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Motivation strategies in the teaching-  
learning process in EFL Secondary Education



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## **Motivation strategies in the teaching-learning process in EFL Secondary Education**

### **1. Introduction**

The present dissertation is the end point to the Master's Degree in Secondary Education, in which I have immersed myself for the last eight months. In this Master's I have become aware of and learned about a great range of issues concerning the teaching profession.

This Master's Degree is regulated by the Aragonese Curriculum (Orden, 9 de mayo 2007, BOA 1/6/2007) regulated by the *Ley Orgánica de Educación* (LOE, Ley 2/2006 de 3 de mayo, BOE, 4/5/2006). As the Curriculum states, nowadays we live in an information and communication society which is becoming more and more globalized. In this type of society, there is an increasing demand for being able to communicate in one or more than one foreign language with people from other countries and cultures. In the same way, most of the accessible information on the Internet is written in English, so the need of speaking this language is paramount. We, as English teachers, share the responsibility of facilitating our students' learning and acquisition of the basic competences in order to successfully deal with this current information society. Moreover, following Finney (2002), as English teachers 'we must develop in our learners the ability to communicate effectively in a wide range of professional and social contexts' (2002: 69).

The new Aragonese Curriculum (Orden, 15 de mayo 2015, BOA 29/05/2015) which is regulated by the *Ley Orgánica para la Mejora de la Calidad Educativa* (LOMCE, Ley 8/2013, de 9 de diciembre, BOE, 10/12/2013), agrees in this aspect in the LOE Curriculum. The LOMCE Curriculum also states that the command of at least one foreign language is vital for what the Council of the European Union calls global, intercultural and multilingual education.

Among all the different aspects involved in the teaching-learning process we have dealt with in this Master's Degree, there is one which I find fundamental and it is the one I have chosen to focus my dissertation from its perspective: learners' motivation. I have chosen this topic because the LOE Aragonese Curriculum brings to

the fore the crucial importance of students' motivation. Moreover, the LOMCE Aragonese Curriculum also refers to students' motivation, as it expects to favour intrinsic motivation and the willingness to develop new projects, as attitudes towards life.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to encompass and critically reflect on the knowledge and skills I have acquired throughout this academic year regarding one of the aspects which I find fundamental in the teaching-learning process: learners' motivation. In other words, my aim is to determine whether this Master's has provided me with the necessary knowledge and abilities to motivate Secondary Education ESL students in the future. To undertake this analysis, I will start with a theoretical review of the concept of motivation with specific focus on foreign language learning. Next I will go through the different subjects and assignments that I have done this year in order to identify and discuss those that have helped me to acquire the necessary competences to motivate my future student. I will finish this paper with a proposal for the future aimed at developing and maintaining the motivation of my students in my future teaching career.

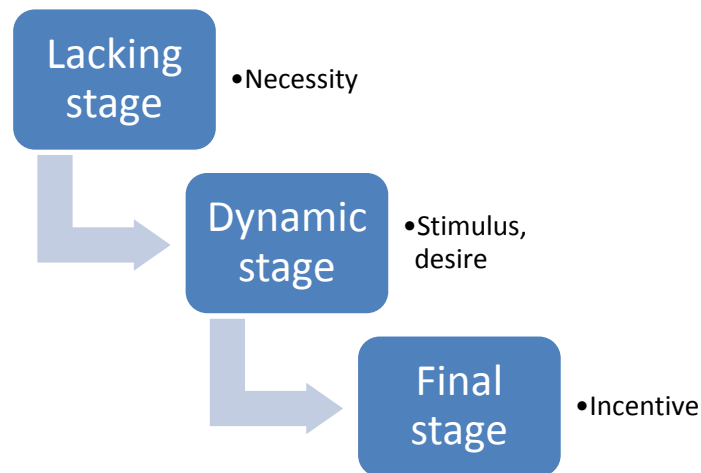
## **2. Motivation and Second Language Teaching**

In this second section of the dissertation I will review some theoretical frameworks dealing with the concept of motivation. I will start first with different ways of approaching the concept in the teaching-learning process in general, and then I will focus on motivation in the foreign language classroom following Dörnyei's (1994) classification. Dörnyei's perspective is the one I will relate my analysis later on in the third section.

### **2.1. Motivation in the teaching-learning process**

According to the Cambridge dictionary motivation is 'the need or reason of doing something', as well as 'enthusiasm for doing something'. In the pedagogical context, and following the definition found in 'Pedagogía' (2007), motivation is the attraction towards an objective that involves an action performed by the person, and allows accepting the required effort in order to achieve that objective. Motivating is, in other words, succeeding in steering someone to behave in a particular way by giving him or her a reason. I will now go through a brief review of different frameworks of the concept of motivation that I have learnt along the Master's Degree.

In the subject *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje*, I learnt that for a motivation to take place, we start from some lack which creates a necessity (*lacking stage*). This necessity makes us move (*dynamic stage*), and that movement lead us to a *final stage* which becomes an incentive.



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In line with the previous idea that motivation starts with a necessity, Maslow (1943) contends that humans are motivated to achieve certain needs, which he represented in a pyramid showing five components. At the bottom of the pyramid are the two basic needs – physiological and safety needs –, and the top three are the secondary needs – love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Maslow's theory deals with the idea that if people do not have their basic needs covered, they do not have secondary motivations. We, as teachers, should keep this concept in mind when dealing with our students and their motivation, and we should not judge them, as they may not have their basic needs covered, and that may be the reason why their performance in class is not the expected one. I am not stating that it is our responsibility to look after the physiological needs of our students, but I think it is important to know them and know in which stage of the pyramid they are, so that we can understand better their performance at school.



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<sup>1</sup> Extracted and translated from class notes *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje*

<sup>2</sup> Extratced from <http://cdn-1.simplypsychology.org/maslow-pyramid.jpg>



Other basic aspects of motivation are the desire and the incentive which motivate the effort. Alonso Tapia (1992) established four types of incentive or academic goals which produce student motivation: the *task*, *self-recognition*, *social recognition*, and *external rewards*. Regarding the goal which has to do with the task, there are three aspects which encourage this motivation goal: competence motivation, that is, what is motivating is what is going to be learnt; control motivation, which refers to the students' option of choosing a topic, or widen their knowledge according to their interests and likes; or it could be an intrinsic motivation, and what motivates students is the proper task on its own.

As far as the second goal is concerned – self-recognition – the students' motivation is between the satisfaction and pride about their own success, and the fear of failure, so, as they want to avoid a shameful experience, they may choose an easier task and that becomes their motivation. The self-recognition goal has very much to do with the social recognition which is once more between two factors: the approval of both adults and peers, and avoiding their rejection.

The last goal is the one about external rewards, and it has to do with reinforcement, both positive and negative. The motivation in this case may be the desire to obtain prizes and rewards (positive reinforcement), or to avoid punishments and loosing of privileges (negative reinforcement).

Once we have defined the concept of motivation and reviewed its structure, its stages and its different academic goals. We need to establish the factors which affect motivation and are fundamental in the teaching-learning process: the student himself or herself, the teacher, and the context.

The student himself or herself plays an important role in his or her own motivation. This motivation depends on the concept they have of themselves, and their affective and emotional components. Moreover, their likes and preferences, as well as their learning styles and abilities influence their motivation. Another factor that affects the students' motivation has to do with the fear to failure and the *learned helplessness*, which is a phenomenon studied by Seligman (1975) that shows that some students may not be motivated in class not because they are not interested, but because they have not had any experience of success during all their academic life. In order to solve this, we,

as teachers, should provide these students with experiences of success, and show all the students that they are able to do things well.

Teachers are also a key point in students' motivation in terms of their pedagogical attitude and their teaching style, which may coincide with those of their students or not. Their behaviour in the classroom, as well as their personality and their relationship with the students are also key elements that affect students' motivation. Finally, the expectations that a teacher has about the students may influence a lot in their motivation and performance, and these expectations may even lead to the so called Pygmalion Effect (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1980), which means that students perform as they are expected to do by the teacher.

Finally, the last factor involved in the students' motivation is the context, which has to do with the classroom atmosphere and the relationships between the students, as well as with the subject itself and the structure of the lesson, the methodology and the evaluation procedures. The projects, objectives and methodology of each school, and its cultural and social conditions also affect motivation.

## **2.2. Motivation in the foreign language classroom**

After having commented on students' motivation in the teaching-learning process in general, I will now focus on this second section on motivation in the foreign language classroom, and I will follow Dörnyei's (1994) classification of components of foreign language learning motivation. This author establishes three different levels: *language level*, *learner level* and *learning situation level*.

Within language level motivation Dörnyei follows Gardner's (1985 in Dörnyei 1994) differentiation between *integrative* and *instrumental* motivational subsystems. Integrative motivation has to do with the student's interest and predisposition to learn a language, including his or her desire to know also about the culture and to interact with the members of the community where this language is spoken. On the other hand, instrumental motivation is related to the usefulness this language will have in the individual's future career, in order to get a better job or a salary, for example.

The second level Dörnyei (1994) establishes is the learner level which is formed by two components related to the learner's personality traits: *need for achievement* and *self-confidence*. According to Dörnyei, need for achievement is a stable personality trait that leads the people who possess it to behave in order to achieve excellence for its own sake in every aspect of their lives, including language learning. The other component of this second level is self-confidence which can be defined as 'the belief that one has the ability to produce results, accomplish goals or perform tasks competently' (Dörnyei, 1994:277). This component has to do with several factors concerning the use of the L2 (second language) such as *language use anxiety*, *perceived L2 competence*, *causal attributions* and *self-efficacy*. These factors are related to the learners' view on his or her own knowledge and command on the L2 and what I mentioned above about past experiences of success or failure and learned helplessness.

The third level of L2 motivation is called by Dörnyei (1994) learning situation level, and it is composed by three different set of components concerning three areas: course-specific motivational components, teacher-specific motivational components, and group-specific motivational components. The components of course-specific motivation include students' *interests*, *relevance* of the learning to their needs, *expectancy* and *satisfaction* about their performance and what they have learnt. This area is related to the syllabus, methodology, and the type of materials and tasks used in the lesson.

Among the motivational components which are teacher specific, Dörnyei (1994) distinguishes between *affiliative drive*, *authority type*, and *direct socialization* of motivation. By affiliative drive, he refers to the need that students may have to do well in order to please their teachers, whereas the authority type has to do with the teacher's attitude towards involving the students in the decision making process, that is, if he or she supports students' autonomy, or if he or she is, on the other hand, more controlling. The last component that has to do with the teacher, is the direct socialization of motivation, and it involves *modelling* – the students' learning will be modelled by the teacher –, *task presentation* – the teachers need to draw attention to the purpose of the activity, as well as to its interest and practical value, to get students engaged –, and *feedback*, through which students may be aware of the teacher's priorities, which will in turn be reflected in their motivation.

The last motivational components included in the learning situation level are the ones related to the group, which can be regarded as a powerful social entity. Those components are: *goal-orientedness*, that is, to achieve an end that is wanted by the majority of the members of the group; *norm and reward system*, which are standardized rules that all or the majority accept; *group cohesion*, which deals with the idea of promoting the contribution of all the students to obtain success as a group; and *classroom goal structure*, which can be competitive, cooperative or individualistic, being the cooperative one the one which has proved to be the most successful when dealing with group performance.

We can conclude that motivation is a multidimensional construct, but the task of motivating students and get them engaged does not only require to know this construct, but it also requires different abilities and methodological knowledge.

### **3. Analysis of the Master's Degree subjects and learning activities and their contribution to provide motivation knowledge and strategies**

Once I have established the theoretical framework of motivation, in this section I will go through the Master's Degree and its different subjects and assignments which have helped me to understand the concept of motivation, and which have provided me with the tools and strategies to motivate my future students. In order to make this analysis more structured and fluid, I will divide the contents of the Master's Degree in four different points dealing with subjects that have common characteristics. First, I will deal with the core subjects to all Master's specialities and the first placement period (*Practicum I*) which took place in the first term. Then, I will continue with the two elective subjects that I chose in each of the terms, and then, I will focus on the subjects concerning the English language teaching (ELT). The last section will be dedicated to the second and third placement periods (*Practicum II and III*), in which I was able to put into practice what I have learnt in the theoretical part of the Master's Degree.

#### **3.1. Core subjects and *Practicum I***

In the first term of the Master's Degree I studied three different subjects which were compulsory for all the branches of this Degree: *Interacción y convivencia en el aula*, *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje* and *Contexto de la actividad docente*. This last subject was closely related to the first placement period – *Practicum I* – which I spent in the Catholic state school 'El Pilar Maristas', located in the area Actur-Rey Fernando. I will comment on how this three subjects and the placement period helped me in terms of motivation. I will start with the first two subjects, and then I will discuss the third subject in conjunction with the *Practicum I*.

The subject named *Interacción y convivencia en el aula* contributed to provide me with certain tools to improve classroom atmosphere and raise students' motivation, and we dedicated three sessions to work on strategies to improve this. The contents of these sessions were divided into two main topics: how to establish a good relationship with the students, and how to promote the students' participation.

Establishing a good relationship with students is a key aspect of Dörnyei's (1994) teacher-specific motivational components. During the course we discussed several strategies which can help teachers to establish a close relationship with students such as knowing the name of his or her students in order to show respect and interest for them. Moreover, by calling a student by his or her name, the teacher activates their attention and implication in the task.

Another useful technique is to practice active listening and to utter both criticisms and answers in an assertive way. Teachers should show their students they are listening to them with verbal responses, such as not interrupting, asking questions or repeating concepts uttered by the students, not advancing his or her own conclusions and letting the students finish what they want to say. There are also some non-verbal responses that can help to show active listening such as head nodding, visual contact or taking notes while listening. Another strategy is the use of humour in the lessons, which motivates the students and makes them be more engaged and to remember better what the teacher is explaining in that moment.

We learnt all these techniques first by means of combining theoretical lectures and then we saw some practical examples which recreated situations which may take place in the classroom. I believe all these techniques can be used to enhance some of the aspects Dörnyei (1994) mentions regarding the teacher-specific motivational components, such as the affiliative type, because the teacher establishes a good relationship with the students, and the way in which he or she provides feedback to the students.

The second topic we dealt with in this subject related to students' motivation was, as I mentioned before, how to promote students' participation. This aspect relates with Dörnyei's (1994) learner level motivation, and more particularly with student self-confidence. Lack of self-confidence is one of the reasons for students to not participate in the lesson. Moreover, in Spain they are not used to speak during the lesson giving their ideas or points of view, and they even feel shame when talking in front of their classmates.

In order to try to solve this problem of students' lack of participation, we focused on strategies to create an interactive lesson, and then we devoted a great amount of time to understanding Skinner's (1938 in McLeod, 2015) concept of operant

conditioning, and how to put into practice reinforcement techniques to enhance students' motivation. Regarding the strategies to make the lesson more interactive, we focused on two aspects: how to make good and appropriate questions, and how to create a non-inhibiting atmosphere. As far as the type of questions teachers should ask, they can be both open and close, but they should be short and simple, and they should not require the student to remember a great amount of concise information, in this way, the students will be able to answer them more easily and they will be more willing to participate. Teachers should also wait and give the students time to answer, and they should not answer to themselves. Moreover, regarding the class atmosphere, teachers should use active methodologies, such as cooperative work, and give the students positive feedback when they do correctly and assertively correct the wrong answers and favour other experiences of success for the students who make errors in their answers.

Starting with Skinner's operant conditioning, we studied the different reinforcement contingencies, and finally the types of reinforcement programmes teachers can apply to enhance students' motivation. According to Skinner (1938 in McLeod 2015) operant conditioning is the modification of the behaviour using a certain reinforcement which is given after the expected and desired response takes place. Skinner's theory of reinforcement contingencies can be summarized in the following table:

		Type of stimulus	
		Positive 'appealing'	Negative 'distasting'
Type of operation	Application	Positive reinforcement	Positive punishment
	Elimination	Negative punishment	Negative reinforcement <sup>3</sup>

After having studied this theory, we put it into practice firstly by commenting together some practical examples in which we were presented certain behaviour, and we had to decide which type of reinforcement programme was adequate in each case.

When we had understood and practiced Skinner's theory at the end of these sessions on improving classroom atmosphere and raising students' motivation, we did an evaluation assignment called '*Caso Paula*' (Paula's case), which can be seen in the

<sup>3</sup> Table extracted and translated from *Interacción y convivencia en el aula* class notes

Appendix I. We were given a case about a girl, Paula, in which some motivational problems were described, and we had to find a solution to those problems by applying the strategies learnt during these sessions that we found relevant. This was the first time I had to work with students' motivation and I proposed some techniques and reinforcement programmes for Paula in order to achieve the following objectives:

- To make Paula trust and value herself
- To increase her motivation regarding the studies and improve her marks
- To integrate her in the group and improve her relationship with her classmates
- To apply a supporting plan for those subjects in which the student shows difficulties

In order to achieve all these objectives, the programmes I designed recommended that the teacher should reinforce her behaviour whenever she participates in class, and whenever she gives a correct answer. Moreover, the teachers should also reinforce the rest of the students whenever they do something to integrate Paula in the group. I also suggested creating success experiences for Paula by asking her questions that we know she is going to answer correctly, or by proposing tasks about topics she likes and in which she is an 'expert', and by doing so we will avoid possible learned helplessness situations. Finally, I also proposed to apply a supporting programme in those subjects she needs.

This assignment was the first time I dealt with students' motivation so directly. I did not know anything about reinforcement programmes before, and when we studied them theoretically they were not too clear for me, but doing the assignment on 'Paula's case' was really helpful and clarifying, and I understood the importance of these type of programmes and the rest of the described techniques.

Another core subject in the Master's Degree was *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje*. This subject promotes the use two aspects which I find really related to students' motivation: Gardner's (1989) multiple intelligences and the ICTs.

The use of Gardner's (1989) multiple intelligences as a way to enhance students' motivation is connected with Dörnyei's teacher-specific motivational components, as we can design activities involving them. All the human beings have at least eight types



of intelligence – linguistic, logical-mathematical, musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal –, and each student stands out in a different one, or in more than one. We should provide different tasks involving multiple intelligences in the English subject in our case, so that the students with weaker linguistic intelligence, which is the one we usually prioritize in our subject – English –, can also perform well by means of the rest of the intelligences. By doing this, we can promote experiences of success for every learner, which will visibly increase their motivation.

In the English subject it is very easy to integrate some of the multiple intelligences, for example, we can introduce the musical intelligence by means of songs or musical videos in English. We can also use the visual-spatial working with maps during speaking activities, or the interpersonal intelligence while working in groups. By doing this we are influencing two aspects of the teacher-specific motivational components proposed by Dörnyei: the authority type, and the task presentation. They can be influenced by the use of multiple intelligences in the sense that we let the students explore other style of learning which differ from the linguistic intelligence. We can even go further and let the students choose which type of intelligence they want to use to perform each of the tasks.

In this subject, we also dedicated some sessions to the use of the ICTs in the classroom, and we were shown some websites and online tools that we can use in the English lessons. Some of the websites we were shown allow the students' to carry out web quests in which they have to complete a series of tasks which contribute to their learning. We can also create our own web quests containing the contents and we want our students to learn. I believe that the use of ICTs can contribute to increase students' motivation in terms of Dörnyei's s learning situation level (course-specific). ICTs are something that the students use every day in the Information Society in which we live nowadays, and by using them for teaching English we are making the teaching-learning process more relevant and interesting for them, as the ICTs are actually relevant and interesting for them.

Apart from getting to know some web pages which provided tools and activities to use in the English lessons, we also learnt how to incorporate to the lessons the physical ICTs that the students own, that is their mobile phones, tablets or laptops. To

get to this conclusion was really striking to me, because it means a great change from my own experience as a student. When I was a student this could never have happened, and I am glad this change is happening, because allowing the students to use their mobile phones or tablets in class, even if it is for doing an activity, will surely enhance their motivation in term of interest and relevance.

We received all the knowledge about multiple intelligences and ICTs which we dealt with in the subject *Procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje* in a theoretical way, something which was interesting, but I missed some practice. I find these two aspects really useful and motivating, but I believe we would have understood them better if we had had some time to practice them, maybe by designing activities involving them, or learning to evaluate their use.

The last of the core subjects was *Contexto de la actividad docente*. This subject was divided into two different parts, one which had to do with sociology, and another one dealing with school organization. This last part was very closely related to the first placement period, *Practicum I*. In the sociology section, we studied the characteristics the field of Education should accomplish in the current Information Society. In this type of society in which we are living, the ability to speak more than one language, concretely English, is very important, as most of the information available online is written in English. Moreover, by speaking English people have more professional opportunities outside their homeland, as English is now considered to be a lingua franca. Drawing attention to these aspects may be useful in order to increase what Dörnyei (1994) called motivational language level motivation, which can be both integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation may be targeted by the teacher by making students aware of the importance of being proficient in English in order to have access to a more wide amount of information, and moreover, they will feel more integrated in the world community which use English as a lingua franca. As for the instrumental motivation, students will also have more opportunities regarding their future career both inside and outside Spain.

The second part of the subject of *Contexto de la actividad docente*, as I said before, had to do with school organization, so we studied the different education laws that have been applied throughout the history in Spain, and we also learnt the documents that every school needs to have and keep updated according to the current

education law. The *Practicum I* was closely connected to this part of the subject, because in the assignment we had to produce we were expected to study all the documents of the school we were placed. In my case this school was ‘El Pilar Maristas’, a Catholic state school located in the area of Zaragoza, Actur-Rey Fernando. This placement period was very useful for me to understand better the documents of the school and their role in the centre, as they show the objectives and methodology that the school follow. The context is one of the factors affecting students’ motivation, so these objectives and methodology influence directly on their motivation. Dörnyei (1994) does not include in his classification a specific place for the context, but I believe it is an important factor which influence the reasons people have to learn a language. Depending on the characteristics of each school, the students will need the language for different purposes.

### **3.2. Elective subjects**

In this Master’s Degree students have the possibility of choosing an elective subject in each of the two terms. In my case, I chose *Educación emocional en el profesorado* in the first term, and *Habilidades comunicativas para profesores* in the second one. I find both of these subjects really useful and I believe they should be compulsory rather than elective, as they provide students with really useful tools and strategies that can be applied to our student life while doing the Master’s Degree, and also to our future career as teachers.

The elective subject in the first term, *Educación emocional en el profesorado*, helped me a lot and made me open my mind to a new whole range of theories and techniques to both motivate my students and motivate myself. It really helped me to cope with all the stress and the amount of work and effort this Master’s requires, and I believe it actually provides students with very useful tools that can be applied while doing the Master’s Degree, in our future professional career and during the rest of our lives. In this subject we practice techniques and we read articles on different methods to think positively and to see the bright side of everything. A key term with which we worked through the subject was that of ‘*emotional intelligence*’ understood, as Teruel (2000) says, as a way to interact with the world, which takes into account the feelings,

and that encompasses emotional qualities such as the capacity to adapt, social abilities, empathy, self-control, self-knowledge, self-motivation, assertiveness, kindness or respect, among others. According to Díez and Martí (1998 in Teruel, 2000), one of the five spheres encompassed by the emotional intelligence is that of motivation – the other four are self-knowledge, self-control, empathy and social abilities. They define motivation as a key ability that allows us to guide our emotions towards certain goals, and to control our impulses. That is, it raises our effort capacity in order to achieve what we want.

We learn how to train the emotional intelligence by means of readings or conferences by different psychologists, and we also practiced the techniques proposed by them both in the classroom and at home. Moreover, we performed some role plays reproducing situations that can happen to us as future teachers, such as meeting with parents, and we trained how to speak with them.

The learning provided by this subject is directly related to Dörnyei's (1994) notion of self-confidence (a subcomponent of learner level motivation), as by using all those techniques and training the emotional intelligence, we can make our students think positively and have confidence in their abilities. In other words, this subject has taught me that I should always keep in mind emotional intelligence as a key factor to promote students' motivation, and I am determined to train this intelligence with my students.

As for the second elective subject, *Habilidades comunicativas para profesores*, it provided me with strategies to improve the way I face a classroom full of students. This idea connects with Dörnyei's (1994) teacher-specific motivational components, more specifically with the role of the teacher as a model for the students: I believe that it does not matter how much you know about your subject, you can be the person who best knows English in the world, the person with the best pronunciation and who knows most vocabulary, but if you lack communication abilities, your students are not going to learn from you, and they are not going to be motivated to learn, because they do not understand what you are telling them.

It is true that this subject focuses more on how to teach a masterclass, something which is not recommended by the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) methodology, which we studied in on the specific subjects of the English speciality, as

we studied the different parts of the oral discourse and oratory techniques. Nevertheless we also dealt with useful strategies to integrate and involve students in the lesson – even in masterclasses – and to learn to ask students the types of questions appropriate to each situation. Moreover, we also practice the use of gestures and tone of the voice. These techniques were designed to help us project empathy and closeness to the students, while at the same time keeping the required distance. All these techniques to involve students in the lesson enhance their motivation and interest. Furthermore, our gestures and the tone in which we speak also influences motivation: students will be more motivated with a teacher who speaks clearly and assertively, than with one who speaks quietly and with a trembling voice. And the same goes for the gestures, it motivates more a teacher who goes around the classroom and he or she shows himself or herself close to the students, than a teacher who is always sitting behind his or her desk.

We first read about all these techniques and then we saw some videos of trainee teachers giving their first lessons, and we commented on the positive and negative aspects of each of them. We later on, had to do some oral expositions and our classmates commented on our performance.

For this subject, we had to do an assignment to assess and critically reflect on our own performance as teacher while doing our second and third placements periods – *Practicum II* and *Practicum III*. This assignment consisted in recording us teaching a lesson, and then we had to hand in an essay where we commented on how we had done in that class with specific attention to all the strategies and techniques studied in the subject. In the Appendix II I have enclosed a fragment of this essay in which by means of reflective teaching (Bailey et al., 2001) I critically reflect on my performance in terms of elocution aspects and rhetoric strategies to make comprehension easier and create interest, and I also analyse interaction and students' attitude. This assignments was a great opportunity for me to put into practice reflective teaching, and also to analyse if I had managed or not to motivate my students – at least in that lesson – and how I should improve my teaching in order to get them more motivated.

### 3.3. ELT subjects

In this section I will focus on those subjects concerning English Language Teaching (ELT). In the first term we took *Fundamentos de diseño instruccional y metodologías de aprendizaje en Lenguas Extranjeras* and *Diseño curricular en Lenguas Extranjeras* – *Fundamentos* and *Diseño* from now on. Then, on the second term we did three other subjects: *Diseño, organización y desarrollo de actividades para el aprendizaje de Lenguas Extranjeras (DODALE)*, *La comunicación oral en lengua inglesa*, and *Evaluación e innovación docente e investigación educativa en Inglés – Innovación* from now on. In this section I will analyse how all these subjects and their different assignments have provided me with tools for enhance students' motivation.

*Fundamentos* was the subject which has provided me with the theoretical framework of ELT that we later on have seen in a more practical way in the rest of the subjects in the English speciality. We acquired this theoretical framework by means of lectures, readings and different learning activities, such as tests and tasks done in the classroom. We studied in this subject how languages are learned and we also learned about how both SLA (Second Language Acquisition) theories and ELT methodologies have changed through the history. According to Kumaravadivelu (2006), in the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, especially during the 1980s CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) was the dominant method which 'introduced innovative activities (such as games, role plays, and scenarios) aimed at creating and sustaining learner motivation' (2006: 61). CLT is what we are encouraged to achieve in the Master's Degree, together with the Task-based language teaching (TBLT) which 'according to some, is just CLT by another name' (Kumaravadivelu, 2006: 64).

One of the basic principles of CLT is precisely that by learning to communicate students will be more motivated while learning a L2, as they will feel that what they are learning is really useful and it has a purpose (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). In the same way, TBLT enhance students' confidence, as they have plenty of opportunities to communicate in the lessons without being afraid of being corrected every time they make a mistake (Willis and Willis, 2007) as the main goal is to achieve communication.

The second ELT subject of the first term was *Diseño* in which we learnt how to programme a course plan according to the current law – LOE in our case – and the

Aragonese Curriculum. My group and I designed a course plan which was topic based, and we tried to find topics for each unit which were motivating for the students. We worked on students' motivation by looking for topics which were contemporary and relevant for them, and that at the same time were suitable for the learning objectives of our course plan, so coherent with the curriculum.

In order to find topics that were appealing and motivating for the students we used a document called 'The theme generator' (Estaire and Zanon 1994) which shows how to choose an appropriate topic and gives some ideas and suggestions.

The topics we chose were: 'Global news', 'J.R.R. Tolkien: life and work', 'Animals in danger', 'Mystery', 'Work and employment. A job interview', 'The evolution of technology and its impact in the classroom', and 'A place to stay'. In the Appendix III I have included the justifications we provided giving the reasons why we chose those topics. By choosing these relevant and motivating topics for the students we were making emphasis on Dörnyei's (1994) course-specific motivational components in terms of interest and relevance (learning situation level).

In the second term we put into practice the theoretical foundations that we studied in the subject *Fundamentos*. In *DODALE* we learnt how to teach the four skills – listening, reading, speaking and writing – together with grammar and vocabulary from a communicative approach and using TBLT structure in the lessons: pre-task, task and post-task. As I said before, this two teaching approaches enhance students' motivation as they make the learning meaningful and useful: in order to achieve communicative teaching we need to teach language in context, with a real purpose and there has to be an outcome to evaluate the learning.

One of the assignments of this subject consisted in designing in pairs a Learning Unit, in which, in the same way as in the course plan for *Diseño*, my partner and I chose a topic which was appealing and motivating for the students: 'Television'. In this way, once more, we worked on Dörnyei's (1994) learning situational level of motivation regarding course-specific components: relevance and interest. In the introduction of the Unit – which can be seen in Appendix IV – we established both our students' English level and their likes regarding the topic of the unit, and we created and adapted authentic materials according to their level and interests in order to make the different lessons more attractive and motivating for them. For example, we knew that our

students liked science fiction, sitcoms and reality shows, and that they were hooked on social networks, so, in our lessons we dealt with *Friends*, reality shows in general and we compared and related them to *The Hunger Games*, and superheroes, and we also worked on writing Facebook posts and Tweets. Moreover, in terms of the different levels of English of our students, we made some differentiation in some of the lessons, and we also worked on multiple intelligences in the final task of our unit, following in this case Dörnyei's teacher-specific motivational components – authority type, as we let the students choose the outcome they wanted for their final task in groups. In this final task the students were in groups, and each of them was assigned a different TV genre. They had to show their learning in the way they choose: with a song, an essay, a poster, a video, a performance, etc.

Another subject of this second term was *La comunicación oral en lengua inglesa*, in which we learnt how to teach pronunciation in terms of both segmental and suprasegmental features. In this subject we also read Walker's (2010) chapter 'The Lingua Franca Core', which I find relevant for this topic of motivation. The use of English as a lingua franca, as I said before in this dissertation, is vital in the Information Society in which we live nowadays, so we come back again to Dörnyei's (1994) language level regarding instrumental motivation. Students probably will need to speak in English in their future jobs with non-native speakers, and also most of the information available on the Internet is in English.

Finally, the last subject which was specific for the English speciality was *Innovación*, which we dedicated to create a project in groups dealing with a proposal for innovation in ELT. Our project had in fact a lot to do with motivation: we operated under the assumption that warm-up activities were not given the necessary importance in the EFL (English as foreign language) lessons, and that when used in class, they were not systematically implemented to achieve the desired effect. Therefore, we thought that if we analysed the current situation in our placement schools and we made a proposal in order to give them the importance they deserved and to implement them correctly, we would enhance the need to use them as well as their effectiveness.

Our innovation project was justified by what the LOE Aragonese Curriculum states in its second additional disposition that innovation and experimentation processes will be favoured in order to develop flexible models answering the students' needs and



context. Moreover, we did some research in SLA and the role of warm-up activities in students' motivation in order to justify our project, and we conclude that warm-up activities can be really effective when used for different purposes such as to establish a good class climate and engage students, as the more comfortable the students are, the more willing they would be in learning something, and this learning would be more meaningful. Another benefit of warm-up activities in terms of developing motivation is that it can help lower students' anxiety and the affective filter (Krashen, 1981) – as they are a relaxed way to start a lesson –, as several affective factors may be the cause for anxiety and shame (Brown, 2001) and they may cause the learner to be silent out of mere shyness and lack of self-confidence (Dörnyei 1994).

Furthermore, warm-up activities are also a useful tool to activate students' previous knowledge in CLT lessons which employ top-down processing tasks, so a warm-up activity can be a motivating option to activate this previous knowledge. Finally, the last aspect we thought that this kind of activities could be used for was that we can explore learners' needs, interests and abilities, giving us the possibility of using such information on future lessons, applying Dörnyei's (1994) both course-specific – interest and relevance – and teacher-specific – task presentation – motivational components.

To carry out this project, each of the members of the group did a research in his or her school placement during the *Practicum II* and *III* – we did five different researches, as our group had five components. Each of us analysed the action plan we decided to carry out in the classroom, as well as the implementation and the individual results that we got from the data obtained, and on the last section we analysed and compared all the results and we draw some conclusions. In the Appendix V I have included my own research – carried out in 'El Pilar Maristas' school.

In terms of motivation, we found that in almost every case, warm-up activities contributed to keep the students interested and engaged, even if we found some cases in which they did not accomplish the desired effect, as in my placement school in some of the sessions, for example. As a result, we concluded something that we already knew: even if warm-up activities may be motivating, they are not the sole cause for students' motivation, as there are many other aspects and factors which influence it.

### **3.4. *Practicum II and III***

As I have already mentioned before, my placement period took place in the Catholic state school 'El Pilar Maristas', located in Actur-Rey Fernando, a district in the north of Zaragoza. In this section I will analyse how I worked on students' motivation during the two placement periods I completed during the second term, in which I tried to apply the knowledge, tools and strategies learnt in the different subjects of the Master's Degree.

First of all, once I knew the level and the unit I had to teach, I examined the lesson plans the text book they used in the school proposed and I tried to make them more communicative, by applying CLT and TBLT methodologies. The year I had to teach was 1<sup>st</sup> of Bachillerato – the three groups -, and the topic of the unit was 'Television'. During the observation period I spoke with some of the students in focus groups to get to know their interests and likes regarding this topic in order to adapt and prepare materials according to them.

I also put into practice the Innovation Project on warm-up activities that I mentioned in the last section, which, as it can be seen in the Appendix V was not as successful as I thought it would be regarding students' motivation.

These placement period were a great opportunity to put into practice some of the learning acquired along the Master's, but I would have liked to have more time to practice more some of the strategies and techniques learnt.

#### 4. Proposals for the future

After having analysed how the subjects of the Master's Degree, and some of their assignments, have contributed to help me to acquire the competences and knowledge to motivate my future students, in this section I will develop a proposal on students' motivation in Secondary Education according to what I have learnt and experience through the year. To organise my proposal will follow Dörnyei's (1994) classification of components of Foreign Language Learning Motivation: language level, learner level, and learning situation level.

According to Dörnyei (1994) language level motivation consists of two subsystems: integrative and instrumental motivations. In order to raise instrumental motivation, teachers should try to do some activities dealing with Spanish people who are living abroad, or who got a good job because they had a high level of English. These activities could be in the form of listening to interviews, or watching videos, or reading about it, or they could even try to bring someone to class who has lived an experience like this to talk to the students. It is not so difficult to find someone who meets these conditions, as nowadays speaking English is fundamental to cope with the Information Society in which we live. Moreover, studying at least one year abroad is something quite common which I am sure is appealing and interesting for the students, and I think the people who have experienced it are willing to share it with other people. Another way to increase on this instrumental motivational component, may be to ask the actual students why they think learning English is important, and even compulsory in the Secondary Education. This reflection could make them draw their own conclusions, and self-motivate themselves.

Following with this idea of people living abroad and the usefulness of English, I think these topics can also increase the integrative motivation. In order to do so, I believe teachers should propose some activities dealing with English as a lingua franca – such writing to pen pals from another country in which English is not the L1 –, and explaining the students how by speaking English they can be integrated more easily in social circles which do not share their first language (L1).

Regarding the second component, learner level motivation, Dörnyei (1994) divides it into two main aspects: need for achievement and self-confidence. In terms of

students' need for achievement, I believe teachers should rely on Maslow's pyramid (1943) to identify the stage of motivation of their students, so as to plan their teaching based on that stage. In order to get to know this, I think that working together with the students' tutor or even with the school counsellor would be a good idea. Similarly, keeping in close contact with the family of the students would be really helpful, as it would allow teacher to detect if there are any differences between the student's behaviour at school and at home, or if there is any problem in his or her family circle, as the causes of motivation or lack of it have not just an academic source, as it can be seen in Maslow's pyramid.

To work with the second components, self-confidence, teachers should try to lower the students' affective filter (Krashen 1981) in order to make them feel relaxed and willing to participate in the lesson. This could be achieved by the use of warm-up activities at the beginning of the lesson, which my classmates and I proved to be effective to accomplish these purposes in most occasions in our project for the subject of *Innovation*. How we start a lesson is fundamental to set the mood for the rest of it, so if we find a warm-up activity which engage the students, the rest of the lesson will develop better. This activity may engage them because of the topic, which may be something they like, or because of the procedure to do it, which can involve physical movement around the classroom. I believe warm-up activities are good opportunities for the teacher to connect with the students and to surprise them.

Teachers can also lower the students' affective filter and raise self-confidence by using the emotional intelligence. As Teruel (2000) states children with capacities in the field of emotional intelligence are happier, more confident and more successful in the school. This is one field to improve within the Master's, as the subject which deals with the emotional intelligence is not compulsory for all the students, but elective, and it is something that future teachers should embrace. According to Teruel (2000) we should integrate the emotional education in our lessons knowing the strategies to learn and teach it, in a way that it can be developed in the classroom and that facilitated the resolution of the emotional conflicts which happen there.

Another way to raise students' self-confidence would be by means of applying reinforcement programmes (Skinner 1938 in McLeod 2015), if teachers see they are needed. These programmes must be individually designed for each of the students we

want to apply them, as not all the reinforcements may work with all the students. We need to know the students to get with the appropriate reinforcement programme. We need to know what the students are interested in, and we could use that as reinforcement. For example, verbal reinforcements may not work with every student, so we have to find what will work with each of them.

Finally, the use of multiple intelligences (Gardner1981) in different activities would be a great way of creating success experiences for all the students. We could integrate songs, or maps, or activities that involve movement, for example, in our lessons. In this way teachers would avoid experiences of learned helplessness (Seligman 1975) among the students, as all of them would stand out in at least one of the intelligences, so their self-confidence would increase.

The last component of motivation that Dörnyei (1994) proposes is that concerning learning situation level, which can be divided into course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific components. In order to deal with the course-specific components, which include interest, relevance, expectancy and satisfaction, I think the first obvious thing to do is to get to know the students' interests and needs, so as to design and prepare suitable materials that meet them. We can know them by means of questionnaires, or focus groups at the beginning of the academic year.

Apart from knowing their interests, it is also important to know their level of proficiency in English to make the activities and tasks relevant and challenging for them, and also avoid, on the other hand, frustration in the case the proposed task is too difficult for them. This information about the students can be collected by doing an initial test in which their English level is measured.

To improve teacher-specific motivation I believe that it is fundamental to ask the students periodically about our own performance. This can be done through one-minute-papers in which the students express their opinions about the development of the lesson, the materials used, etc. This kind of tool can help us as teachers to see how the motivation of our students and their satisfaction with the subject is developing along the year, and we can react and make the necessary changes. In this way, we are making the students participants of the teaching process and this will raise their motivation as they will feel that their opinions are taken into account.

Another strategy to target teacher-specific motivation would be letting the students choose activities or topics they want to work with in the English lessons. By doing this, we show them that we take them and their opinions into account, and that we consider them a central part of the teaching-learning process. We also show them that the educational system is centred on them, and that they have also the chance of choosing and deciding in their own learning. Moreover, by choosing the topics or activities, we also show them that they can improve their English in an autonomous way and with the materials that please them.

Finally, the way in which the teacher provides feedback to the students may affect their motivation, we should establish when and how we are going to correct their errors, for example, we should establish when we are going to focus and correct accuracy or fluency (Brown 2001), and how we are going to do it. In the speaking tasks centres on fluency, for instance, we may choose not to correct accuracy, so we will not interrupt a lot the students while talking, which is something that may affect their motivation if they see that we are correcting them all the time.

The last component in the learning situation level is that which has to do with the group. To enhance this motivational aspect, the rules and goals of the students as a group have to be very clear and they must be accepted by all of them (Dörnyei 1994).

Finally, we should also work with group dynamics in order to build a sense of group belonging, and promote cooperative work. Evans and Dion (1991 in Dörnyei 1994) found that group cohesion is directly related with group performance, as in a cohesive group, all the members tend to behave in a way which is beneficial for the group as a whole.

## 5. Conclusions

To conclude the present dissertation, I would like to come back to its purpose: to examine whether the Master's Degree has provided me with the necessary competences to be able to motivate Secondary Education students. My analysis has helped me realize that in fact, it has, and I am satisfied with my learning. I have learnt and understood the concept of motivation from different theoretical frameworks, and I have also acquired different tools and strategies to apply in my lessons in order to enhance students' motivation. However, I would have liked to have more time to put them into practice with the students during the placement periods. I believe that if I had known my students better, the classroom atmosphere would have been more relaxed and the activities and tasks would have been better oriented and more successful.

This Master's Degree has helped me realize that education nowadays is more and more centred on the student, something which did not happen – or at least, I was bit able to see it– when I was a Secondary student. This learner-centred methodology is something undoubtedly good and positive for both their learning and their motivation to learn, as they feel they and their needs and interests are taken into account within the teaching-learning process. I am glad that education is following this path and I am looking forward to be part of it in the future.

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## **7. Appendixes**

### **7.1. Appendix I**

#### **‘Caso Paula’**

##### **Caso práctico**

Paula tiene 16 años. Es más bien introvertida en clase. Sin embargo, los informes de los que dispone el centro indican que es muy inteligente. Aunque solía sacar buenas notas, desde hace un tiempo suspende matemáticas e inglés. Además estos suspensos le generan frustración. Sus padres acuden al centro para hablar con su tutor pues están preocupados. Señalan también que últimamente dice que no vale para nada y que no va a ser capaz de acabar los estudios. Sus relaciones con los compañeros de clase se han deteriorado o no son buenas, dice que cómo alguien va a quererla. ¿Qué podemos hacer con Paula?

Paula fracasa en los estudios y no confía en sí misma

- a) Define el problema y la conducta operativa
- b) Establece una hipótesis
- c) Intervención: Establece la hipótesis de intervención (si hacemos esto sucederá....) y los objetivos operativos de la intervención.
- d) Describe las técnicas y recursos que vas a utilizar. Sírrete de tantos recursos como quieras de los que hayamos visto en clase, pero define al menos un programa de refuerzo.
- e) Describe las situaciones de intervención: quién, dónde, cuándo
- f) Describe cómo realizarás el seguimiento y evaluarás los resultados

## 7.2. Appendix II

### **Fragment of the assignment for the subject *Habilidades comunicativas para profesores***

#### ASPECTOS DE ELOCUCIÓN Y ESTRATEGIAS RETÓRICAS PARA FACILITAR LA COMPRENSIÓN Y CREAR INTERÉS

Creo que el lenguaje utilizado fue el adecuado para los alumnos, prueba de esto es que a pesar de impartir prácticamente la totalidad de la clase en inglés, los alumnos no se perdieron en ningún momento y no necesitaron ninguna aclaración en español. El nivel de inglés de este grupo es suficientemente alto para poder seguir una clase en inglés sin ningún problema.

En cuanto a la contextualización del tema, creo que podría haberles explicado porqué es importante que sepan hablar de la televisión en inglés, algo que sí que tengo claro yo, pero que en esta clase no expliqué, de este modo quizás les habría parecido más interesante la clase. Por otro lado, sé que les pareció interesante porque tratamos temas que les gustan y conocen, por lo que prestaron atención y participaron mucho.

También me faltó explicarles al inicio de la clase la estructura que la sesión iba a seguir. Sí que es verdad que fui anticipando cosas, por ejemplo, cuando terminamos con la lluvia de ideas, les dije que íbamos a continuar con la corrección de deberes y que luego seguiríamos con el tema, pero es verdad que habría sido mejor explicarles la estructura y organización de la sesión al comienzo de la misma.

Por otro lado, creo que sí hago bastante hincapié en los conceptos, los repito mucho y repito también las ideas que surgen de los propios alumnos para enfatizarlas y que queden claras. También creo que queda claro cuando empieza y acaba cada actividad.

En cuanto a la gestualidad, quizás podría ser más expresiva, aunque sí es verdad que hago muchos gestos y muevo bastante la mano para remarcar distintos aspectos, incluso cuando llevo papeles en la mano. Y en relación al lenguaje, como ya he dicho creo que el adecuado, creo que hablo demasiado bajo, pero me parece que sí que lo hago de manera expresiva.

El contenido de esta clase podría haber sido denso si me hubiera limitado a leer una lista de vocabulario por ejemplo, pero esa lista la fueron creando los alumnos entre todos gracias a la lluvia de ideas en la pizarra del principio de la clase, y los ejemplos después, por lo que la densidad disminuyó muchísimo.

La parte de corrección de deberes, por otro lado, sí que me parece bastante densa y pesada, sin embargo, los alumnos siguen bien esa parte, están atentos y colaboran, incluso preguntan dudas. Para que esta parte no fuera tan pesada intenté repetir las respuestas correctas después de que las dijeran los alumnos, también les reforzaba cada vez (o casi cada vez) que decían una respuesta acertada, y cuando cometían errores, en lugar de corregirlos, los repetía para que ellos mismos se dieran cuenta y rectificaran.

Como ya he dicho antes, reconozco que el volumen de voz no es el adecuado, debería hablar más alto, algo que mi tutora también me comentó. Sin embargo, creo que sueno natural y no me noto monótona. Además creo que pronuncio claro (si bien mi pronunciación del inglés es mejorable, como la de casi todos) y pongo el énfasis en los aspectos que pretendo resaltar. El ritmo también me parece el adecuado y la expresión más o menos fluida, aunque sí es verdad que utilizo mucho “OK” al final de las frases. Tengo que decir también que a veces mi cara es demasiado expresiva, y en alguna ocasión, cuando un alumno contesta algo que no me espero, mi cara lo refleja. No tengo muy claro como de bueno o como de malo es esto. Por un lado, ser expresiva está bien, pero por otro el alumno en cuestión puede no tomarse bien mi expresión facial.

Creo que sí que doy la sensación de saber sobre la materia, aunque no creo que exprese mi opinión sobre los programas que mencionan, aunque sí que les pregunto sobre los que no conozco para que me los expliquen.

Sí que uso algún recurso para regular la actividad en el aula, ya que voy preguntándoles uno a uno en los momentos en los que no hay participación voluntaria, o simplemente porque intento que participen todos. Por otro lado, también hay un par de momentos en los que les llamo la atención para que se callen y escuchen a sus compañeros.

Por último creo que también uso estrategias de aproximación, ya que me río con sus comentarios, y el tema se presta a hablar de conocimientos compartidos por todos. Creo que sí ofrezco una imagen cercana.

## ANÁLISIS DE LA INTERACCIÓN

Creo que la participación de los alumnos y la mía propia está bastante equilibrada, ya que es una clase muy dialogada en la que son los alumnos los que van sacando poco a poco el contenido, a través de las preguntas que les voy haciendo. En relación a estas preguntas, no creo que haya ninguna memorística, más bien son todas intelectuales sobre sus conocimientos previos sobre el tema. Estas preguntas están dirigidas tanto a la clase en general como a alumnos individuales en particular. Las preguntas tanto en la lluvia de ideas como en la actividad posterior están planteadas a la clase en general, pero si en algún momento no hay respuesta, les pregunto individualmente a los alumnos. Durante la corrección de deberes, las preguntas son individuales, y cuando hay más opciones de respuesta, o la respuesta es errónea, sí que pregunto a la clase en conjunto.

Casi todo el tiempo les hago preguntas, y después clarifico conceptos, en muy pocas ocasiones doy instrucciones o normas, solo cuando les llamo la atención para que escuchen a los compañeros, o al explicarles la actividad final.

En cuando a la aceptación y al refuerzo, creo que intento aceptar todas sus respuestas y las refuerzo cuando son correctas, y cuando no lo son, repito el error para que ellos mismos se den cuenta y lo corrijan. También hay alguna ocasión en la que doy yo la explicación porqué está mal, y cuál es la respuesta correcta.

La mayoría de las respuestas por parte de los alumnos son individuales, aunque hay momentos (en la actividad antes de que preparen el diálogo) en los que quieren hablar todos a la vez para dar ejemplos de programas de televisión.

## ACTITUD DE LOS ALUMNOS

Los alumnos dan la sensación de estar interesados por el tema, ya que participan y quieren dar su opinión y sus ejemplos. Durante la corrección de deberes no sé si estaban interesados, pero por lo menos atentos, sí. También creo que se nota que entienden los conceptos y el hilo de la clase, aunque me gustaría comentar que en la actividad que no se ve en la grabación, el diálogo sobre la programación de esa noche, hubo algo de confusión y tuve que explicar la actividad más de una vez a alguna pareja.

En general creo que los alumnos mostraron una actitud muy buena, colaboraron, participaron y mostraron interés, a pesar de que en algún momento estés hablando entre ellos, o todos a la vez en alguna ocasión.

### **7.3. Appendix III**

#### **Justifications of the Learning Units in the Course Plan**

##### **UNIT 1: Global news**

###### **Introduction and justification**

There are several reasons why we have chosen this unit. First of all, living in a globalised society, it is important for students to learn how to talk about real-life events, both to a national and international extent. Besides, it helps students to be informed about other countries' realities, experiences and lifestyles. Finally, having to express themselves as if they were journalists, they will develop a sense of professionalism and the capacity to develop critical thinking abilities.

##### **UNIT 2: J.R.R. Tolkien: life and work**

###### **Introduction and justification**

This unit deals with the life and work of a well-known writer in the English literature: J.R.R. Tolkien. We have chosen this topic because we think that in order for students to learn the English language it is also necessary to learn about its culture. Therefore, by means of this approximation to the writer, we hope to bring students closer to English literature. The author's success is mostly related with two cinematographic adaptations of his works: *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*. These two adaptations catapulted Tolkien's work to international fame and it is probable that most of the students are more than familiarised with them, which makes the topic more interesting and appealing.

##### **UNIT 3: Animals in danger**

###### **Introduction and justification**

We have chosen this topic because we think it is important for students to learn values of respect as well as the importance of animals in our lives. We think that with this unit, students will appreciate the necessity of preserving natural resources and diversity. Students have to be aware of the influence people have in the environment and its consequences to both short and long extents. In this sense, it is important to bare in



mind that human activity in the world may result on damaged landscapes and the extinction of certain animals.

#### **UNIT 4: Mystery**

##### **Introduction and justification**

This unit is focused on mystery and we have selected several crime and detective stories for its development. This topic is thought to stimulate the students' imagination and creativity. At the same time, it will provide them with a little approach to this literary genre which has been so fashionable for a long time, and it is still nowadays as we can see by the great amount of both popular TV series and best seller novels that are successful in our society.

#### **UNIT 5: Work and Employment. A Job Interview**

##### **Introduction and justification**

This topic is of interest to the students as they can see future application to real life of the vocabulary and formulae used to talk about employment, work situations and they can practice job interviews or make wishes/plans for the future. Furthermore, taking into account that they are at the end of compulsory secondary education, we consider this the right moment to think about their future. This training will prepare them for future employment and/or to collaborate to a basis for future learning.

#### **UNIT 6: The evolution of technology and its impact in classrooms**

##### **Introduction and justification**

The choice of this topic is due to the importance that technology has in our students' lives. And we think it is important for them to know the origins of technology. Moreover, they have to be aware of the disadvantages of the misuse of technology and how it affects to the learning process. We hope that with this unit the students can appreciate what they have but, at the same time, they can learn to use correctly new technologies.

#### **Unit 7: A place to stay**

##### **Introduction and justification**

The reason for choosing this unit is directly related with current social and economic situations. Immigration has always been an option for society as a way of looking for a better place to live and have a promising future in a different country. Nowadays, due to the economic crisis, immigration has been intensified up to the point that many young professionals are leaving their countries to find a job mostly in England, Germany and other world powers. This is why we thought that students, aware of this reality, should be prepared to think about the possibility to leave their commodities, costumes and cities and see themselves living in a different place.

## **7.4. Appendix IV**

### **Introduction of the Learning Unit (*DODALE*)**

#### **Introduction**

#### **Justification**

This unit is designed according to the LOE Aragonese Curriculum (Orden 9th May 2007). The topic of the unit is “Television”, and we have chosen it because it is something really close to the students’ experience as they usually spend some time watching it every day. We want the students to be able to cope up with this more than familiar topic in the target language. TV is present in their everyday life and they are also very influenced by it. Nowadays society would not be the same without television, and the western society share a common knowledge of this TV based culture, that is why we find very important that the students are able to deal with this topic in English. We want our students to be aware of the main features of the different TV genres, and we will work on them through the four skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing), grammar and vocabulary, so at the end of the unit they will be able to show their learning by means of a final task of their choice that they will develop in groups (an essay, a poem, a song, a video, a poster, etc.)

#### **Contextualization**

Our learning unit is thought to be implemented in the 4th year of ESO in El Pilar-Maristas, a Catholic State school located in the area of Zaragoza, Actur Rey Fernando. In this group there are 24 students and all of them are Spanish - there is not much cultural or ethnic diversity in the whole school. On the other hand, we find some diversity among the students in terms of their English level: there are seven fast finishers with an outstanding knowledge of the target language, and we also find five students who need a bit more scaffolding in order to acquire the expected learning.

In terms of skills, most of the students have quite a good level in listening and reading, an average one in writing, but speaking requires more scaffolding for some of them. Regarding grammar, the majority of the students can deal with almost any problem with the verbal tenses, but there are some structures in which they do not feel

so confident (reported speech, for example). In this unit we will work on improving the four skills, and also some grammar and vocabulary.

### **Organization of Learning Unit**

This learning unit consists of 7 sessions, from which four will be dedicated to the four skills (speaking, reading, listening and writing), another one to vocabulary, and the other one to grammar. The last session will be dedicated to the final task in which the students will be working in groups and the teacher will be monitoring and helping when necessary. This unit is thought to be implemented in October after 'Fiestas del Pilar'. We plan to dedicate the first weeks of the academic year to test and set the students' level, and to get them to know each other and build together a sense of group identity in order to have a good class climate for the rest of the year. As a result of these first weeks, we know our students' previous knowledge about grammatical structures, and we also know about their interests. Most of the students are really fond of fantasy and science fiction, specially *Game of Thrones*, *The Hunger Games*, *The Avengers* and *The Walking Dead*, and they also like watching sitcoms and reality shows both on TV and on the Internet. They are also hooked on social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. According to their interests we have prepared our materials for the unit plan.

## 7.5. Appendix V

### Research Project: Warm-up activities in the EFL classroom (*Innovación*)

#### 4.4. RESEARCH D. “EL PILAR MARISTAS”

##### *a. Action plan and main aims*

The first thing that I observed was that my mentor teacher never used warm-up activities, she almost always started the lessons correcting the homework, and the students seemed to be very bored. Before starting my teaching practice, I asked the students by means of the initial questionnaire (Fig 7.1.1) how they usually started a lesson and how they would like to start it. All of them said that they usually correct the homework at the beginning of the lesson, or sometimes they started talking about some topic (Fig. 7.5.2).

	Speaking	HW	Lesson	Doubts	Vocabulary
Nº of students	7	14	5	1	1

Most of the students suggested starting the lesson with a speaking activity, a video, a song, or a game. There were also some of them who just said that they wanted something different for the beginning of the class, but they did not specify the type of activity they wanted (Fig 7.5.3).

	Speaking	Game	Video	Sth. different	Song	Listening	HW	Doubts
Nº of students	10	5	3	5	4	1	1	1

After having analysed the questionnaires, I planned starting each lesson —I had five sessions with them— with a different warm-up activity. For the first lesson I prepared an icebreaker, and for the rest of the lessons I prepared different activities which had to do with something that was studied during the lesson. In this way, I wanted them to both activate previous knowledge and to awake their interest.

With the implementation of warm-up activities, I wanted the students to both activate previous knowledge and to be motivated. They seemed not to enjoy during the English lessons I was able to observe, so I thought that they would be more interested if they did something they liked. That is why I followed what they said in the questionnaire in order to design the warm-up activities.

### *b. Procedure and report*

I did my teaching practice during the last two weeks of the placement period, and the different warm-up activities that I implemented were:

- A game in which I wrote 3 numbers related to my private life, and the students had to guess what they meant: 2011 was the year I did my ERASMUS, 23 was the age I was when I finished my university degree, and 1 is the number of brothers I have.
- A video about a skype conversation with subtitles in which the passive constructions were highlighted—in that session I explained them the passive.
- A song in which they had to fill the gaps with passive constructions.
- A ‘find the fic’ game about a reality show based on The Hunger Games. I wrote three rules of the contest which coincided with those rules of the contest in the book/film, and they had to guess which one was not true.
- A game consisting in some pictures on the board with sentences containing adjectives ending in -ing and -ed, and they had to guess what the lesson was going to be about.

As I said before, I designed these activities according to what the students said they wanted to do in the questionnaires. So I tried to cover all the activities they suggested and connect them with the topic of the unit, which was ‘Television’, and with the grammatical point of the unit which was the passive,

### *c. Individual findings*

The effects of these warm-up activities were not as successful as I thought. The ones in which the students were most interested were the first one with the numbers about me, and the one about the reality show inspired in The Hunger Games. During those two the students were more or less willing to participate, and they seemed to be interested—I

guess this was because of the topics—, but regarding the other three, there was very little participation and interest. What I find most surprising is that they were not interested in the song, the video or the other game as the majority of them asked for those types of activities in their comments. I have to say that even with those warm-ups which were successful, their participation and attention remained only high at the beginning of the lesson, and it went lower and lower during the rest of it.