic Appraisalment, to distinguish between evaluation which is realized by referencing or naming linguistic resources (Intrinsic) and evaluation which is brought to the text by other elements such as actor-related attributes, processes or circumstances (Extrinsic). This is done in an attempt to capture evaluative elements, which tend to play a very significant role in the representation of social actors.</p>
Relational Identification	<p><u>van Leeuwen’s definition:</u> Social actors are defined “<i>not in terms of what they do, but in terms of what they [...] are</i>” (van Leeuwen, 1996:54). In this category, van Leeuwen proposes a sub-division into “<i>classification, relational identification and physical identification</i>” and defines Relational Identification as the representation of social actors “<i>in terms of their personal, kinship or work relation to each other</i>” (van Leeuwen, 2009, p. 84).</p> <p><u>Our version:</u> We have used only the Relational Identification category because we have found that it is the most relevant for our corpus, as many of the articles about Argentina make reference to the relationship between Cristina Fernandez and her late husband, Nestor Kirchner. (In other contexts, it may be more relevant to use some of the other categories proposed).</p>
Impersonalisation	<p><u>van Leeuwen’s definition:</u> Social actors are impersonalised when they are represented by abstract or concrete nouns which “<i>do not include the semantic feature ‘human’</i>”. This category is subdivided into Abstraction and Objectivation (van Leeuwen, 1996, p. 59), with the latter being further subdivided into four additional sub-categories.</p> <p><i>Cont. next page.</i></p> <p><u>Our version:</u> For the sake of simplification, in our analysis we apply the same label -impersonalisation- to the different ways in which actors are stripped of their human features and somehow objectivised, as happens in the case of nominalizations.</p>

Table 1. Simplification and adaptation of van Leeuwen's socio-semantic categories

Perhaps the most significant element in this adaptation process is the assimilation of various subcategories into one, or the decision to apply only some of the categories proposed instead of all of them. Although van Leeuwen's categories are not exploited in all their delicacy potential, we believe this adaptation constitutes an initial step towards putting this linguistic theory into practice and serves a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, it can make the exploratory task more manageable for the novice analyst, and on the other hand, it can facilitate the potential application of linguistic categories in the EFL classroom.

In our research, these adapted categories are presented in a table for data collection from our corpus, consisting of 24 newspaper/magazine articles from well-known USA and UK publications released between the end of 2007 and the end of 2011, a period roughly coinciding with Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner's first presidential term.

Table 2 illustrates the application of the research instrument to one of the articles in our corpus. Only one example from each category is provided for illustration purposes.

Newspaper Article: <i>Cristina in the land of make-believe</i> –The Economist- May, 1 st 2008 http://www.economist.com/node/11293743 (Text between brackets in first column is included to provide co-textual references).						
Social actor as portrayed in the text	Activation / Passivation	Nomination	Functionalisation	Relational identification	Appraisal	Impersonalisation
Cristina (in the land of make believe)	P	INF				
Carlos Fernandez (is a non-entity)	P	SF			EXT (-)	
Ms. Fernandez (shows little sign of curtailing the dash for growth..)	A	F				
Argentina's new president is leading her country into economic peril and conflict	A		X		EXT (-)	
Her campaign promise	A					Nominalisation (CFK promised...)
(Cristina Fernandez succeeded) her husband, Nestor Kirchner	P	SF		X		

P: Passivation / A: Activation; INF: Informal /SF: Semi formal/ F: Formal ; X (*indicates category selected*); EXT (-): Extrinsic Appraisal, with negative load.

Table 2. Sample of the categories surveyed in our research

It should be noted that the table above applies to individual social actors only. For the analysis of collective social actors, an alternative table has been devised considering further categories not included here, given the scope of this paper.

With the data from the social actors tables used in our research, we conduct both, quantitative and qualitative analysis. In this way, we identify the social actors that are brought to the text and the number of times they are referred to, the degree of formality and/or informality with which they are referred to (*nomination*), the aspects of their persona selected for referencing them (*functionalisation*,

relational identity), as well as their displacement through discursive strategies (*impersonalisation*) and their evaluation (*appraisal*). The data thus gathered reveal certain trends which provide evidence of the type of representation being constructed in the texts. Because data analysis is currently underway, no research findings are presented at this point.

We believe that the value of van Leeuwen's categories lies in their capacity to put meaning at the core of text analysis, going beyond formal grammatical categories. We also believe that this meaning centred orientation to the analysis and interpretation of texts can be brought to the classroom and can help students to see social actors not merely as nouns and pronouns but as real people.

Classroom application as a destination: aiming at learners' autonomy

Based on our research exploration, we make some pedagogical suggestions in the form of 'social actors tables' intended to help students to discover the ways in which human participants are represented in discourse. We consider that the implementation of these suggestions can contribute to the development of students' autonomy.

When learner autonomy becomes an objective, it is necessary to think of tools that students can use without depending on the teacher. In this respect, we share Holec's (1981, p. 3) view of autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" and "a potential capacity to act in the learning situation". Also, extending the concept beyond the learning situation, James (2006, p. 151) claims that the main objective of ELT is that "*students will apply outside the classroom what they have learned inside the classroom*".

Some aspects of our research seem relevant to strengthen the link between the classroom and the outside world. Firstly, our work is based on newspaper articles, which deal with everyday matters and are often regarded as powerful motivators. Mishan (2005, p. 154) considers newspapers "*the best single source of information about the contemporary culture of a country*". Secondly, our research is focused on exploring the representation of people in texts beyond grammatical categories, which brings a real-world perspective to the analysis of texts.

For students to be able to deal with the people in newspaper articles on their own, they need to be guided to develop certain learning strategies. In the words of Jeremy Harmer (2007, p. 394), "*to compensate for the limits of classroom time and to boost the chances for successful classroom language and acquisition, students need to be encouraged to develop their own learning strategies so that as far as possible, they become autonomous learners.*" In this respect, teachers play a central role in helping students develop such strategies.

An initial requirement to help students handle these social actor categories is the teachers' familiarization with the theoretical principles underlying this proposal, as the use of these categories may require further adaptations considering the level being taught and the type of text being used in different contexts. Once teachers are acquainted with this approach, students' awareness may be raised starting with simple questions such as:

Who are the people in this text?

Are they referred to by their first name, their surname or a nickname?

Is their occupation used to refer to them?

Is their relationship to other people the identifying element?

Then, more evaluative or critical questions may be introduced:

How are people 'treated' in the text?

Are people presented under a positive/negative light?

Are people objectivised?

Once the class is focused on people, our proposed 'social actor tables' can be introduced gradually, with different categories presented one at a time. Table 3 below, focused on nomination, can guide students to classify the social actors in the text based on the degree of formality or informality with which they are referred to:

Social actor (Proper names)	Nomination			
	Formal Mr/Mrs/Ms	Semiformal Name+ surname	Informal Given name	Honorific Title /rank

Table 3: Sample table for the nomination category

A similar adaptation process can be used to introduce the functionalisation category. This would engage students in classifying actors in terms of the social activity they perform.

Social actor	Function or activity

Table 4: Sample table for the functionalisation category

Two or more categories can then be combined to record different types of data in the same table:

Social actor (as referred to in text)	Nomination				Functionalisation
	Formal Mr/Mrs/Ms	Semiformal Name+ surname	Informal Given name	Honorific Title /Rank	

Table 5: Sample table combining nomination and functionalisation

Some of the categories may be more complex to implement. For instance, the category of impersonalisation may impose certain constraints, as identifying impersonalised representations of

social actors requires a higher level of abstraction that very young students may not be prepared to handle considering that this skill “tends to develop later in the maturation of the individual” (Martin, 1997). However, in the right classroom context, this category has great potential for critical analysis of texts since it involves the identification of social actors divested of their human attributes.

Hidden social actor (not mentioned in the text)	Impersonalised representation

Table 6: Sample table for impersonalisation

Once students have completed different tables for a given text, they may be guided to identify certain trends or variations in the way the same actor is referred to in different parts of the same text. Also, in the case of newspaper articles, students may be asked to identify variations in the way different articles (possibly from different media sources) present a certain participant.

We believe that once students have been instructed in the identification of the categories and in the use of the tables proposed, they can apply that understanding to new texts. Each table can be used as a sort of generic template to help students to discover by themselves the way in which people are represented and ‘treated’ in a text. The use of such analytical artefacts can become a lens for students to approach new texts. They can also guide them to formulate their own questions when dealing with a text, instead of expecting the teacher to provide the questions, as it is clear that “no students anywhere will have their teachers to accompany them throughout life (Littlewood, 1999, p.73).

We also believe that the use of this pedagogical resource can provide students with a tool to ‘think with,’ which is a significant step towards developing autonomy. If students can apply these tables to a text, they can then ‘question’ any new text with the same analytical categories. Undoubtedly, outside the classroom students will encounter many references to social actors, and if they have been made aware of the existence of the analytical categories proposed for their study, we believe that their autonomy and critical thinking skills can be enhanced.

Conclusion

The questions posed by van Leeuwen regarding the way people are represented in texts seem to be relevant not only for linguistic research but also for educational practices in which the development of autonomy and critical thinking is a goal. Helping students discover the discursive resources to represent human participants is certainly a worthwhile endeavour.

We have attempted to build a bridge between linguistic research and classroom application in the belief that this interconnection deserves to be pursued. Such pursuit can benefit both, research and educational communities. The pedagogical tool presented in this paper, which highlights the value of a meaning centred approach to a text’s human participants and the importance of developing students’ autonomy, is intended to be a small contribution in that direction.

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20**Multimodal resources in textbooks:
Powerful motivators****Susana Liruso¹****Marisel Bollati²****Pablo Esteban Requena¹**¹Universidad Nacional de Córdoba²Universidad Nacional de San Juan**Introduction**

The study reported in this paper is part of a larger research project designed to explore several aspects of foreign language textbooks from the perspective of systemic-functional linguistics (SFL). We explore different components such as rubrics, charts, images, framing devices and book covers in six EFL textbooks used in Argentina from beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. In this paper we report on findings regarding the analysis of charts, images and framing devices and show examples from that corpus.

Theoretical background

The SFL framework provides a meaning making orientation to the study of language use as it focuses on language use in social contexts (Halliday, 1994, Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). SFL views language as being intrinsically functional (Martin, 1999). It is precisely this orientation, adapted and applied by Singapore Wala (2003) to the study of textbooks that we have followed. Our study relies on the assumption that many non-linguistic elements in textbooks, which constitute the focus of our analysis, are as functional and meaning making as language. For the study of these elements we resort to research on multimodality, such as Kress and van Leeuwen's work on images (1996), as well as findings from Unsworth (2001) and Bateman (2008), among others. Both the SFL and multimodal orientations are fully interrelated as they are based on Halliday's metafunctional approach. In particular, Kress and van Leeuwen's "grammar of visual design" (1996) provides a structure of representational, interactive and compositional meaning-making resources based on the three Hallidayan metafunctions.

Kress & van Leeuwen's categories	Halliday's categories	Work done
representational	ideational	verbal and visual resources presenting content
interactive	interpersonal	verbal and visual resources constructing the nature of relationships among participants
compositional	textual	language and images organising the content

All these categories are relevant to our study. As is implied from a systemic functional perspective, the three metafunctional types of meaning occur simultaneously in the creation of any text. When applied to multimodal elements, this claim continues to be true to a large extent. In the case of *images*, ideational (representational) meaning tends to stand out, construing content, with an interpersonal (interactive) element establishing some kind of bond with the textbook user or “viewer” (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996, p.119). The textual (compositional) element is inevitably realised as images are made to interact with the rest of the elements on a page, which are thus “integrated into a meaningful whole” (1996, p.181). When it comes to *charts/tables*, the representational element tends to be construed verbally, with the level of interaction realised through open options inviting the participation of the textbook user or closed options denying such possibility. The compositional element in charts is particularly relevant as non-verbal elements (mostly lines, shapes and shades of colour) are deployed to organise and give special meanings to the verbal elements. *Framing* also combines the creation of these three forms of meaning, with the compositional component standing out, as the dominant purpose of framing devices is that of organising content. At the same time, these devices create ideational or representational meaning by establishing associations between related elements, and interpersonal or interactive meaning through degrees of formality or informality, friendliness or detachment associated with the specific framing tools selected (confront the effect of a straight versus a crooked line separating sections or the use of cold versus warm colours).

The importance of visual literacy, or in Wileman's words: “the ability to ‘read,’ interpret, and understand information presented in pictorial or graphic images” (cited in Stokes, 2001, p. 12) cannot be overestimated. With the emphasis traditionally placed on the verbal components of language teaching materials, there is the risk of forgetting that visual literacy comes before verbal literacy in human development (Stokes, 2001). If images and other visual elements play such an important role in a person's development, it is only natural that their presence in textbooks should have a beneficial effect on the learning process.

From a motivational perspective, we endorse Dörnyei's definition of motivation as the “sustained process of mastering an L2” (Dörnyei, 2005, p. 616) and claim that multimodal resources are potentially powerful motivators which can provide variety, organisation, aesthetics, as well as strictly academic input. Such positive motivators may add to the learners' interest in interacting with the textbook. This idea has been verified through a research study by Mayer (2003), which claims that students learn more effectively through a combination of words and images than from words alone.

Modern pedagogical approaches attach great importance to authentic communication as it enhances language learning. In line with this emphasis, textbooks seek to recreate the “authenticity” of real life situations in the L2 culture. We believe that this authenticity, partly achieved through the use of multimodal resources, can be highly motivating for learners. Acknowledging the critical role that motivation plays in language learning, we believe that teachers’ understanding of the full potential of multimodal resources used in textbooks can become a highly relevant pedagogical tool to help learners to make stronger connections between their own experience and the target culture. Such connections might in turn foster a positive attitude towards the foreign language and, as many researchers have hypothesised (Dörnyei, 2005, Gardner, 1985), L2 learners are more likely to learn the target language more effectively if they have a positive attitude.

Findings

Charts / tables

The study of charts/tables included gathering information on the colour, form, framing, type of interaction proposed and the section of the textbook such charts/tables belong to. These elements tend to appear in colour or in a combination of colours and are rectangular in shape. Most of the charts/tables surveyed are framed, either by means of a coloured rectangular background, lines marking a rectangle, or open lines indicating a rectangular shape. Regarding the type of interaction afforded by this type of graphic elements, we explored whether each table/chart provided a “closed” or an “open” type of interaction. Based on criteria identified by Kress and van Leeuwen (1996), interaction was considered to be closed when the table/chart presented exemplified or showed some type of data providing the totality of the information, and it was considered open when the textbook user was expected to provide some missing information in order to complete it. Charts with closed interaction patterns predominate. As to the section of the textbook (grammar, reading, writing, etc) in which charts/tables appear, our findings reveal that their presence is not associated predominantly with any one section in particular.

Images

With respect to images, the type of image mostly used is a relatively small size photograph –smaller than a quarter of a page. Several photographs can be found in the same single page, and practically all of them are in colour. Concerning the relation of the images with the verbal aspect, results show that most of the images in all the books surveyed are connected to the task, though there are some instances in which they seemed to be present just for decoration. The text-image relation may be direct –the image is needed to perform a task- or indirect –the image is used to activate previous knowledge.

Another aspect examined was the link between the image and the language skill in focus (listening, speaking, reading and writing), or the subskills associated with vocabulary and grammar. For the analysis of this category, we took into account the explicitness of each instance of image inclusion. We found that the relationship between an image and a skill/subskill is not always explicit. Moreover, many times the same image implicitly relates to more than one category. However, findings from our

study show that the use of images tends to be related to the language skills of speaking and reading, followed by the grammar and vocabulary subskills.

Framing

Framing devices are recurring features –verbal or pictorial- that help the student to recognise a unit/chapter and/or different sections of a textbook (consolidation, revision, tests). All these features are used either to connect or to separate sections in a textbook.

Framing is frequently realised by means of different elements such as lines, colour, texture, shape, and backgrounding or foregrounding effects, among other resources. In our corpus we found the use of framing realised in the form of lines, arrows, special uses of margins, numbers/letters signalling divisions and subdivisions, as well as verbal cues. All the textbooks in our study show a combination of two or three types of framing. The only common element to all the textbooks under study is the presence of a verbal cue and a number (e.g. Unit 3) to introduce a new unit.

Conclusion

In line with a functional multimodal approach, this work acknowledges the semiotic nature of images, charts and framing devices. These interrelated elements make an impact on how ELT textbooks communicate and engage learners. On the one hand, we claim that these elements may impact the learner's willingness to work with the textbook and to sustain efforts in learning. We also claim that multimodal resources may influence the attitudes toward the L2 culture.

Our conviction regarding the important role of multimodal elements is best summarised by O'Halloran and Lim Fei (2011) when they say that "there is a growing recognition that, increasingly in this day and age, information is packaged multimodally (for example, using language, image and audio resources), rather than just through language alone" (p. 2). If we as educators accept that the modern scenario demands multimodal competences, we must also accept our responsibility in coming to grips with such challenge. Once again, we make O'Halloran and Lim Fei's claim our own:

Educators have the responsibility to understand the multimodal ways in which knowledge is presented and, beyond that, to teach students to access, appraise and appropriate the multimodal texts which they will inevitably encounter. (O'Halloran & Lim Fei, 2011, p. 2)

We believe that this is a responsibility we cannot afford to ignore.

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21

Gender differences: Do they matter at school?

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Introduction

One of the often-repeated complaints made by teachers nowadays is that, in spite of endless efforts, girls tend to perform better than boys both in coed and single-sex classrooms. Teachers have started to compare boys and girls as regards their distractions in class, their apparent predisposition to certain areas of study or their reaction and learning styles. The scarcity of information about the influence of gender in education in Argentina might prove the need to inquire into this topic and others that might arise in connection to this issue.

This paper contains a summary of a study on gender preferences conducted in Argentina. The purpose of this paper is to explore whether gender differences affect the teaching-learning process. In doing so, the second focus of this study is to determine whether primary school students evidence a preference for certain topics and tasks when learning English as a foreign language.

It is important to mention that in this study I shall be generalizing based on relevant research. Of course, there are exceptions to each generalization as every child is an individual, and male and female differences range both between boys and girls, and among boys and girls. It is also relevant to say that both, boys and girls, are equally capable of learning and succeeding, but they do so in ways that teachers must understand if we are to create an educational environment that meets the needs of both.

Literature Review

Along the past decades gender development has been approached by several major theories. These theories differ on the emphasis placed on psychological, biological and sociocultural determinants.

Biological determinants of gender development

Defenders of the biological influence in gender development (Gurian 2003, 2008; Sax 2005, 2007) claim that boys and girls learn in a different way because there are biologically programmed differences between them.

According to Sax (2005, p. 28), “today we know that innate differences between girls and boys are profound. [...] Girls and boys behave differently because their brains are wired differently.”

Socio-cultural determinants of gender development

Some other gender theorists (Baron-Cohen, 2005; Chadwell, 2010; Hubbard, 2002; Riordan, 1990) rely more on the way on which social interaction shapes individual and group expectations of what men and women should be like. Thus, this theory favours a multifaceted social transmission model in which schools play a relevant role as agents of human development.

One of the clearest explanations of how boys and girls' interests begin to separate in early schooling, lies in the concept of sex-role stereotyping.

Chadwell (2010, p. 94) states:

It is crucial that educators not stereotype boys and girls by saying *all boys* or *all girls* learn in one only exclusive way; or that boys move around a lot, and girls sit still, listen, and do their work; or that boys are naturally good at math and girls are naturally verbal. Characterizing gender differences in this way limits the opportunities for students.

What happens at schools?

According to Gurian (2003), schools and educators at the moment are struggling to teach all that they need to teach, maintain discipline, build character, and provide for the safety of the children in their care. However, he argues that "few educators understand the differences between how boys' and girls' brains work, how they differ, and what they need in order to learn (p. 1)."

The first change agent in schools seems to be the teacher. A crucial influence in the way that teachers and students interact appears to be the teachers' own gender stereotypes. Gurian (2003) claims that

in kindergarten through six grade, almost 90% of the teachers are women, and female learning teaching styles dominate. Teachers have not received training in male development and performance. Most systems rely less on kinaesthetic and less disciplined educational strategies than many boys need. (p. 27)

Encouragement in typically stereotyped educational fields at school would tend to deprive students from the possibility of developing all their natural talents. Riordan (1999) in Datnow and Hubbard (2002) claims that

Students hold relatively clear expectations for each other as to academic competence at various tasks (Cohen, 1994, 2000). Furthermore, research demonstrates that group members who assume and are accorded high status in one area of expertise, such as reading, are expected to be more competent and influential in other non-related tasks as well, academic and non-academic. [.....] Specifically, it means that women might be accorded higher status in all academic skills based on their reading ability or that men might be accorded higher status based on their mathematical ability. (p.12, 13)

Differences are also evident from research on what activities and teaching techniques are used for boys and girls. According to Gurian (2003),

Many boys find one learning mode they like and stick with it, whereas girls generally like moving from one mode to another – probably a reflection of the multitasking female brain. Although some boys also enjoy a variety of learning modes, girls usually shine when provided with numerous ways of learning. (p.109)

The differences that occur in schools may also have an early impact on boys and girls in terms of reading selection and reading performance. Sax (2005) claims that “girls and boys like to read different things. [...] Most girls prefer fiction: short stories and novels. Boys are more likely to choose nonfiction: descriptions of real events - battles or adventures - or illustrated accounts of how things work, like spaceships, bombs or volcanoes.” (p. 107)

However, Sax and other authors (Gurian, 2008; James, 2011) tend to suggest that a concentration on a limited range of genres may reproduce inequality and perpetuate differential access to literate practices. Though educators should cater for boys’ and girls’ likes and preferences, Sax (2005, p. 111) argues that “they must avoid falling into the approach “fiction for the girls, non-fiction for the boys.” Sax (2005, p. 111) suggests that “this attitude would reinforce stereotyping and lead boys into believing that great literature is only for girls.”

Conversely, Sax (2005) claims that “Boys *do* like fiction, if it is the right kind of fiction: strong male characters doing unpredictable things, for instance. Hemingway, Dostoyevsky, and Mark Twain, for starters” (p. 111).

The themes that boys and girls choose to write about also seem to be marked by gender differences. Given a free choice, boys tend to write about topics such as plane crashes, murders or war exploits; while girls continue to prefer writing that is self-reflective or empathetic (Gurian, 2008).

Method

Data were collected from two single-sex private bilingual schools in the northern area of Greater Buenos Aires. One of the aforementioned schools was a school for girls where 100% of the teaching staff were women and the other a school for boys where 100% of the teaching staff were men.

The study was conducted through a written questionnaire which was completed by thirty teachers. The criterion used for the choice of teachers was that 15 teachers were female teachers who worked in a school for girls, and 15 were male teachers who worked in a school for boys.

The questionnaire was designed and administered in Spanish. Some questions were predetermined, i.e. the respondent was required to complete the question; whereas others were response-keyed: they were designed so that subsequent questions may or may not be answered, depending on the response given. Some other questions were of the open ended type in order to allow the respondents to provide his/her own answers.

The questionnaire focused on the following main issues:

Are teachers aware of their female/male students’ cognitive styles?

What class activities and topics do they find more effective to work with their female/male students?

Results and Discussion

It was considered relevant to compare and contrast the information obtained from the respondents’ replies to the individual questions, with the purpose of strengthening the reliability of the analysis.

One of the questions asked the participants to define their female/male students’ learning style according to the learning techniques their students felt more attracted to. They were asked to choose one of the following options: a) varied and innovative learning techniques, b) traditional

techniques that are known by them, c) very few or no techniques at all seem to attract them. Of the total number of respondents, 13 of the teachers who worked with girls stated that their female students were attracted by varied and innovative teaching techniques, whereas 7 of the teachers who worked with boys reported that their boy students were attracted by teaching techniques that were traditional and familiar to them.

In order to find out what class activities boy and girl students enjoyed the most, the teachers were presented with a list of class activities, which they ranked from 1 to 10; 10 indicating those that the students enjoyed the most and 1 indicating those that the students enjoyed the least. There was also an open-ended option for the participants to give any other activity not provided by the question. The opinion of both groups of teachers as regards what activities *they* found more effective to work with girls and with boys differed considerably (see Figure 1). According to the results discussed in the present study, the teaching activities that the teachers who worked with girls found more effective to work with their girl students were role playing (66.67%), dramatizations (77.78%), songs (77.78%), cooperative work (72.72%), contextualized exercises (66.67%) and creative exercises (78.78%). In contrast, the teachers who worked with boys reported that their male students were attracted by group competitions (94.44%), problem-solving activities (77.8%) and group and individual activities (61.1%).

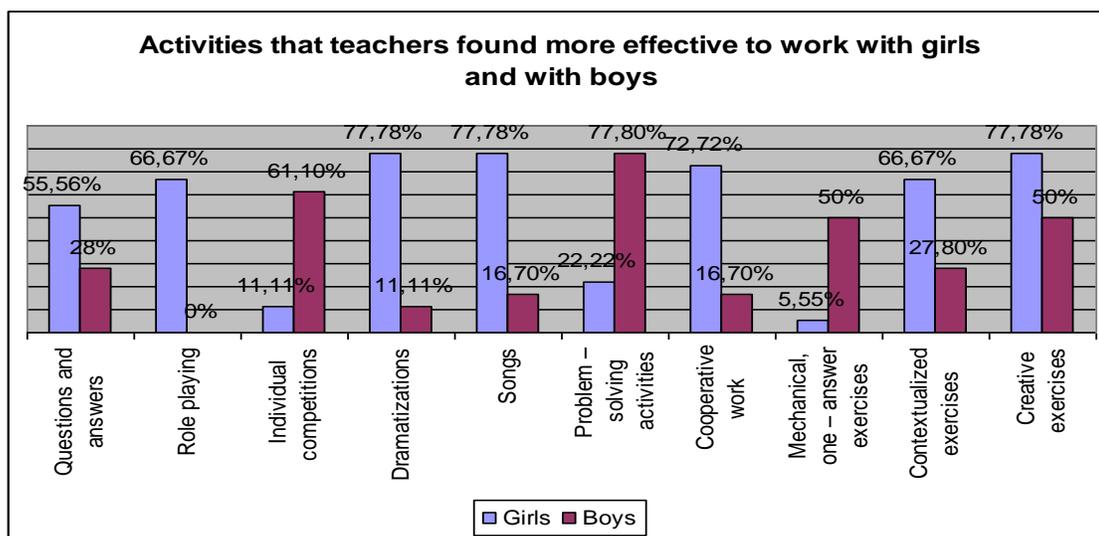


Figure 1: Activities that teachers found more effective to work with girls and with boys.

To get to know the teachers' opinion about what topics *they* perceived that their male and female students found more appealing, the participants were presented with a list of 10 topics, which they ranked from 1 to 10; 10 indicating the most appealing, and 1 indicating the least appealing. The information given by both groups of teachers in this respect differed significantly. The answers given by the respondents reported that there was a marked tendency for girls to enjoy topics such as: adventures, animals, the family and friends, film stars, TV stars and singers, romance and love stories

and myths and legends. Boys seemed to enjoy natural phenomena, sports, war and discoveries or scientific processes much more than girls (Table 1).

Topic	Very appealing to	
	Girls	Boys
Natural phenomena	22.22%	44.44%
Animals	66.7%	44.44%
The family and friends	83.33%	22.22%
Sports	16.7%	77.8%
Film stars, TV stars and singers	66.7%	0%
Adventures	77.8%	55.5%
Romance and love stories	55.5%	0%
War	0%	50%
Myths and legends	50%	27.8%
Discoveries or scientific processes	0%	22.22%

Table 1: Topics reported to be appealing to girls and boys.

As regards the school subjects that both sexes are more attracted by, the participants were presented with a list of 12 subjects, and were asked to mark the ones they considered that boys and girls enjoyed the most. The participants could choose more than one subject. The answers given by both groups of teachers clearly portrayed that boys and girls seem to share different interests. According to the opinion of the teachers interviewed in this study, girls seem to prefer literature and singing and drama; whereas boys seem to prefer mathematics, natural sciences, computing studies and social sciences (Table 2).

Subject	Enjoyed by girls	Enjoyed by boys
Maths	16.6%	72.2%
Natural Sciences	16.6%	50%
Computing Studies	16.6%	72.2%
Sports	22.2%	94,4%
Literature	44.4%	0%
Music	55.5%	61.1%
Drawing	66.66%	77.8%

Table 2: Subjects that boys and girls find more appealing.

The participants in this study were also asked to define what types of books their male and female students chose to read when they were allowed to choose books for extensive reading or for pleasure. The participants were required to base their responses on their own observations. The teachers who worked with girls reported that girls were more attracted by romantic and fantasy novels; as opposed to boys who were reported to be attracted by non-fiction stories about discoveries and inventions and science fiction novels. Both sexes were reported to share and interest in adventure, terror, and detective stories (Table 3).

Book type	Chosen by girls	Chosen by boys
Adventure novels	66.66%	77.80%
Romantic novels	66.66%	0%
Fantasy novels	88.88%	38.91%
Terror stories	50%	55.55%
Detective stories	50%	50%
Biographies	27.77%	22.22%
War stories	27.77%	38.90%
Non-fiction stories about discoveries and inventions	11.11%	55.55%
Science fiction novels	11.11%	55.55%
Scientific non-fictional stories	0%	27.80%

Table 3: Books chosen by girls and boys for extensive reading or reading for pleasure.

Conclusions

In general terms, the teachers who worked with girls perceived that girls were more prone to accept innovative teaching techniques and they were reported to be fond of more varied teaching activities compared to boys.

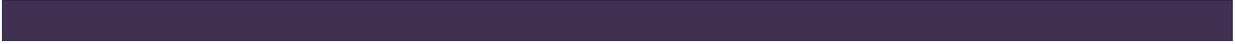
Girls and boys seem to share different interests concerning the subjects they enjoy at school, the reading material and the class topics they like. The teachers who participated in this study agreed that girls enjoyed more literature and singing and drama, while boys preferred mathematics, natural and social sciences, and computing studies. Girls chose romantic and fantasy stories as reading material, while boys chose non-fiction and science fiction stories and stories of inventions and discoveries. Both sexes were reported to feel attracted by terror and detective stories. Topics such as animals, the family and friends, film stars and singers, romance, love stories and adventures were associated to girls, whereas boys felt identified with books on natural phenomena, sports, technology and war.

At the same time, the analysis of the data collected served to prove that teachers were aware that boys and girls are different, especially as regards girls' and boys' performance and interests. It would be logical to conclude, then, that boys and girls should be exposed to a differentiated methodology, if we mean to cater for their academic and personal needs.

Using reading and writing material that appeals to both sexes, and implementing class activities that cater for the needs of boys and girls, might be a starting point to make our lessons more motivating. The main limitations of the present study are that the available research on this topic is surprisingly scanty and the designing of a gender differentiated pedagogy is in its early stages. Consequently, this study might humbly be considered a starting point for future research. Similar studies should be conducted to determine whether these differences are indeed valid and replicable across different demographic groups and different cultures.

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