



REVISTA KRONOS

What Are Some Practices and Outcomes Beyond the English Class? A Narrative Inquiry About the English Teaching/Learning Process

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ABSTRACT The teaching of English as a Foreign Language in the Ecuadorian educational system faces several challenges, among them, deficient teacher preparation for teaching the subject and the passive role of students in the learning process in the classroom. Through the LEARN Project (Leadership in English and Research Network), English teachers from different parts of the country received training on activities and methodological strategies that can be applied in the classroom. The present study is aimed to explain the challenges that both students and teachers experience in the teaching/learning process of English as a Foreign Language and which strategies are favorable and functional in a school in the province of Cañar, Ecuador. The teacher researcher explained the context in which the teaching/learning process of her students takes place. Most of the students coming from rural areas and experiencing social phenomena such as migration, teenage pregnancy and drug addiction shaped students' conception of the importance of learning and participation. Strategies learned in the training were instrumental in motivating students, as well as creating a safe learning environment where students feel good. Students explained that their previous experiences learning English were unfavorable due to having monotonous classes, study of basic topics, and lack of motivation. Conclusively, students stated that classes with their current teacher represent a marked improvement due to the implementation of activities, practice opportunities, and having a favorable classroom environment.

KEY WORDS Meaningful activities, classroom environment, confidence, practice, engagement.

FECHA DE RECEPCIÓN 17/10/2023

FECHA DE APROBACIÓN 29/04/2024

¿Cuáles son algunas prácticas y resultados más allá de la clase de Inglés? Una investigación narrativa sobre el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje del inglés

RESUMEN La enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera en el sistema educativo ecuatoriano atraviesa distintos desafíos, entre ellos, la deficiente preparación docente para la enseñanza de la asignatura y el rol pasivo que desempeñan los estudiantes en el proceso de aprendizaje dentro del aula. A través del Proyecto LEARN (Leadership in English and Research Network), personal docente del área de inglés de distintas partes del país recibió entrenamiento acerca de actividades y estrategias metodológicas aplicables dentro del aula. Mediante el presente estudio, se planteó explicar los desafíos que tanto estudiantes como maestros experimentan en el proceso de enseñanza/aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera y cuáles estrategias resultan favorables y funcionales en un colegio de la provincia de Cañar, Ecuador. La maestra participante explicó el contexto en el que se desarrolla el proceso de enseñanza/aprendizaje de sus estudiantes. Los estudiantes de la institución vienen de zonas rurales y experimentan fenómenos sociales como migración, embarazos adolescentes y drogadicción, moldeando su concepción acerca de la importancia de aprender y participar en el aula de clase. Las estrategias aprendidas en el entrenamiento fueron fundamentales para motivar a los estudiantes, así como la creación de un ambiente de aprendizaje seguro en el cual los estudiantes se sientan cómodos y seguros. Los estudiantes explicaron que sus experiencias previas con el idioma resultaron poco favorables debido a tener clases monótonas, estudio de temas básicos y falta de motivación. De manera concluyente, afirmaron que las clases con su actual docente representan una notable mejoría debido a la implementación de actividades, oportunidades de práctica y un ambiente de clase favorable

PALABRAS CLAVE Actividades significativas, ambiente de clase favorable, confianza, práctica, interés.

Education is perceived as an instrument to improve the life-quality of individuals in ways that conform with social values. However, the role of the educational system is not limited to provide learners with academic content necessary for their academic development but also to provide individuals with the foundation to coexist with others in a society based on those strong values. As stated in Ecuadorian EFL (English as A Foreign Language) Curriculum (2016): “The curriculum also supports general educational goals of justice, innovation, and solidarity, by developing thinking, social, and creative skills in the context of language learning”. Through the achievement of those goals, learners must be able to be part of and respond to the challenges of a 21st-century globalized world. Through this paper, the teacher researcher will explore the realities and challenges that teachers and students experience during their teaching and learning process, and which strategies can be applied in the classroom to help students in their English instruction.

Nowadays, education faces challenges in achieving its goals, particularly in Latin America. In the case of Ecuador, certain factors influence the results of students’ performance and achievement of learning outcomes. Some of those factors such as infrastructure, socioeconomic level and educational model determine Ecuadorian students’ results in their educational level. The influence of those factors certainly may influence students’ motivation to learn, engage in class and continue with their academic formation.

In the case of EFL, public schools provide 3 class hours, 40 minutes each, for English instruction per week. Since there is a limited time to instruct the language, students hardly cover the content they must learn and are stuck at such primary content as colors and numbers. Furthermore, social misconceptions about English learning affect the teaching and learning process. As Spanish is Ecuador’s official language, English is considered irrelevant in daily life communication. Moreover, there is a common belief that learning a language is difficult and should be restricted to people whose professional development requires English; thus, the learning processes and the relevance of learning English for students decreases, and in some cases, students are reluctant to learn.

Nevertheless, education is a complex area of professionalization and study primarily because it involves working with human beings. When we refer to human beings, it is not exclusively related to students; but also to teachers, administrators, and families. Everyone has their own ideas, beliefs, culture, and personal values that shape how they act and behave. Considering the richness of human capital manifested in diverse social areas, education among them, any characteristic can affect the environment and the educational process.

CONTEXT

Ecuador’s education system is organized in 9 Zones with a total of 140 districts. This organization is designed to improve the management and optimization of resources in the country (Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo, 2012). This organizational system allows for a national planning with a vision that considers the specifications and needs of every region. Accordingly, it can be stated that the needs, challenges, and characteristics of each school are different.

The setting for this specific research study is Zone 6, located in the southern part of the country, which comprises the provinces of Cañar, Azuay, and Morona Santiago. The school is in an urban area and offers classes from 8th to 10th grade of Basic Education (EGBS) and from 1st to 3rd year of high school BGU (Bachillerato General Unificado). The school offers options to study diverse areas of professionalization when students start high school levels. The options that students have are related to technical areas such as General

Sciences, Computer Sciences, and Agribusiness. The students' age range goes from 12 to 18 years old.

THE TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE

At first sight the infrastructure and area were more extensive in comparison to other public schools. The classrooms were organized in a U-shape, where the main two-floor building was in the middle with rows of classrooms. The classrooms had big windows and adequate size, so learners would have enough room to work, and there was natural light.

After becoming familiar with the physical space, there was a meeting with the English teacher who was part of the research project. This teacher participated in the TESOL best practices training course which provided the participants methodologies, strategies and activities that can be integrated into EFL lessons to improve the teaching and learning process. Moreover, she was a new teacher in the high school; she had been working at this high school for two months, but she had nine years of experience being an English teacher. The researcher became familiar with the school environment and the groups with which the teacher works. One of the classes had just three students; they were assigned to one of the most undersized classrooms, but they still had enough space to work. The other classes had 22 to 29 students. The teacher worked with high school students, from 2nd BGU and 3rd BGU (Senior Year).

A positive aspect in the class was the rapport. Although students had a close relationship with their English teacher, they always behaved appropriately. There was an elevated level of voluntary participation and students were confident enough to comply with their teacher's instructions. After observing the lessons, the teacher was interviewed, asking about particular aspects that she noticed in the school and addressing how these aspects influence her teaching practice. First, she explained the school environment and discussed how it influences students' learning process.

R: Could you please describe the context of your educational institution?

T: "During the short time I have been in the institution, I have noticed several problems that influence the students' learning. You can notice that there is a lack of interest of the students in the school, and this is due to various causes such as parents' migration, teenage pregnancy, and drug addiction in many cases. But of course, some students like to work, 3 to 4 in class. When we see these problems in the classroom, we try to have a good relationship with the students. If you are too strict, students lose interest, that is why you must create a good relationship with them, make them laugh in class.

Unfortunately, students do not like to think, so I like students to think in my class. I like them to reflect on what they are learning, and to do this, I use sentences that are purposely incorrect or with mistakes, so I ask them, "Do you think it is correct?", to which many students answer "Yes" when I ask them "why?" Many times, students answer, "Because it is the teacher that says it", so that is what I try to change, I try to get students to think. Students should be responsible for constructing knowledge; teachers are guides or instructors in the learning process since it is the students who put everything together, and that is why it is necessary for them to think.

Many students come from rural areas, and many of them have different problems. Out of about 10, 1 or 2 are problem free. All the problems that students have influence their education, and that's why we must support them. I often hear kids say "What's the point of studying?", and I always tell them, "The school is going to help you, then everything will be solved. Imagine how proud you must be to get a degree because of your effort. "That's what I try to do, to alleviate the problems of the kids, that's what should be done in class".

Teacher Interview 1

The teacher's response shows the realities, challenges, and problems that are part of a broader society. Because those external factors influence students' lives, it is evident that learners' particular backgrounds, embracing both positive and negative experiences, define their readiness and engagement in the learning process.

Clearly teachers cannot solve all the problems that students have; but at least they can become supportive actors with an essential role in encouraging students to learn. The teacher shared profound insights about the relationship between the teacher and students. Creating a classroom environment where students see their teacher as someone trustworthy is key to the class's success. Humor shows students that she genuinely cares about them. As a result, students feel confident and eager to participate; they have created a bond of friendship with their teacher, but also recognize that she still is an authority in the class.

Another worthy factor involved the type of activities that the teacher used to work interactively with the students. In the case of the 2nd BGU of Agribusiness, the class had three students. Because there was plenty of space to work, the teacher used different layouts, each depending on the type of activities she planned. Students were situated in a group where they could discuss ideas, work as a team, and even correct one another. With the other classes, the characteristics of the lessons were similar. The teacher asked students "How they had been doing" and interacted with them, responding cleverly to their jokes.

After that, there were recap activities, the use of teamwork, opportunities to experiment with the language through freer (more unrestricted) practice as well as, providing personalized feedback and cheering up students, and allowing learners to discover how to understand and use grammar structures covered in class.

Classroom observation reflected what the teacher mentioned during the interview. Allowing students to learn through group work, pair work, experiment with the language, and discover rules and purposes give learners a more active role in their learning process. Another reality that schools are facing, and the teacher highlights, is that students are used to playing a passive, receptive role in education. Commonly, students expect teachers to instruct them and provide all the content that they need; they take a receptive role without questioning whether their teachers are providing correct information or not. That is what the teacher in this narrative intends to change in her classroom; she encourages students to think and reflect on what they are learning; then they can discover how to understand the content they are learning and give a meaningful purpose to it; in general, to have an active role in their learning process which is related to Constructivism which states that "Learning can occur when students are challenged, open, and comfortable, while giving their full attention. It is important that teachers and learners develop trust and openness in the classroom for all students to become engaged and attentive" Kalina (2009).

During informal conversations and the interview, the teacher shared her points of view about the challenges that English teachers face in their classes. She explained that something common in English classes is translation, and students get used just to listening to what the teacher says. However, during the TESOL workshop, she learned new strategies and methodologies that she incorporated into her lessons. She considers that the strategies that she learned during the course fit with her perspective on teaching English. The teacher explained that the best way to learn a language is through practice. Students must have an active role during the lessons, and teachers must be facilitators who support their learning process, so she tries to provide opportunities for students to put into practice what they learn during the lessons.

R: *How have the lessons learned in the training course influenced your professional practice?*

T: *"Very much, I have implemented the methodologies and strategies I learned throughout the workshop. I try to let my students be the ones who construct their knowledge. The students were very used to translation and to the teacher explaining everything to them. That also happens in this school, and I realized it when*

I arrived because I was not there from the beginning of the school year, I just arrived in November. Now I try to use English and have the students practice so they can learn because practice is the best way to learn the language. Now the students can create paragraphs and give their own examples”.

Teacher Interview 1

Another relevant point the teacher mentions is the importance of having a good relationship with students. During the training course, she was a student, and noticed how important it is to have a close relationship with the teacher. She said that she was never afraid of asking questions because of the confidence she had with her teacher. According to Brekelmans (2002) “In the classroom environment, the interpersonal relationship between teacher and students is an important element contributing to the learning process of students”. It is something that she uses in her classes. As a teacher, she knows when her students do not understand something, so she tries to create an environment where students can be honest and say whether they really understood or not, so she can explain again.

R: *Do you consider yourself a different teacher after the training course?*

T: *“Yes, definitely. Adeline was very charismatic and kind, both, actually; so, I was never afraid to ask if I had doubts. I feel that’s how a teacher should be; they should give confidence to their students so they can ask questions, and if there is that confidence to ask, as teachers we can know if the students understood the subject or not”.*

Teacher Interview 1

During the conversations and the interview, the teacher talked about what she could see during the two months that she had been teaching in that school. She found out that her students had issues with Writing and Speaking in English, and a lack of confidence regarding their knowledge of the language. When she came into her classrooms, she talked to her students, as a close friend, and through time they got along. She remembers, laughing a bit, that it felt good when she met her students outside of the classroom and they said phrases such as: “Hello”, “Goodbye”; and although it was in a joking tone, it was satisfactory to see students using the language. She reminds them when they say that they struggle with English and that learning is a process that takes time, but that students can do it if they practice and work hard. Also, there is an improvement in the quality of the assignments that students present, and it is a signal of progress in students’ learning path.

R: *If you had a change in your professional practice, do you think your students noticed the change? Could you explain with an example?*

T: *“Yes, there has been a change, and where I can see it is in the greeting. Even if it is in a joking tone, the students say phrases like “Hello”, “Goodbye”, and “See you tomorrow”, and even though they say, “I don’t know English”, I tell them: “Yes, you do, look, you are already using phrases”. So, the students are using the language. I can also see a change through the assignments; most of the students have improved, that’s something that gives me satisfaction as a teacher; you can see the results of teaching, it’s reaping what you sow”.*

Teacher Interview 1

Finally, she shared her experience in the TESOL workshop. It was defined as a wonderful experience, and everyone should be involved in that experience. What made it memorable was the engagement and the use of technology and strategies. The participants had an active role, and everyone could bring something from their experience, so it was a constructive experience that can be useful for teachers who implement new methodologies and strategies.

R: *According to your criteria and teaching experience, how do you think teacher training courses should*

be planned?

T: “I think courses should be planned like TESOL, with practice. It is boring when the people who present workshops just talk and talk. In the TESOL courses, they used interactive whiteboards, examples, and activities that involved everyone’s participation and, in some way, having each person contribute and not enter the meeting with the camera off just to mark attendance and leave. This is how workshops should be: practical and also use technology and give opportunities to interact”.

Teacher Interview 1

STUDENTS’ PREVIOUS EXPERIENCES

From the perspective of students, their learning path has varied. It is important to mention that they come with specific characteristics, experiences, and personal profiles, their interests, motivations, and reasons to learn English are different. One of the factors that are related to learners’ interest in learning is previous experiences. A set of positive and negative events may affect how students perceive the English learning process. Thus, students’ expectations, motivation, and willingness to participate are linked to the way they have previously learned or not.

In most cases, students had experienced learning situations that discouraged them from learning since the course content taught was confusing. During the English learning process, students found it challenging to engage in the lessons and understand what they were learning. Most students associate previous English learning experiences with adverse or unsatisfactory events and results. To obtain varied opinions, experiences and points of view, different interviews were conducted to students from the 2nd to 3rd levels chosen at random.

S1: *When I was in school, there were not so many English classes, it was at high school where I learned, but I did not understand my previous teachers. With my current English teacher, I have learned a lot more; she has an exceptionally good way of teaching.*

Student 1 Interview

S3: *When I was in school, the classes were not particularly good, and the teachers did not really know. When we got to high school, English was a compulsory subject, and we had to learn by obligation. At the beginning, we were lost, we did not know, I would say that the teaching here was not so good.*

Student 3 Interview

S4: *In school, we did not learn much; we could say that what we learned were basic things, you know, like how to say, “Good morning”, “Good afternoon” and so on. In high school, I have learned with different teachers, but with the current teacher I have learned well; she is a good teacher.*

Student 4 Interview

S9: *How to say it... awfully bad. When I was in eighth grade, I was in another school, and I met a teacher; she did not give us classes, and one day; she was summoned to the principal’s office; then, she started to misbehave, and she was giving classes, but in a bad mood. When I came to this school, we met a teacher; her name was Fanny, she was the one who awakened my interest in learning English because she was a particularly good teacher. When I was in tenth grade, I did not have such a pleasant experience because I was with another teacher and the classes were not as good. The current teacher who came this year is someone I get along well with; she is an incredibly good teacher.*

Student 9 Interview

Based on what students mentioned during the interviews, they have noticed a variation between their previous learning experiences with the current lessons. Students found out that they had negative experiences in their previous English classes. Some of the points that the teacher mentioned and were observed, for example, their teacher's rapport with the students and integrating different teaching methodologies.

STUDENTS' MOTIVATIONS

As stated in the Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural, Art. 40 (2017) "Universal access, and completion will be guaranteed without any discrimination, as well as compulsory education at the initial, basic and high school levels. It is the right of every person and community to interact between cultures and participate in a learning society". Although learners have experienced events that may influence their attitude towards learning English, there are specific reasons which encourage them to keep learning the target language. Those reasons are seen as motivating factors that give a purpose to students' learning process. It can vary from sharing language knowledge with others, the desire to get better job opportunities, facilitating communication when traveling abroad, and being able to respond to the needs of a globalized scenario. English has become in a vehicle to communicate with individuals from various contexts, places, and backgrounds. It can be evidenced by some personal stories which learners shared during the interviews.

S2: Yes, the truth is that the activities have helped me. For example, in the case of my grandmother, she always wanted to learn English. So, with the activities and what I learn in the classes, I have also been able to help her to learn English. I do not consider myself so good or so bad, but for my mom, I know enough English, so I also help my brother with his homework sometimes, and I believe that these activities help a lot to learn English.

Student 2 Interview

S4: I have a brother who lives in the United States. Since he was born and raised there, he speaks almost no Spanish, so thanks to what I have learned here in the classes I can understand some things he tells me and try to communicate with him. Thanks to what I have learned, I can communicate with my brother, and I can understand people who speak English, at least. The classes have helped me a lot because I did not learn so much before.

Student 4 Interview

S7: Since I am not so easy to have a good relationship with people in real life, I met people online, online friends and many of them spoke English. That is my motivation, to be able to talk to them and communicate in English with them as well as if I were doing it in Spanish. Classroom activities have helped me. As I told you, in conversations, I talk to my nephews who live in the United States, and I understand them a little bit more, so I would say that the classes have helped me because now I can know what they are telling me.

Student 7 Interview

S: It is always good to learn a new language, to travel, to meet people living abroad, and to get to know cultures. I have family in the United States, and they speak English. Now, I understand them a little more, and it has helped me to communicate with them.

Student 8 Interview

During the interviews, most of the participants emphasized the importance that English has to communicate with people, especially family and friends who live abroad. It also responds to the reality that students live within the context of the school. As their teacher mentioned, migration is a phenomenon that influences students' learning. Students' parents tend to migrate to the United States, an English-Speaking country, and there are family members who grew up in an English-speaking context; thus, English is a vehicle that the members of the family use to communicate. Due to this fact, students consider that learning English to allow communication is one of the most important reasons to keep studying the language.

However, there are cases of people who learn English with a different purpose for example, one of the participants (S2) mentioned that she uses the strategies and content she learns in class to teach her grandmother and her brother. During the interview, the participant explained that her grandmother was interested in learning new languages, especially English, because she always wanted to visit England. The student considers herself an average English speaker, but she uses what she learns to help her grandmother and her little brother with his homework. She hopes that her brother will learn the language in the future, which is why she is helping him. It is related to the concept of intrinsic motivation which according to Ryan (2000). "A student could be motivated to learn a new set of skills because he or she understands their potential utility or value or because learning the skills will yield a good grade and the privileges a good grade afford" which is the case of participant 2, who learns English to teach to her family.

S: Yes, in the future I want to be a flight attendant, and I know that English is something that will help me.

Student 3 Interview

Also, students found English learning as an essential element in their professional development. Some students expect to continue studying at the following level and go to college. There was a participant that mentioned her desire to be a flight attendant and considers that speaking English is essential to work in that profession, and that is the reason that motivates her to keep learning.

S: Well, I was born in the United States and lived there for six years; that is, I am a native speaker. But when I came to Ecuador, I did not have anyone to practice with or many people to interact with in English, so my level dropped quite a bit; I would say it dropped 60%. But, about a year ago, I started taking Cambridge courses, and so I have had more opportunities to practice English and my current level is a B1 certification. There have been positive situations. For example, my family manages a hotel, so many foreigners arrive, people whose first language is English, for others it is their second language. I like to be able to communicate with them, it is something extremely useful and satisfying.

Student 6 Interview

Also, there was a participant with a particular characteristic; he is an English native speaker. The student was born in the United States, and he spent his early years in that country. When he came to Ecuador, he noticed that his English level was getting lower since the lack of exposure to the language. He mentioned that he has been taking Cambridge courses which helped him to improve his level. Also, he is in a context where he can practice and use English because his family's hotel receives tourists from different countries. The participant mentioned that what motivates him to learn is the usefulness of English to communicate with people from various places.

LESSONS' PERCEPTIONS

Although there is a wide variety of learning experiences, in most cases, there also exist various negative situations that students have passed through. Whereas most students found positive characteristics in their current English classes. Students described their last lessons as a completely new experience in their English as a Foreign Language learning process. The factors that learners described as innovative and different in the class were: a) integration of practical activities, b) dynamic activities such as role-plays or the development of a product, c) group work, d) use of questions to help students to reflect, and they emphasized the relationship between the teacher and the students. Most of the learners described the relationship between the teacher and the class as close. Hence, students were confident to ask for clarifications or explanations, and described their teacher as someone patient that found ways to help students until they could understand the content of the lesson.

S3: *Classes are good, the teacher makes us understand, and it is better than other classes, we learn a lot. Lessons are incredibly good and are useful in cases such as being able to speak in other countries, so it is useful. Each teacher has his or her own way of teaching. With the previous teachers, I did not understand very well; but with the teacher, the classes are clearer.*

Student 3 Interview

S4: *They are exceptionally good, the teacher knows how to make herself understood, and she is cool; she makes herself understood. Many times, she calls us to the front, and she tells us the processes we must do and explains them well. She is an exceptionally good teacher. The tasks she gives us are good and help us, everything is based on what she explains and teaches us, it helps us to learn more and understand the subject. There is an enormous difference with other teachers' classes. Since I was in eighth grade, I have had several teachers, but I did not understand them very well, they were not very patient to repeat. The current teacher, on the other hand, knows how to make herself understood and is patient in explaining, so that has helped me a lot.*

Student 4 Interview

S5: *They are good classes, she teaches well, and you try to learn; it also depends on you. The activities help us to improve. At first, the teacher gives us classes, then we do classwork, and that helps us understand better. The classes with other teachers were not so clear. Now that we are at a higher level, the topics are more complex, but you can understand them.*

Student 5 Interview

S7: *Classes are good, they have given results, and I have noticed. Now I understand much better, the teacher is patient, and her methods help us to grasp the information she wants to give us. They have been remarkably interesting, it is easier for us to understand, and it has been good. I say it has been quite different. The methods that she uses are easier, there is time to ask questions, and she is patient; she comes back to explain if we do not understand something; on the other hand, with other teachers, they only used to put activities and explained truly little, you can see that they are different classes.*

Student 7 Interview

S8: *It is nice; she knows how to understand us; when we do not understand something, she explains it again, with patience, and makes us understand better. We have not had the opportunity to have many classes with her because the teacher came at the end of the year, so we did not cover much content, but it was fine. The current teacher is good, since she studied to be a teacher. The other teachers gave us English classes in Spanish, she is more prepared to teach us the language.*

Student 8 Interview

S2: *The activities are exceptionally good; I would say they are pretty practical; we even work among classmates sometimes and help each other, which helps us to understand more. There is a lot of difference with other classes. She has very practical activities and explains well. She also knows how some classmates behave and jokes with them; she gets along well with us as a class. The classes are fun, dynamic, and there is confidence. At school, I also had a teacher who incorporated dynamic activities, but the truth is that I prefer the classes with the current teacher because we have more confidence to ask questions, and she explains us with patience, and explains very clearly.*

Student 2 Interview

Some common characteristics of the answers given by the participants were the teacher's patience and ability to teach clearly, and the use of strategies to practice. They mentioned that they are confident to ask questions in class since she has a good relationship with her students, she makes jokes and has a good rapport with the class, and she explains the topic in diverse ways until students understand.

S1: *They are incredibly good classes, the teacher explains the subjects in a straightforward way, she is very patient with us, and if we do not understand something, she explains it again, even uses examples. The classes are exceptionally good; I like them a lot; they are pretty different from how I have learned English before. In previous years, we worked with the Ministry of Education English books, so the other teachers just followed the book, but they didn't explain much. We would go to the internet because since it is the Ministry of Education book, the answers were there. Instead, with the current teacher she hardly uses the book, she uses her own activities, and we hardly have homework; we do the work in class, also the activities help us so she can make sure that we understand the subject.*

Student 1 Interview

S9: *Very entertaining; despite giving classes, the teacher takes things with humor, builds confidence, and it feels good to ask questions. Lessons are something more original. Before, we used to use the English text provided by the government, the blue one, but now there are new methods, not the typical or what is always used. The classes are livelier, and more cheerful. The other teachers were very secluded; they didn't interact with others. Teacher Fanny was a little closer, but because she was our tutor.*

Student 9 Interview

Both participants (Interviews 1 and 9) mentioned a critical point, the use of textbooks. Schools used to work with an English textbook provided by the government which included grammar content and vocabulary. Students describe their experiences working with the textbook as not so valuable, because they just copied the answers and did not learn. In contrast with their current classes, they find their new English lessons more cheerful, and exciting but also challenging, since they must work during class and really understand the content to be able to do the class activities. It is related to the points mentioned by the teacher during her interview, that the purpose of her class is to make students think about what they are learning.

S6: *The English classes are exceptionally good. Throughout my time at school, I have had many English teachers, but she is the one with the highest level. Her accent is native, and that is something that helps a lot in the quality of the classes and helps us with pronunciation, for example. Honestly, the classes are incredibly good. The teacher explains very well, but in my case, there are topics that I already know, as my level is advanced. I finish my classwork quickly, and what I do is help my classmates, but in general, the classes are good. In the classes, I learn new words, and I reinforce some topics I have already studied. For example, if in a reading activity, I find a word that I do not know, the teacher explains it to me and helps me with the pronunciation. In the Cambridge course, the topics are different, they are a little more advanced, but at a school level, the classes are particularly good. Other teachers knew the theory but did not have good*

pronunciation, but the current teacher has knowledge of linguistics, grammar, pronunciation, and knows how to explain the topics very well.

Student 6 Interview

Then, in the case of participant 6, he mentioned that the classes are helpful for him as well. Another similarity with the answers of the other participants is that he considers the classes are good and innovative. A new positive characteristic is the teacher's accent. The participant described it as a real accent that helps improve his pronunciation. Although he is familiarized with the content taught, he still learns from the classes, whether helping his classmates and also improving his vocabulary and pronunciation.

FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

Since students perceive changes in their learning, they still have certain expectations about their future learning process.

S1: I would like the classes that I will take in the future to be like the current English classes that I have with the teacher.

Student 1 Interview

S2: Regarding the activities, no suggestions. I like the classes with the teacher, how she teaches, and how she explains, and that motivates us to learn English. For future classes, I would like fun classes with charismatic teachers because when they are grumpy, the classes become boring. I would like classes like the current ones with the teacher, she gets along well with us, and uses mimicry to help us understand and activities. If it is possible, I would like the current teacher to be our English teacher next year as well.

Student 2 Interview

S7: The classes are fine to me; I do not think anything else should be changed. I would like my future teachers to be patient and look for methods that help students understand the subject. You know that if there is no communication and methods, students get frustrated, and then they no longer want to continue with their degrees, or they lose interest in learning. So that is what I would like, in the future I will have patient teachers like the current teacher.

Student 7 Interview

S8: I do like the way the teacher teaches the classes; I have no suggestions. I hope to have teachers who are as prepared as our current teacher to learn new things. The support of the teachers is also important, and I hope one day to have a good domain of the language (English).

Student 8 Interview

This particular student considers that current classes are suitable, and they like how their teacher works. They expect to work with teachers with similar characteristics in the future. They emphasized the importance of supportive teachers who motivate students to keep learning because it is a crucial factor to encourage students to continue studying, especially in college. Also, they mentioned that teachers should use methodologies to help students understand what they are learning, so they can use what they have learned in class.

S3: *More hours of classes. English is useful for life, and if we go to another country, not knowing the language can be detrimental to us.*

Student 3 Interview

S4: *What I have learned has been good, but there are still things to do and to learn. It would be good to try to use English in the classroom, less Spanish, but so far, so good. They teach us things that will be useful in our daily lives.*

Student 4 Interview

Additionally, some participants suggested certain elements that can be improved to help students to learn. They mentioned that there is not enough time to study English at school, so it would be better to implement more class hours for the English subject. Also, the use of English during the class. In some previous experiences described by the participants, they said that their English teachers did not use English during the class, and they were not prepared enough. Based on that, students consider that using the language during the class can be helpful in their learning process.

S5: *I think there could be more interaction with the students. They can do things like project videos or something like that.*

Student 5 Interview

S6: *I think it could be taught with images or use videos to reinforce the topics. In future courses, I would like to have interactive classes, something a little more fluid, not only using the blackboards but also using images and videos.*

Student 6 Interview

Also, there were some ideas regarding activities that can be incorporated into the English class. Students consider that using audio, videos, and pictures in the class can be great tools for learning English. Although those suggestions are reasonable, it will depend on the availability of resources at each school. In the case of the high school where this research took place, there were no projectors in the classes, but it can be done using flashcards or drawings; it will all depend on the creativity of each teacher.

S9: *I would not know, honestly. I adapt to whatever comes my way.*

Student 9 Interview

Finally, some students have different expectations. They know that each teacher has his or her own way of teaching, and there can be positive and negative things about each methodology. This participant mentioned that he has learned to adapt to whatever comes and that the best students can do is try to learn from every teacher and learning experience.

Students consider that their current English lessons are excellent and valuable. There is effective communication and support from the teacher. Those factors have influenced what students expect in their future classes. Students hope that their future teachers will be prepared enough, have effective communication with them, and use of innovative methodologies to teach since they consider English as useful for life. Also, the implementation of resources, time allotted for English classes, teachers trained and prepared to teach English,

and use of the language during the lessons are suggestions given by the students to improve the students' learning process inside the classroom.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Every experience is worthwhile since it teaches something new, and exploring the reality of this school was not an exception to the rule. It was an opportunity to discover the challenges, opportunities and hopes that both teachers and students have for their future. The truth is that learning is not related exclusively to what happens inside the classroom. However, the uniqueness of each student reflected in their experiences, fears, motivations, and expectations, influences their learning process. Also, it demonstrates that teachers face different challenges in their teaching process. The teacher and the students commented that implementing innovative methodologies and strategies was a helpful tool to improve students' learning because they had opportunities to practice and use the language. Finally, the importance of creating a good classroom environment where students and teachers feel comfortable. The role of a teacher is not limited to someone who stores content but to someone empathetic who supports her/his students and encourages them to keep working. Also, a teacher must be self-reflexive and critical. A teacher has to identify students' strengths and weaknesses and apply appropriate strategies to support them, giving students the opportunities to explore and use the language during the class and being responsible for their learning process.

CONTRIBUCIÓN DEL AUTOR

Alex Alarcón: análisis formal, investigación, metodología, visualización.

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

The author states that there are no ethical implications.

CONFLICTS OF INTERESTS

The author states that there are no financial and non-financial conflicts of interests that could have influenced the current study.

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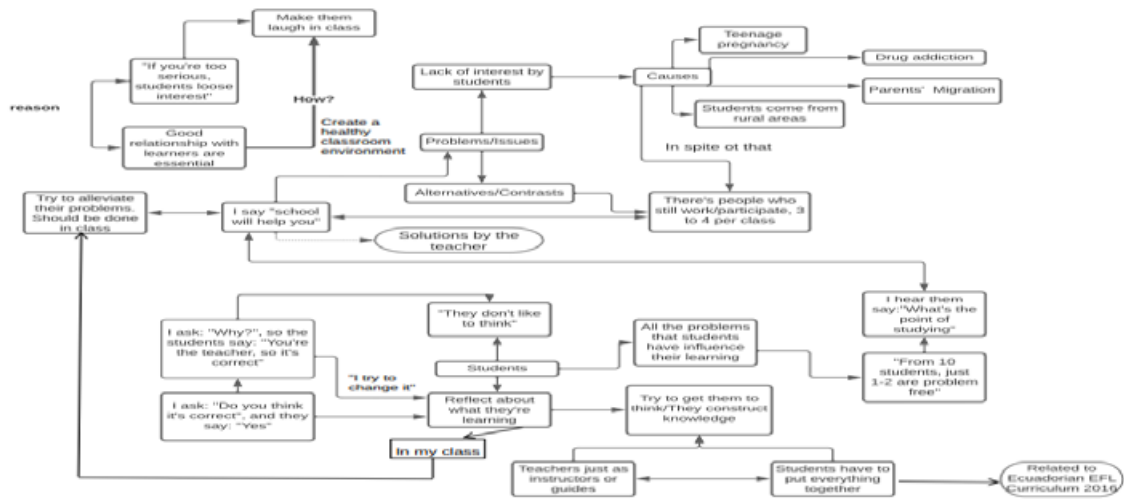
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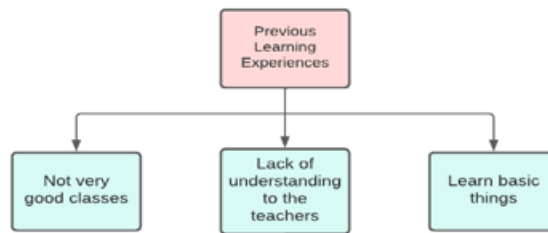
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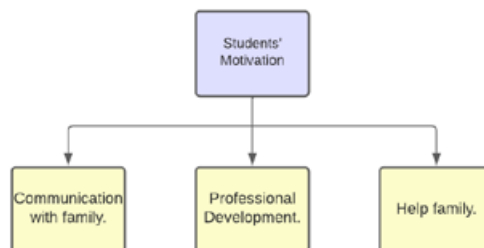
ANNEXES



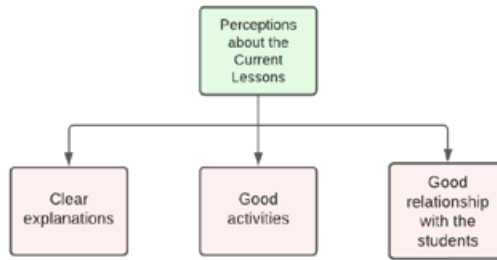
Situational Analysis Map of Teacher's Interview



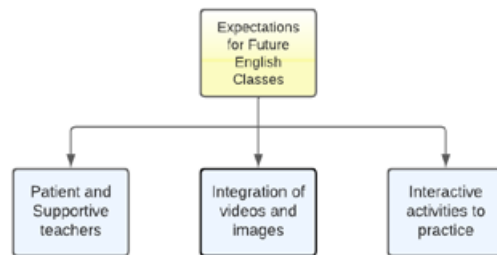
Codification of students' answers about previous learning experiences.



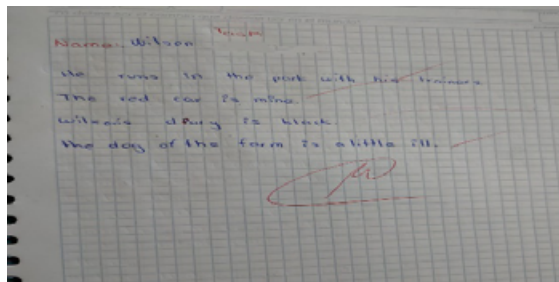
Codification of students' answers about their motivations to learn English.



Codification of students' answers about their perceptions of their current English lessons.



Codification of students' answers about their expectations for future English lessons.



Freer practice activity asking students to write their own sentences in 2nd BGU. June 03rd, 2022