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CULTURA LOCAL Y APRENDIZAJE DE LA LENGUA: SU IMPACTO EN LA MOTIVACIÓN DE LA PRODUCCIÓN VERBAL EN EL AULA SECUNDARIA DE INGLÉS

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Suggested citation (APA, 7th edition)

Reyes, M., & Vega, M. (2023). Local culture and language learning: the impact on motivation in oral production in High Schoolefl class. *Revista Metropolitana de Ciencias Aplicadas*, 6(S1), 198-215.

ABSTRACT

Given the relation between language and culture, the incorporation of local culture topics in the EFL classroom can serve as a means of fostering greater comfort among students when speaking in public. Therefore, the present study aimed to provide a closer look at EFL learners' speaking performance by introducing local culture topics to speaking assignments in class. This paper reports the findings of a mixed methods study on the effect of local culture topics on speaking skills and motivation of a group of students at a high school in Cuenca, Ecuador. Quantitative data was collected through a pre-test and post-test based on the Attitude Motivation Test Battery (Gardner, 1985). Qualitative data was gathered through speaking rubrics, class observations, student questionnaires and teacher interviews to gauge students' level of comfort during speaking activities and their perceptions on the incorporation of local culture as a focal point. While the quantitative results showed no statistical differences between the students' pre and post motivation scores, classroom observations showed increases in their oral production and appreciation for local culture topics. Further research with a longer period of intervention time is recommended.

Keywords:

Local culture, anxiety, motivation, speaking skills.

RESUMEN

Dada la relación entre el lenguaje y la cultura, la incorporación de temas de cultura local en el aula de inglés como lengua extranjera pueden servir como herramienta para fomentar mayor comodidad entre los estudiantes al momento de hablar en público. Este artículo reporta los resultados de un estudio de métodos mixtos sobre el efecto de temas de cultura local en destrezas orales y motivación de un grupo de estudiantes en un colegio secundario en Cuenca, Ecuador. Los datos cuantitativos fueron obtenidos a través de un pre y post-test basado en la prueba de actitud y motivación de Gardner (1985). Los datos cualitativos fueron obtenidos mediante rúbricas, observaciones en clase, cuestionarios a estudiantes y entrevistas a profesores. Si bien los resultados cuantitativos no mostraron diferencias estadísticas significativas con relación a los puntajes del pre y el post-test de motivación, las observaciones de clase mostraron un incremento en la producción verbal de los estudiantes y su apreciación por temas locales. Se recomienda para futuras investigaciones una mayor cantidad de tiempo de intervención.

Palabras clave:

Cultura local, ansiedad, actitud, motivación, destrezas orales.

INTRODUCTION

Language is the medium through which a culture's customs, morals, and principles are diffused. It is delivered as a means of communication and a carrier so that language without culture is unimaginable, as is human culture without language (Sun, 2013). Since English is the most widely used lingua franca in the world, it is important to promote its spread, particularly by way of speaking. Through this skill, other language skills may be integrated as learners develop their vocabulary, grammar and even their writing in its process (Alahem, 2014).

Every individual in the world has been raised in a certain culture which has taken individual and collective dimensions (Romrome & Ena, 2022). There is an undeniable link that connects language with culture, as acquiring any language is better accomplished in its cultural sense Alakrash et al., (2021). Consequently, in their role as educators, teachers should not treat their students as simple information receiving objects, but as human beings with their own lives, experiences, and culture (López-Gopar, 2019). It turns the entire responsiveness of educators, letting students have a voice, be critical about the society they live in, as well as understand and value their own culture.

According to Altman (2005) cited in (Albán & Cobo, 2016), through language, culture is transmitted and reinforced as the teaching learning process of the target language is influenced by culture. This is why some authors assert that teachers ought to include students' local culture in class activities so they can explore their own culture and find similarities and differences between the culture of the target language and their own native one (Albán & Cobo, 2016). It is therefore imperative to create a connection between curriculum content and the lived experience of students as individuals (Freire, 1998). Local culture-based learning may raise students' appreciation of their local culture (Alakrash et al., 2021) and have a positive effect on their motivation while learning English as a second or foreign language. In addition, the use of local culture may also help lower students' affective filter while talking about their own culture instead of speaking about topics that may seem too foreign to them.

Nevertheless, there is much research focusing on the integration of local culture promoting reading and writing skills in different levels of education. Its effect in the use of local culture to expand speaking or listening skills in secondary education deserves further attention, especially in Ecuador and Latin America as many studies on those topics have taken place in countries of the Middle East. While many studies have shown the integration of local culture at elementary levels to improve speaking skills, in higher education levels the importance of this topic has not been studied as extensively. Existing studies that analyze the importance of adding local culture in English classes to improve different skills in this language, often

show how students can compare their own culture with the foreign one(s). However, there does not appear to be clarity regarding the appropriate age of students whose speaking skills in English can be impacted through the usage of local culture.

Considering the impact of local culture in the EFL classroom, the present study aims to analyze the motivation and oral production skills of a group of high school students in an EFL class after using their own local culture topics in their oral assignments as well as understand their perceptions about the practice as opposed to speaking about social aspects from other cultures. The research questions were formulated as follows:

What is the effect of using local culture topics on students' motivation in the EFL class?

What are students' perceptions after talking about Local Culture topics in a L2?

Social development by Lev Vygotsky (1987), explains that the learning process in any human being is affected by socialization, as consciousness or awareness is a result of interacting with others. Along this process, the person acquires their cultural morals, beliefs, and strategies to solve problems through keeping dialogues with other members of the society. As mentioned by Scott & Palincsar (2013), sociocultural theory explains how each person's mind is related to its cultural, institutional, and historical background, that is the reason why its focal point is the participation in social interactions as part of the psychological development. This theory explains learning as a social practice, as Vygotsky believed that parents, caregivers, peers, and the culture at large are responsible for developing higher-order functions, for example specific structures and processes discovered by individuals can be connected to their interactions with others. This theory emphasizes on the way the learner accomplishes a task and by what means the communication between apprentices can scaffold and contribute to the L2 acquisition process (Ellis, 2000).

No group or person is identical to another; sociocultural theory does not recognize that individuals can rise above others in personal understanding which can become a drawback in the case of gifted students or those who have more knowledge of L2. Moreover, collaboration and participation vary from one learner to another. According to Vygotsky, there is a great difference in the development of the learner while they are interacting with another student who is more knowledgeable (Vygotsky, 1987). As well, there are differences in skill in each learner, which could lead to learning limitations. Learners with learning disabilities or learning difficulties may not be able to take away the same meaning from group interactions as those learners without learning disabilities, as their instructor or teacher students will be accompanied in this process to help students with learning disabilities as they can be

encouraged to develop their strengths in a way that they overcome or rise above their primary deficiency (Knox & Stevens, 1993).

SLA theory by Stephen Krashen (1982), consists of five main hypotheses: the Acquisition-Learning hypothesis, the Monitor hypothesis, the Natural Order hypothesis, the Input hypothesis, and the Affective Filter hypothesis. In Krashen's view language acquisition does not require extensive use of grammar rules and drills; rather, it requires meaningful interaction in the target language (natural communication). The affective filter is a theory from Second Language Acquisition which manifests that a learner who is nervous, anxious, or even suffers from self-esteem problems and believes itself unable to speak the second language, will not be able to receive any input (Lessard-Clouston, 2018). Krashen has established that teachers should create a comfortable, lower affective filter and motivation stimulating study environments where learners can develop higher self-esteem and greater sense of confidence and fulfillment as they are associated with the student's emotional condition. According to Oxford (1996), the affective side of a learner influences their ability to acquire the new language in that way if a student feels a high affective filter, they will be blocked and will not acquire the L2 while learning, compared to another student who feels a low affective filter who will be able to acquire the language, as they feel relaxed.

While Krashen's affective filter theory served as a basis for this study in terms of the use of local culture topics to lower students' affective filter (anxiousness, anger, etc.), it does not specifically address everyday life stresses and the fear of communicating in a L2 faced by many students, who may feel terrified at the prospect of speaking in front of others no matter what the teacher does. The theory does suggest that emotional factors may distract learners in the language learning process and it might lead them not to be able to absorb what they should learn in class for some external factors such as their teacher's unfriendly manners or classmates' competitive attitudes (Krashen, 1985).

Krashen (1985), suggests that second language acquisition will take place if a person obtains comprehensible input and reveals low affective filters, which includes motivation, attitude, anxiety, and self-confidence, to allow that input (Du, 2009).

Motivation is attributed to the selection people go through when facing different experiences or goals which they will be able to reach or evade, and the degree of effort they will utilize while doing so (Keller, 1983). In other words, motivation is the persistence or effort individuals exert to reach a certain goal. According to Gardner (2005), people have different reasons for their behaviors, also called motives, and there are "characteristics which reflect cognitions, some reflect affect, and some reflect behaviors or behavioral intentions" (p. 4). If a person is motivated, they

persist in accomplishing their goals, and show a desire to achieve them no matter the effort involved. In fact, motivation is required to firstly initiate L2 learning and later the impelling cause to keep trying during the often-exhausting learning process; naturally all SLA factors involved in the learning process depend upon that motivation (Dörnyei, 2005).

On the other hand, anxiety is considered the apprehension felt by students with physiological responses such as increased heart rate and offensive self-related thoughts, suffered by those individuals who are not fully skilled in a L2 when they are required to use that language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1992). According to Alahem (2014), "*anxiety involves a pattern of physiological and psychological reactions like feeling stressed and overwhelmed with negative emotions, sweaty palms, accelerated heartbeats, queasy stomach, self-doubts and constant worry about things*" (p. 36).

Traditional education presumes learners are empty agents who receive knowledge from their teachers, but Critical Pedagogy (1984) is an approach that involves helping students become critically conscious about the uneven distribution of power. Knowledge should relate to and develop from the lived experience of participants by raising awareness of the power relations embedded in society. The concept of the Critical Pedagogy by Freire (1984), is a teaching philosophy in which language is not simply a means to express or communicate, but a product constructed by the ways language learners recognize themselves, their social surroundings, their histories, and their potentialities for the future. Through the appropriate tools, any individual is able to observe personal and social reality as well as its contradictions, no matter how ignorant they may be, they are capable of looking critically at the world they live in and in that way, become conscious of their reality and deal critically with it.

Many research projects have been studied in different parts of the world about the inclusion of L1 and L2 in different activities to promote English learning in different students of different ages. Research on this topic in Ecuador is limited as a large amount of these types of studies have taken place in the Middle East. Much of the existing research on the incorporation of local culture to an EFL curriculum have involved elementary levels to improve speaking skills while others have aimed to improve other skills such as reading. Studies among students in higher education levels is still scarce.

A study by Romrome & Ena (2022), in Indonesia found students' motivation and vocabulary levels increased with the incorporation of local cultural topics in the EFL class, as well as critical thinking skills. It was also found that the development of students' English skills including speaking, reading, and writing improved by using local culture content in learning English. As students' confidence and motivation in learning English increased, so did

their vocabulary, confidence, and critical thinking skills. Similarly, Chin Lin (2008), studied the effectiveness of pedagogies based on the affective filter theory with a focus on the connection between students' interest, self-esteem, attitude, motivation, and the use of various student-centered communicative activities designed to enhance confidence and language acquisition.

A study by Tazhitova et al. (2022), with students majoring in pedagogical specialties in Central Asia aimed to study motivation after the integration of local materials and check the efficacy of a structural model used in EFL classes. It was found that teaching English including local materials had a positive effect on students' motivation while learning a foreign language.

Special attention has been focused on speaking skills inside classrooms, as it demands significant effort and tends to be the least practiced inside the class as students tend to speak in their native language to communicate with their peers and foreign language teacher. Teaching speaking requires dealing with elements including correct pronunciation, morphology, and lexis as well as syntax, semantics, and fluency, among others (Bygate, 2001). But it can be extremely challenging for students to speak in the second Language with the naturalness that they use their own language. This is often due to anxiety at the moment of communicating with others, even though speaking is the most common way for learners to communicate with others to reach their goals or to express their personal points of view or intentions (Torky, 2006). Nevertheless, despite the importance of developing this skill, it tends to receive the least attention in the classroom as many English teachers spend a significant amount of class time teaching grammar, focusing on reading articles or even translating them. In a study conducted in Indonesia by Saraswati et al. (2018), among first-year University students, it was shown that the knowledge of the native and local culture was embedded in teaching speaking classes. It was through the local culture that a benchmark and departing point of teaching intercultural communication to students was understood.

According to Albán & Cobo (2016), *"the process that allows the integration of L1 and L2 culture is known as an acculturation process"*. Through this process, students can compare both cultures, thus enabling them to better understand English culture and develop their learning process in an environment where they feel confident and less anxious.

Among the studies conducted in Latin America, two studies in Ecuador and Colombia stand out. In Latacunga, Ecuador, Albán & Cobo (2016), studied how the L1 and L2 culture were integrated to promote 9th grade students' speaking skills and increase their interest to learn the English language. In a study by Pérez et al. (2018), the local culture of Barranquilla, Colombia, was the focus to improve students' speaking skills with the purpose

of reducing their affective filter. They focused on topics students were familiar with to reduce anxiety and mental blocks while speaking in English.

Alakrash et al. (2021), found that after six years of exposure to the local culture-based curriculum contents, students' skills were highly improved due to their high level of confidence, and this research also provides recommendations about local culture-based curriculum to be used as a medium to develop EFL student's language learning.

According to what has been seen in the previously mentioned investigations, conducted among younger school students and university students, the use of local cultural topics has had positive effects on their motivation, critical thinking skills and confidence while learning an L2. The Integration of L1 as a pedagogical tool should be considered in a classroom if the acquisition of L2 is a clear objective, especially if the goal is to foster speaking skills in students who may be terrified of speaking in front of an audience over fears of judgement for making mistakes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To provide a wider perspective of the impact of local culture topics on students' performance as well as their motivations, the study followed a mixed methods approach over a three-week period. Quantitative data was gathered via a pre-test and post-test survey with close ended questions to understand the students' motivations in the EFL class at the onset and end of the intervention. A qualitative inquiry, in which an investigator conducts an in-depth investigation of an incident, activity, process or individuals (Creswell, 2009), was used to collect student perceptions through the use of various instruments.

Pre and Post-tests Surveys: Gardner's (1985), Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which measures motivation, instrumental orientation, anxiety, and attitudes towards learning English as a L2, was adapted and then completed by the participants through the digital tool Google Forms. Since its development, the test has been updated and used extensively by researchers around the world in second language research.

Rubric: To assign numerical scores to each student during their oral presentations (as required by the school curriculum), a rubric was used with the following parameters: *fluency* over four points, *vocal variety* over four points, *anxiety shown* over four points, *preparedness* over four points, and *enthusiasm, body language and eye contact* over four points so that the final grade was over twenty points. To prevent bias during each presentation, guest teachers were invited to grade each student individually according to their presentations (See Appendix 3).

Questionnaire: seven students were selected randomly according to their performance in class shown during the school year, 2 highlighted students, 3 average students and 2 low-score students. They were asked to

fill in a questionnaire with seven open-ended questions in which they were required to answer about their motivation and perceptions after the use of foreign and local cultures respectively.

Observation diary: During both presentations, the researcher did not grade the students, as two guest teachers were called to grade the students' presentations in order to avoid biases during the investigation. Both guest teachers were also required to add any impression during the oral presentations. The researcher also annotated the observations found in each student while they were doing their expositions.

Teacher interview: Both guest teachers were interviewed about their perceptions during both presentations. In those interviews they were asked four open-ended questions in which they presented their opinions about the general students' expositions.

The participants were 56 EFL high school students, 18 (33%) of whom were male and 38 (67%) of whom were female. Their ages were 15 years old ($n=2$; 4%), 16 ($n=53$; 95%), and 17 ($n=1$; 1%) from two classrooms of a Junior level in *Unidad Educativa Particular La Asunción*. All students were born and raised in Ecuador and shared Spanish as an L1.

The focus group selected in the last phase of the research project comprised seven students according to their average scores and who also had the consent of their parents to take part in the study. While all students accomplished the planned tasks as part of the curriculum, only seven took part in the final focus group questionnaire.

This research intended to use an inductive reasoning to process the data, draw conclusions about the usage of local culture topics in their oral presentations in order to help them feel less anxious and unmotivated, as the idea of qualitative researches are concerned about revealing the way people feel or think about the situations they are facing at that moment (Thorne, 2000). A constant comparative analysis was used to generate knowledge about common patterns and experiences from the participants.

Before developing this research project, a meeting with the principal of the school took place to inform and ask for the corresponding approval to conduct this research (Appendix 1). After the approval was conceded, participants and their parents were required to sign a consent form authorizing their participation as the participants were minors. Once permission was granted, the teacher started working in the classrooms with the students.

Phase I

During the first phase, a survey was created by adapting the AMTB (Appendix 2). Three students who were not part of the group of participants tested the survey to check for clarity and length of time needed to complete it. After corrections were done based on the feedback from the pilot

test, the survey was conducted among all 56 participants via Google forms online as a pre-test.

In class, students were introduced to two culture-based example topics, one from an English language culture and another from a local culture by the teacher to help them understand the purpose of their oral assignments.

Phase II

In the second phase, after the teacher's explanation, students worked in groups of three or four to first choose a topic of their preference to investigate. As part of the methodology, students were given more time to think about the development of their own topic. Two weeks later, they were provided with time to gather in groups to discuss and build their presentations. Students were also directed to do two presentations with the same general topic, one about a foreign English-language country and one about their own country; some students then selected topics such as famous restaurants, political matters, sports, and architecture, among others, in both cultures. Students were given three-class periods to write their findings in a presentation on Canvas or PowerPoint.

Phase III

In the third phase, students presented their assignments about the foreign country, and one week later, they focused on their own culture topic. For both presentations, two teachers from the same school, who were not the students' school year teachers, but guest teachers, graded them individually in terms of: fluency, vocal variety, anxiety, preparedness, enthusiasm, body language and eye contact while the researcher took notes of the same variables on each student, with the help of a rubric. (Appendix 3)

Phase IV

At the end of the intervention, all the students completed the post ATMB test. Seven of them, selected based on their scores in class (two high, three intermediate and two lower scores) were interviewed on their feelings, perceptions, motivations, and anxiety during both presentations. The pre and post test results and feedback were complemented with the observations made by the teachers who participated in the intervention, which is recommended to provide detailed accounts of the teacher points of view as the research advanced (Mackey & Gass, 2005)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The quantitative data were analyzed using the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, which is a non-parametric test based on differences between dependent or related groups of ordinal data. Usually referred to as a counterpart to the paired t-test, the Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test is considered appropriate for situations where a dependent sample undergoes an evaluation, a treatment and then another

evaluation (Lind, et al., 2012). For the present study, the two groups of ordinal data were obtained from the scores recorded in the pre and post ATMB test.

The level of significance, also called a “critical value” or “alpha,” was established at 0.05 ($p < 0.05$ or a 95% confidence interval), which has also been recommended in second language research (Mackey & Gass, 2005). The p value method for testing a hypothesis involves weighing the evidence against the null hypothesis, which implies there is no statistical difference between two groups of data. The p value method determines how likely an observed result is due to chance, so a small p value (close to 0.00) implies the null hypothesis, which is that there is no statistical difference between two sets of data, should be rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis (Doane & Seward, 2016). After analyzing the mean scores of the pre and post-test, there was no statistical difference in instrumental orientation among the participants before and after the treatment as shown in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1. Instrumental Orientation.

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
Instr ^r _Orient_Pre	56	3.7770	.81982	1.00	5.00	3.5000	4.0000	4.3300
Instr_Orient_Post	56	3.8400	.74230	1.67	4.83	3.6700	4.1700	4.3300

As shown in Table 2, numerically speaking, twenty-four participants' instrumental orientation was higher in the pre-test (prior to treatment) than in the post-test. Twenty-three participants' instrumental orientation increased after the treatment, and nine participants' instrumental orientation remained the same after the treatment.

Table 2. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

Ranks				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Anxiety_Post - Anxiety_Pre	Negative Ranks	24a	21.85	524.50
	Positive Ranks	23b	26.24	603.50
	Ties	9c		
	Total	56		
a. Instr_Orient_Post < Instr ^r _Orient_Pre				
b. Instr_Orient_Post > Instr ^r _Orient_Pre				
c. Instr_Orient_Post = Instr ^r _Orient_Pre				

Table 3 shows an asymptotic significance of .675, which is higher than the established p value of 0.05. Thus, there was no statistical difference in instrumental orientation among the participants before and after the treatment.

Table 3. Test Statistics^a.

Instr_Orient_Post - Instr ^r _Orient_Pre	
Z	-.419 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.675
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test b. Based on positive ranks.	

Table 4 shows the mean scores obtained in the Anxiety about language learning portion of the ATMB in the Pre-Test and Post-Test.

Table 4. Anxiety Levels.

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
Anxiety_Pre	56	3.0488	.97842	1.00	5.00	2.2825	3.0650	3.7500
Anxiety_Post	56	3.0041	.89213	1.25	4.50	2.2500	3.1300	3.6300

As shown in Table 5, twenty-four participants' anxiety levels increased after treatment in the pre-test, while there were twenty-eight participants' anxiety levels decreased after the treatment compared to the pre-test, and finally, four participants' anxiety levels remained the same after treatment.

Table 5. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

Ranks				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Anxiety_Post - Anxiety_Pre	Negative Ranks	24 ^a	28.00	672.00
	Positive Ranks	28 ^b	25.21	706.00
	Ties	4 ^c		
	Total	56		
a. Anxiety_Post < Anxiety_Pre				
b. Anxiety_Post > Anxiety_Pre				
c. Anxiety_Post = Anxiety_Pre				

Numerically speaking, the highest pre-test score (3.34) recorded for Anxiety was for the following question: *Me siento ansioso (a) de que otros estudiantes de la clase, se rían de mí cuando yo hable en inglés / I feel anxious about other students in the class laugh at me when I speak English*. The post test score for the same question was 3.07.

For the question: *Me preocupa que otros estudiantes en mi clase hablen mejor inglés que yo / I am worried about the fact that other students speak better English than me*, a similar numerical decrease was recorded, with a 3.3 score out of five in the pre-test and 2.66 in the post-test. This refers to concerns about others speaking better.

Table 6 shows an asymptotic significance of .877, which is higher than the established p value of 0.05 and requires the acceptance of the null hypothesis. Thus, there was no statistical difference in anxiety levels among the participants before and after the treatment, even though the anxiety levels as indicated by the scores were critically high in some students at the start of the treatment.

Table 7 shows the pre and post-test mean scores for the section on Attitudes towards learning English.

Table 7. Learning Attitudes.

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
Attitudes Learning_Pre	56	3.6621	.62323	2.22	4.89	3.2800	3.6950	4.1425
Attitudes Learning_Post	56	3.6048	.59756	2.00	4.78	3.1150	3.6400	4.0450

As shown in Table 8, twenty-five participants' learning attitude scores were higher after treatment in the pre-test, while there were twenty-nine participants' whose scores decreased after the treatment compared to the pre-test, and finally, two participants' scores remained the same after treatment.

Table 8. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

Ranks				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Att_Learning_Post -	Negative Ranks	29 ^a	29.29	849.50
Att_Learning_Pre	Positive Ranks	25 ^b	25.42	635.50
	Ties	2 ^c		
	Total	56		
a. Att_Learning_Post < Att_Learning_Pre				
b. Att_Learning_Post > Att_Learning_Pre				
c. Att_Learning_Post = Att_Learning_Pre				

Table 9 shows an asymptotic significance of .357, which is higher than the established p value of 0.05 and requires the acceptance of the null hypothesis. Thus, despite slight numerical decreases in the scores, there was no statistical difference in learning attitudes among the participants before and after the treatment.

Table 9. Test Statistics^a.

Att_Learning_Post - Att_Learning_Pre	
Z	-.922 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.357
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	
b. Based on positive ranks.	

Table 10 shows the pre and post-test mean scores for the motivational intensity section of the ATMB test.

Table 10. Motivation.

Descriptive Statistics								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
						25th	50th (Median)	75th
Motiv_Inten_Pre	56	2.1607	.31082	1.40	2.70	1.9250	2.2000	2.3750
Motiv_Inten_Post	56	2.1125	.28095	1.40	2.70	1.9000	2.1000	2.3000

Table 11 shows twenty-three participants' motivational intensity scores were lower after treatment in the pre-test, while there were eighteen participants' whose scores were higher after the treatment compared to the pre-test, and finally, fifteen participants' scores remained the same after treatment.

Table 11. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test.

Ranks				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Motiv_Inten_Post -	Negative Ranks	23 ^a	22.70	522.00
Motiv_Inten_Pre	Positive Ranks	18 ^b	18.83	339.00
	Ties	15 ^c		
	Total	56		
a. Motiv_Inten_Post < Motiv_Inten_Pre				
b. Motiv_Inten_Post > Motiv_Inten_Pre				
c. Motiv_Inten_Post = Motiv_Inten_Pre				

In Table 12, an asymptotic significance of 0.232 can be observed, which is lower than the established p value of 0.05. Therefore, there was no statistical difference in level of motivation intensity after the treatment, despite the apparent numerical decreases in the scores from the pre- test.

Table 12. Test Statistics^a.

Motiv_Inten_Post - Motiv_Inten_Pre	
Z	-1.194 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.232

- a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test
- b. Based on positive ranks.

While there was no statistical difference in the distinct motivation levels measured among the participants after the treatment, a difference was observed in the grades obtained by the students during their oral presentations about local cultural topics. Of the 56 students who participated, thirty-seven obtained a higher score after the second round of presentations compared to the first where the students presented topics related to the culture of foreign countries. Nine students' grades remained the same in both presentations, while ten students obtained a lower score during the local culture presentation (see Table 13).

Table 13. Student presentation scores.

Scores obtained	# Students	%
Students with the same scores in the Local Culture presentation	9	16
Students with lower scores in the Local Culture presentation	10	18
Students with higher scores in the Local Culture presentation	37	66
Total	56	100

Student comments

In Phase IV, seven students were asked about their perceptions, motivation, and level of anxiety after both presentations, one about a foreign country topic and later on, another about a local culture topic, different answers were provided by the students.

Six out of seven students manifested they get nervous when they must speak in English in front of an audience. The only student who felt confident about talking in front of other people, considered he has gotten enough preparation to do it, as he has attended many courses. Four students from the seven interviewed, commented that they seem to have a positive reaction while talking about their own culture in the second language as a new experience. Dafne noted, *“More than feeling more motivated, this kind of activities help me to practice my pronunciation and how to explain them to native English speakers.”*

José mentioned as well, *“those are things that I know well as they are part of my culture and I know what I am talking about.”* María Celeste noted, *“Yes, I feel more motivated while talking about my culture as I can expose to other people things related to my culture... I can even share those topics with foreigners.”* This perception was also held

by Josué, who manifested, *“Yes, I feel more motivated while talking about my culture, even though we do not see many things every day, they are around us and they are interesting for us.”*

Dafne mentioned *“I was more confident as I added less information and studied more to do my presentation about my local culture”* Mónica said that she felt the same way in both presentations, but for the second one, about her local culture, *“I felt self-reliant as I studied and practiced my presentation”* On the other hand, Paula mentioned *“I felt more nervous presenting this topic as I got the feeling some people were judging me as I pronounced incorrectly some words”* referring herself to the presentation about the local culture, she also referred about this presentation as not necessarily more motivating as *“she suffers nervous breakdowns whenever she has to talk about something”*. Ian said that nothing changed in the second presentation as he was equally nervous about not pronouncing the words in his presentation in a correct manner.

Seven out of seven students said they were interested in continuing to participate in activities like this in the future to improve their English in terms of pronunciation and control their anxiety when speaking in front of an audience.

Teachers' observations

Two teachers were invited to grade students during both oral presentations. It is important to highlight that in each presentation both teachers had a rubric to assign a score for each student, as well as a space where they could write observations. None had the students' previous scores or observations in their hands during the second presentation, so they could not compare the first presentation (foreign culture topic) to the second one (local culture topic).

The theme of familiarity was expressed in both teachers' observations when asked about the mood or emotional state of the students as they were completing their assignment in class regarding the topic from the foreign country in comparison to the exposition of our country's topic. Teacher 1 expressed, *“More confidence was seen during the presentation of our country's projects”* while teacher two mentioned, *“Even they showed interest in the topics they were talking about, it was possible to see more nervousness and anxiety while talking about topics were not too familiar for them. However, while talking about national topics, there was more confidence, as some have been known by the students ever since they were kids.”*

Both teachers referred to what they noticed during the students' presentations. Teacher 1 explained there was a *“lack of eye contact in the majority of students,”* as well as the fact that some of them *“who were not prepared, got really nervous as it could be perceived in the tone of their voices, the movements of their hands, and the movement of their whole bodies.”* Teacher 2 also expressed that *“the most notorious indicators of anxiety and nervousness*

were the swaying of the students as well as the hands in their pockets, the way many of them were looking at the ceiling or turning to the board or cellphone to read their presentations...Even though this was even more evident during the first presentation.”

The main emphasis of this research was to explore the effect of using local culture topics on students' motivation in the EFL class as well as to hear to their perceptions after talking about Local Culture topics in a L2.

Through the lens of Critical Pedagogy (Freire, 1998), it was observed that learners acquired critical overview of the local cultural topics spoke about in their presentations. Many students' confidence seemed to increase during interactions with their peers, which required them to remember and the different topics they were working with. Additionally, through integrating L1 and L2 culture, students were able to acquire a cultural awareness by discussing similarities and differences among both cultures, as well as identifying different manifestations of a specific culture. This outcome is consistent with previous research (Albán & Cobo, 2016; Pérez et al., 2018) on the integration of L1 and L2 cultures.

While no statistical changes could be observed from pre-test compared to the post-test in terms of instrumental orientation, anxiety levels, learning attitudes and motivation, the qualitative data presents a slightly different picture of what occurred in the classroom. Through observations and students' own self-reported perceptions, by focusing on local culture topics, students felt more familiar with the theme they were presenting as they knew in advance through their personal experience things related to the topic. This is does not always occur when the sole source of topics is from EFL textbooks, which tend to depict foreign customs and traditions. It can be interpreted that the act of using an L2 to speak about a topic that is closer to the student's own personal experiences can indeed lower their affective filter, thus fostering a greater sense of relaxation (Saraswati et al., 2018).

Students also appeared to be interested at the prospect of repeating this type of activity in the future to improve their skills in the L2 and as a means of managing their nerves when they must speak in front of an audience.

CONCLUSIONS

Some limitations were found during this research, most notably in terms of time. One issue was related to vacation time, which was not considered when planning the timeline as well as the break after exams. There were also unexpected additional holidays and cultural and civic activities that took place in the Institution that interrupted the intervention. It is also important to highlight the disinterest of many students who were asked repeatedly to deliver the signed consents by their parents or to do the surveys

online; this is an important consideration as it can delay the planned activities.

For further research on this topic would benefit greatly from a longer intervention time, such as a school term. In the present study, the intervention lasted approximately three weeks, which may not have been long enough to warrant statistical differences in motivation levels. A longer intervention time might yield different statistical results as well as perceptions from the participants.

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APPENDIXS

Appendix 1. Consent to participate in academic research

Introduction

I am undertaking a study to explore the Impact of Local Culture topics in EFL students' motivation on speaking skill development in the language learning classroom. This form will describe the purpose and nature of the study. You have been selected for this research for several reasons. First, because I have been assigned as your English teacher for this school year and second because you are a student in the Junior high school section, which is a major focus of the study.

Please take whatever time you need to discuss this study with me. The decision to allow the use of your information is yours. If you decide to participate, please sign and date the last line of this form.

Background and purpose of the study

I am interested in measuring the Impact of Local Culture topics in EFL students' motivation on speaking skill development in the English language classroom. I hope to use what is learned through the research to improve the quality of language learning and teaching, and contribute to the growing body of knowledge in the area of language learning research.

General Plan

For this research, classes will be conducted as usual, but with an added focus on oral presentations with foreign and local cultural topics. The lessons will follow the regular curriculum and evaluations. The study will last throughout the whole first term until march 2023, during this school year. All students will be involved in speaking tasks, but only the ones who want to participate will be recorded in audio and video for the research.

Confidentiality

All data collected as a result of this study will be kept confidential, including your name and grades. The choice to have your data used is completely voluntary and you may withdraw your permission to use the data at any time. If you have any questions, you may contact me at the following email address: margaritareyes@laasuncion.edu.ec. Please accept my most sincere appreciation for your participation in this study.

Kind regards,

Margarita Reyes Hermida.

Participant's consent

I have read and understood the information provided in this Consent Form. I voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

Student's Name

Legal Representative's Signature

Date

Consentimiento para participar en investigaciones académicas

Introducción

Estoy realizando un estudio para explorar el Impacto del uso de temas de la Cultura Local para mejorar la motivación de los estudiantes en tareas de presentación oral, en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. Este formulario explicará el propósito y naturaleza del estudio. Usted ha sido seleccionado para esta investigación por varias razones. En primer lugar, porque me han designado como su docente de Inglés durante este año lectivo, y en segundo lugar porque usted es alumno(a) del Segundo de bachillerato, mismo que forma parte integral de este estudio. Por favor, tome el tiempo que sea necesario para dialogar sobre este estudio conmigo. La decisión de permitir el uso de su información es suya. Si decide participar, por favor coloque su firma en la última línea de este formulario con la fecha actual.

Antecedentes y propósito del estudio

Estoy interesada en medir el impacto del uso de temas de la Cultura Local en la motivación en el aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera. Espero utilizar los resultados de esta investigación para mejorar la calidad del aprendizaje y enseñanza de inglés y contribuir al conocimiento en el área de investigación sobre aprendizaje de idiomas en general.

Plan General

Para esta investigación, las clases se manejarán de manera normal, pero con un enfoque adicional en el cual se añadirán presentaciones orales acerca de temas culturales de nuestra cultura y de culturas de habla inglesa. Las clases se desarrollarán según las planificaciones (Puds) y las evaluaciones planeadas. El estudio durará hasta el mes de marzo de 2023. Todos los estudiantes participarán en las actividades dentro de clases, pero sólo aquellos quienes quieran participar en este estudio, serán grabados en audio y/o video para el proyecto.

Confidencialidad

Todos los datos recopilados como resultado de esta investigación se mantendrán confidenciales, incluyendo su nombre y sus notas de aporte. La decisión de permitir el uso de su información es completamente voluntaria y usted podrá revocar el permiso otorgado en cualquier momento. Si tiene cualquier inquietud, puede contactarse conmigo al siguiente correo electrónico: margaritareyes@laasuncion.edu.ec. De antemano le doy mi sincero agradecimiento por su participación en este estudio.

Saludos cordiales,

Margarita Reyes Hermida

Consentimiento del Participante

He leído y he comprendido la información brindada en este formulario de consentimiento. Yo doy mi permiso para participar en el estudio de manera voluntaria.

Nombre del estudiante

Firma del representante legal

Fecha

Appendix 2. Attitude Motivation Test Battery

The following is the **AMTB (Attitude Motivation Test Battery)** model by Gardner from which some questions might be used as a reference for the survey and focus group questionnaires.

Following are a number of statements with which some people agree and others disagree.

Please circle one alternative below each statement according to the amount of your agreement or disagreement with that item. The following sample item will serve to illustrate the basic procedure.

CUESTIONARIO PARA ESTUDIANTES

Adapted from: Mackey & Gass (2005); and Pascale /Marchi (2011).

Parte I - Información básica

Conteste las siguientes preguntas.

1. Nombre: _____
2. Edad: _____
3. Sexo: F M
4. ¿Ha estudiado en otro colegio que NO sea La Asunción?
Si No En caso de que su respuesta sea SI,
especifique la Institución _____
5. ¿Ha estudiado Inglés en algún Instituto fuera del colegio?
Si No
Instituto: _____
Tiempo: _____
6. ¿Además de su lengua materna y el inglés, usted habla otro idioma? Si su respuesta es si, indique qué idioma.
Si No
Idioma: _____
7. ¿Cómo considera su grado de conocimiento del idioma inglés de acuerdo al nivel que está cursando actualmente?

Excelente
Bueno
Regular
Básico
8. ¿Ha estado en algún país de habla inglesa (ej. Canadá, E.E.U.U., Australia, Inglaterra, etc.)?
Si su respuesta es no, pase a la pregunta 10.
Si No

9. Si su respuesta a la pregunta anterior es si, ¿Por cuánto tiempo estuvo en ese país?

- Menos de un mes
- De un mes a tres meses
- De tres meses a seis meses
- De seis meses a un año
- Más de un año

10. ¿Tiene usted posibilidades de hablar inglés fuera del aula de clase?

- Si No

Parte II – Orientación Instrumental

A continuación, encontrará afirmaciones en las que se le solicita indicar su opinión. No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas dado que las personas tienen diferentes opiniones. Por favor marcar con una X la alternativa que más refleja su grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con la afirmación.

1. Estudio el inglés porque:

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	Más o menos en desacuerdo	Neutral	Más o menos de acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
Me permitirá conocer y conversar con otras personas					
Me hará una persona mejor educada y preparada					
Es importante para mis planes futuros (carrera, estudios fuera del país, conseguir trabajo, etc.)					
Es importante porque me permitirá entender y apreciar de mejor manera la manera de vivir de las personas que hablan esta lengua.					
Saber esta lengua hará que otros me respeten más.					
Únicamente porque es un requisito para graduarme del colegio.					

Parte III - Ansiedad

Por favor marcar con una X la alternativa que más refleja su grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones.

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	Más o menos en desacuerdo	Neutral	Más o menos de acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
1 Me pongo nervioso (a) cuando tengo que contestar una pregunta en mi clase de inglés.					
2 Me pondría nervioso (a) si tuviera que hablar inglés fuera de la clase. (por ejemplo, con un turista)					
3 Me siento inseguro (a) cuando me piden hablar en la clase de inglés (por ej.: hacer una presentación, un debate)					
4 Me preocupa que otros estudiantes en mi clase hablen mejor inglés que yo.					
5 Hablar inglés en cualquier lugar me hace sentir nervioso (a) / ansioso (a).					
6 Me sentiría cómodo (a) hablando inglés frente a personas que hablen español o inglés.					
7 Me siento ansioso (a) si alguien me preguntara algo en inglés.					
8 Me siento ansioso (a) de que otros estudiantes de la clase, se rían de mí cuando yo hable en inglés.					

Parte IV - Actitudes hacia el aprendizaje del inglés

Por favor marcar con una X la alternativa que más refleja su grado de acuerdo o desacuerdo con las siguientes afirmaciones.

	Totalmente en desacuerdo	Más o menos en desacuerdo	Neutral	Más o menos de acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
1. Es muy difícil aprender inglés.					
2. Desearía poder hablar el idioma inglés perfectamente.					
3. No presto atención a la retroalimentación que recibo en la clase de inglés (por ejemplo: deberes, lecciones orales, trabajos)					
4. Me gusta la clase de inglés porque es buena.					
5. Me interesa realmente conocer todos los aspectos relacionados con el inglés.					
6. Mi clase de inglés es una pérdida de tiempo.					
7. Odio el inglés.					
8. Preferiría pasar más tiempo en mi clase de inglés que en otras clases.					
9. Pienso que aprender inglés es aburrido.					
10. Estudiar inglés me servirá para la carrera que quiero estudiar en el futuro.					
11. Prefiero pasar mi tiempo en otras materias que en inglés.					
12. Pospongo hacer mis deberes de inglés, lo más posible.					
13. Planeo aprender la mayor cantidad de inglés posible					
14. Tiendo a no prestar atención cuando no entiendo las explicaciones que da mi profesor (a) de inglés.					
15. Trabajo arduamente para aprender inglés					
16. No me interesa intentar entender los aspectos más complejos del inglés.					
17. El inglés es una de mis materias favoritas.					
18. Me gusta representar personajes, actuar o presentar diálogos en mi clase de inglés.					

Parte V - Intensidad Motivacional

1. Pienso en lo que he aprendido en mi clase de inglés:

- a) muy frecuentemente
- b) casi nunca
- c) de vez en cuando

2. Si la materia de inglés no fuera parte de la malla curricular, yo:

- a) podría aprenderlo en situaciones cotidianas (por ejemplo: leer libros o periódicos, o hablar cuando sea posible.)
- b) no intentaría aprenderlo
- c) trataría de conseguir clases de inglés en otra parte

3. Cuando tengo problemas de comprensión durante la clase de inglés, yo:

- a) inmediatamente pido ayuda al profesor o a un compañero
- b) únicamente solicito ayuda antes del examen
- c) lo olvido

4. Cuando se trata de deberes de inglés, yo:

- a) le pongo algo de esfuerzo, pero no tanto como podría
- b) trabajo muy cuidadosamente, asegurando entender todo.
- c) solamente lo reviso rápidamente

5. Considerando como yo estudio el inglés, honestamente puedo decir que yo:

- a) hago únicamente lo suficiente como para aprobar el curso
- b) aprobare el curso por pura suerte o inteligencia porque hago muy poco.
- c) realmente hago un esfuerzo para aprender

6. Si mi profesor quisiera que alguien hiciera un trabajo extra de inglés, yo:

- a) definitivamente no me ofrecería
- b) definitivamente me ofrecería
- c) únicamente lo haría si el profesor me lo pide

7. Luego de recibir los trabajos de inglés corregidos por el profesor, yo:

- a) siempre los vuelvo a escribir para corregir mis errores.
- b) los olvido
- c) los reviso, pero no corrijo los errores

8. Cuando estoy en la clase de inglés, yo:

- a) ofrezco la mayor cantidad de respuestas posibles
- b) solamente respondo las preguntas más fáciles
- c) nunca digo nada

9. Si tuviese que escoger un tema para hablar en mi clase de inglés:

- a) no me importaría el tema
- b) buscaría un tema que me interese al menos un poco
- c) trataría de hablar de algo que conozco muy bien

10. Si tuviese que exponer algo en mi clase de inglés yo:

- a) Me prepararía mucho para no equivocarme.
- b) Trataría de escribir todo lo que debo decir en un papel, para leerlo durante la exposición.
- c) No me interesaría en lo absoluto.

Appendix 3. Rubric

The following Rubric was used to grade students while they were doing their presentations.

Oral Presentation Rubric

	/4	/3	/2	/1	TOTAL
Fluency	Speaks smoothly , with little hesitation that does not interfere with communication.	Speaks with some hesitation , but it does not usually interfere with communication.	Speaks with some hesitation , which often interferes with communication.	Hesitates too often when speaking, which often interferes with communication	/4
Vocal Variety	Vocal variety changes according to the topic he/she is explaining, all the time during the whole presentation, causing interest in the audience.	Vocal variety changes according to the topic he/she is explaining sometimes during the whole presentation, causing some interest in the audience.	Vocal variety barely changes according to the topic he/she is explaining during the whole presentation, causing little interest in the audience.	Vocal variety never changes during the whole presentation, causing no interest at all in the audience.	/4
Anxiety	Does not show any anxiety , seems calm, never stutters, does not sweat and/or does not show any tics.	Shows little anxiety at times , barely rubs his/her hands, barely stutters, does not sweat and/or show tics.	Shows some anxiety , as he/she sometimes rubs his/her hands, often stutters, sweats a little and/or shows tics at times.	Shows extreme anxiety , as he/she is rubbing his/her hands, always stutters, sweats and/or shows tics.	/4
Preparedness	Student is completely prepared and has obviously rehearsed.	Student seems pretty prepared but might have needed a couple more rehearsals.	The student is somewhat prepared , but it is clear that rehearsal was lacking.	Student does not seem at all prepared to present.	/4
Enthusiasm, body language and eye contact	Facial expression, body language and eye contact show a strong interest, enthusiasm and confidence about the topic throughout the presentation, but it is not overdone .	Facial expression, body language and eye contact show much interest, enthusiasm and confidence about the topic throughout the presentation, but it is somewhat overdone .	Facial expression, body language and eye contact show some interest, enthusiasm and confidence about the topic throughout the presentation.	Facial expression, body language and eye contact depict apathy, boredom and none confidence with the topic.	/4
TOTAL					/20