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**English Teaching Strategies to Motivate EFL Students in Rural and Urban
Public Schools**

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Resumen

La motivación y las estrategias de enseñanza son fundamentales en el aprendizaje de idiomas; los maestros juegan un papel crucial al emplear estrategias motivacionales para involucrar a los estudiantes en su aprendizaje. Hay factores que influyen en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje del inglés, como la localidad de las escuelas, ya sea urbana o rural. Esta investigación tiene como objetivo analizar estos entornos para identificar las estrategias motivacionales utilizadas en cada área, la frecuencia de su uso y las percepciones de maestros y estudiantes respecto a estas estrategias. El estudio se centró en dos instituciones educativas públicas en Ecuador: una rural y una urbana; los participantes fueron tres maestros de inglés y 80 estudiantes y dos maestras de inglés y 85 estudiantes respectivamente. Los estudiantes cursaban el primero, segundo o tercer curso de bachillerato, teniendo entre 15 y 18 años. Se aplicaron observaciones registradas como notas de campo y entrevistas semiestructuradas. Los datos recolectados se analizaron mediante la técnica de análisis de contenido temático. Los resultados revelaron que las estrategias motivacionales utilizadas fueron la incorporación del humor, la adaptación del contenido a situaciones de la vida real, la facilitación del trabajo en grupo, la entrega de recompensas y la retroalimentación. Además, los recursos tecnológicos se utilizaron notablemente como estrategia motivacional en el entorno rural. La frecuencia de estas estrategias varió dependiendo de los maestros. Finalmente, tanto maestros como estudiantes tenían percepciones positivas sobre las estrategias motivacionales, aunque las observaciones en el entorno urbano no corroboraron esta positividad.

Palabras clave del autor: motivación, enseñanza del inglés, estrategias motivacionales



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Abstract

Motivation and teaching strategies are fundamental in language learning; teachers play a crucial role in employing motivational strategies to engage students in their learning. Factors such as the locality of schools, whether urban or rural, influence the process of teaching and learning English. This research aims to analyze these environments to identify the motivational strategies used in each area, their frequency of use, and the perceptions of teachers and students regarding these strategies. The study focused on two educational public institutions in Ecuador: one rural and one urban. The participants included three English teachers and 80 students in the rural school, and two English teachers and 85 students in the urban school. The students were in the first, second, or third year of high school, aged between 15 and 18. Observations recorded as field notes and semi-structured interviews were applied. The collected data were analyzed using the technique of thematic content analysis. The results showed that the motivational strategies used included incorporating humor, adapting content to real-life situations, facilitating group work, providing rewards, and giving feedback. Additionally, technological resources were notably used as a motivational strategy in the rural environment. The frequency of these strategies varied depending on the teachers. Finally, teachers and students had positive perceptions of the motivational strategies, although observations in the urban environment did not corroborate this positivity.

Author Keywords: motivation, English Teaching, motivational strategies



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Samantha

Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved family: my parents, Melba and Moises; my sisters, Jessica and Wenddy; and my dear pets, who have always been by my side at all times.

Andrea

I dedicate this thesis to my family for their constant support and encouragement. Especially to my mother and father whose love, patience, and faith in me have been my greatest strength. Without their sacrifices and guidance, none of my achievements would have been possible. I also dedicate this work to my friends and my mentor who have provided me with invaluable support and advice throughout this project. Thank you all for always being there for me.

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Introduction

Over the years, motivation has been considered the most important aspect in teaching and learning English as it can inspire students to engage more actively in their studies (Ames, 1990). According to Filgona et al. (2020), motivation involves the learner's energy to develop learning activities. On the contrary, it is a problem when teachers do not use motivational strategies taking into account the students' needs; therefore, learners could feel bored (Tashlanovna et al., 2020). According to Atim et al. (2023), motivation could also be affected by the geographical area in which the teaching-learning process takes place (urban or rural). Those who live in rural areas, have to deal with several inconveniences, such as lack of access to the internet, overhead projectors, or computers (Dasaradhi et al., 2022). On the other hand, urban schools confront significant and unique workplace challenges, such as class size, difficulty hearing the teachers, and whispering among students (Curwin, 2010).

In Ecuador, one factor influencing motivational strategies is the locality of schools, whether urban or rural. While numerous studies have been conducted globally, research of this nature is scarce in Ecuador. Consequently, to understand the motivational strategies used in each setting, their frequency, and the perceptions of students and teachers, a descriptive study was conducted.

This thesis/work is divided into five chapters. The first chapter outlines key concepts essential to understanding the purpose of the study, along with a detailed description of the research, the research questions, and the objectives to be achieved. Chapter two includes the theoretical framework, which introduces concepts that help to understand the research focus. It also contains the literature review, which provides a systematic analysis of studies focusing on motivational strategies in urban and rural areas as well as the perceptions of motivational strategies among teachers and students. Chapter three details the methodology, including the approach, participants, data collection instruments, and data analysis procedures. Chapter four analyzes and presents the results of observations and interviews conducted in schools located in both urban and rural areas. The final chapter presents the conclusions drawn from this study and offers recommendations for the educational community, the Ministry of Education, and future research.

Chapter 1

Description of the Research

Background

The language teaching process involves several fundamental elements; among them, motivation and teaching strategies. Gardner (1985) mentioned that motivation in language learning is the individual's drive for learning due to his or her personal desire and enjoyment in the learning process. Regarding teaching strategies, Nguyen and Terry (2017) stated that they are different activities that teachers perform to make their students' learning process more effective. According to Hariri et al. (2021), teaching strategies and motivation go hand in hand. Their study showed that those teachers who apply different strategies frequently obtain higher degrees of motivation in students; therefore, using them plays a pivotal role in student performance.

Dörnyei and Otto (1998) and later Dörnyei (2005) presented a model that outlines three stages of motivation in language learning. First, the pre-actional stage is the phase when learners create their initial motivation by setting goals, which are influenced by different factors such as the properties of the goals themselves, their expectations of success, their ability to cope with challenges, and their beliefs and strategies. Second, the actional stage which refers to the active engagement of students in the achievement of their language learning goals which most of the time takes place in the classroom. Finally, the post-actional stage involves taking action towards the initial goal of the student and evaluating the learners' motivation.

Not only stages of motivation have been proposed and studied but also types; for instance, according to Dörnyei (2001b), there are two types of motivation. Intrinsic motivation occurs when an individual performs an activity because he or she has a desire to learn for personal satisfaction. In contrast, extrinsic motivation occurs when a person engages in a specific activity in order to receive something in return such as extra points or gifts.

In addition, based on Atim et al. (2023), context plays a very important role in English language teaching because it affects the strategies used by educators, which influence students' motivation. For instance, in rural and urban areas, which are two different realities, motivational strategies will vary depending on the resources available in each setting. In this

regard, according to Andrade et al. (2021), there are important differences between urban and rural educational institutions. That is, socioeconomic status and geographical location could lead to variations in learning models, pedagogical activities, access to technology, infrastructure, and information dissemination which influence the motivational strategies used by teachers.

To illustrate, Prabowo and Akmal (2019) indicated that there is a low socioeconomic level in a rural setting; therefore, teachers do not have the necessary resources to motivate their students. The results of their study showed that there is a lack of technology, so teachers have to resort to traditional materials (books), which sometimes are scarce. In addition, Machfudi (2016) mentioned that due to the lack of technology in rural areas, the strategies used by the teachers include providing positive feedback, maintaining teacher-student trust, and providing rewards and good comments that motivate them to increase their confidence.

On the other hand, Prabowo and Akmal (2019) stated that teachers in the urban area use better resources. For example, because the learning rooms are comfortable, teachers can create fun spaces where students enjoy learning. Also, thanks to the availability of technology, teachers can easily obtain material and apply different methodologies in each class. Furthermore, Burgin and Daniel (2017) mentioned that the strategies used in the urban area vary depending on the teacher; for example, some make use of technology (i.e. projector and television). Also, teachers use the direct methodology as they ask questions and students respond. They also allow students to take the leadership role. In addition, teachers start their classes with motivational activities that capture the attention of the students.

As it has been aforementioned, there are important differences between the motivational strategies that teachers use in rural and urban settings; however, research also indicates that the context might not have any influence on learners' motivation. In this light, Iwikotan et al. (2019) showed in their study that motivation is almost the same in rural and urban areas. The teachers who participated in the study used motivational strategies such as praise, rewards, and advice; the results of such application created an environment where students felt engaged in and enjoyed learning.

Based on what has been presented, it could be inferred that the area in which students are located could influence the teaching strategies used to motivate students. According to Cirocki et al. (2019), both in rural and urban areas, certain teaching strategies such as promoting student autonomy, encouraging positive self-assessment, and making learning attractive and stimulating are important for students to acquire meaningful learning.

Problem Statement

Chillagana et al. (2023) stated that motivation is key to make students work harder in the language learning process. Therefore, they mentioned that teachers play a vital role in motivating students since they are the ones who select the motivational strategies, such as didactic materials, games, dynamics, and tutorials which help students to improve their performance. In addition, according to Sabiq (2023), the locality (rural or urban settings) is an important factor in the motivation of students and the teaching process.

According to Andrade et al. (2021), there are different conditions in which the teaching process takes place in both rural and urban areas. On the one hand, the urban area is a poor space when talking about obtaining resources from nature due to its location. In contrast, it has many benefits since it has the necessary classrooms for teaching at each level. In terms of teaching strategies to motivate students, according to Gan et al. (2019), in urban areas teachers use varied teaching strategies, such as the use of teacher-guided student-centered learning activities and different materials due to the availability of technological resources.

Based on Hsu's (2016) study, learners in rural areas face negative situations such as low socio-economic status and lack of resources; as a result, they could have low degrees of motivation which affects language learning. Regarding teaching strategies to motivate students, according to Saiful and Triyono (2018), educators in rural areas use special pedagogical strategies due to different factors such as a lack of resources, parental involvement in learning, and a poor learning environment. In addition, based on this study, the teaching strategies used in the rural area were using the natural environment, the creation of didactic material, and the use of gestures, which were positive for teachers and learners.

Furthermore, Alshenqeeti (2018) mentioned that motivational strategies help teachers to increase students' motivation throughout learning. Based on this, since in each context (rural and urban), there are different realities affecting the resources that the teacher has available to create motivational strategies, it can be inferred that the setting in which education takes place is an important factor to be considered.

Although there are studies on motivational strategies in urban and rural contexts around the world, research on this topic is scarce in Ecuador. Hence, there seems to be a need for analyzing what teaching motivational strategies are used by English teachers in urban and rural areas in our context, the frequency with which teachers use motivational strategies, and what are the students' and teachers' perceptions of the strategies used in the classroom in a public rural and an urban setting.

Rationale

Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008) stated that motivational strategies are considered techniques used by the teacher in order to create an appropriate environment and encourage students to learn English as a foreign language. According to Nguyen and Nguyen Thi My (2020), motivational strategies are an indispensable factor in the teaching-learning process in both rural and urban settings, as they stimulate the achievement of language learning success. For this reason, they mentioned that teachers need to select appropriate strategies to use in their classes in order to increase students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Also, according to Kouraichi and Lesznyák (2022), motivational strategies must be perceived as such by the students, otherwise they will have no effect on them. In addition, Saleem and Ghani (2019) mentioned that using motivational strategies helps students perform better in classes by actively participating; also, teachers can help students become more proficient in the language if they apply these strategies correctly.

Research on motivational teaching strategies in urban and rural areas on language learning is lacking in Ecuador. For this reason, it is important to carry out a study that allows obtaining information about the motivational strategies that English teachers use in both rural and urban contexts in Cuenca. In addition, it is important to analyze students' and teachers' perceptions of these teaching strategies. This information will be useful for English teachers since it will allow them to know about the strategies used so that they can implement them or make some changes in their classes.

Research Questions

- What English teaching strategies to motivate EFL students are used in a rural and an urban public school?
- What is the frequency in which teaching strategies to motivate EFL students are used in both contexts?
- What are EFL students' and teachers' perceptions about the motivational strategies used in classes in both contexts?

Objectives

General:

- To analyze the English teaching strategies used for motivating EFL learners in a rural and an urban public school.

Specific:

- To identify the frequency in which teaching motivational strategies are used in both contexts.
- To examine EFL students' and teachers' perceptions about the motivational strategies used in classes in both contexts.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

In this section, the conceptualization that frames this qualitative descriptive research will be presented. The theoretical framework will include important concepts on motivation, its types and phases, motivation in language learning, motivational teaching strategies in EFL classrooms, and motivation in urban and rural educational settings.

Motivation

Motivation is key in the teaching and learning process because it helps students to succeed (Hayikaleng et al., 2016). Ames (1990) mentioned that motivation within learning refers to students' participation in activities that keep them engaged in the process. Also, the author affirmed the goal of motivation is not only to achieve learning outcomes but also to make students value the learning process. In addition, Ames (1990) stated that motivation cannot be measured in terms of whether students get good grades or not, as this may be related to immediate achievement activities and not to motivation itself.

Similarly, Filgona et al. (2020) argued that motivation is a very complex term to define. They mentioned that motivation refers to the energy learners generally employ to develop learning activities. Also, they mentioned that motivation helps learners to want to know, act, understand, believe, and gain skills. In addition, these authors stated that it can be defined as the process which helps to satisfy an individual need, such as learning to read or count. However, it becomes a problem when teachers do not apply the motivational strategies effectively taking into account the students' needs; therefore, learners will not develop this desire to learn the language, but will instead feel bored (Tashlanovna et al., 2020)

Types of Motivation

According to Dörnyei and Otto (1998), there are two types of motivation which are intrinsic and extrinsic. Referring to intrinsic motivation, they mentioned that it refers to the behavior that the individual performs for him/herself to achieve pleasure and self-satisfaction. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to the behavior that the individual performs in order to receive something in return after having achieved a certain goal. Also, they pointed out that extrinsic

motivation can affect student learning negatively or positively depending on the situation in which the individual finds him/herself. For example, if students have to perform a certain activity just to fulfill a requirement, they will lose extrinsic motivation. However, if the activities to be performed by individuals are very well determined and internalized, the two types of motivations can be merged to achieve a positive result.

Similarly, according to Ryan and Deci (2000), intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to engage in an activity or task because it is inherently interesting, enjoyable, or satisfying. It is driven by internal factors, such as personal interest, curiosity, or a sense of competence, rather than external rewards or pressures. It is often linked to the satisfaction of psychological needs for competence and autonomy.

On the contrary, Ryan and Deci (2000) identified extrinsic motivation as non-autonomous behavior because students are usually forced to do an activity to avoid receiving a punishment. The authors proposed four types of this kind of motivation. The first type is called external regulation which occurs when individuals engage in an activity solely to obtain external rewards or avoid punishments. The second type is introjected regulation which involves motivation that is partially internalized driven by a desire to avoid guilt or seek approval from others. The third type is identified regulation which reflects motivation driven by personal values and goals as individuals engage in activities they perceive as important. Finally, integrated regulation represents the highest level of extrinsic motivation, where individuals have fully internalized an activity and integrated it into their sense of self. This final type reflects a high level of autonomy and personal ownership over their actions. In this case, the motivation to engage in the behavior is driven by the individual's values, beliefs, and identity, rather than external rewards or pressures.

Phases of Motivation

According to Dörnyei and Otto (1998), the process of motivation is divided into three phases (Figure 1):

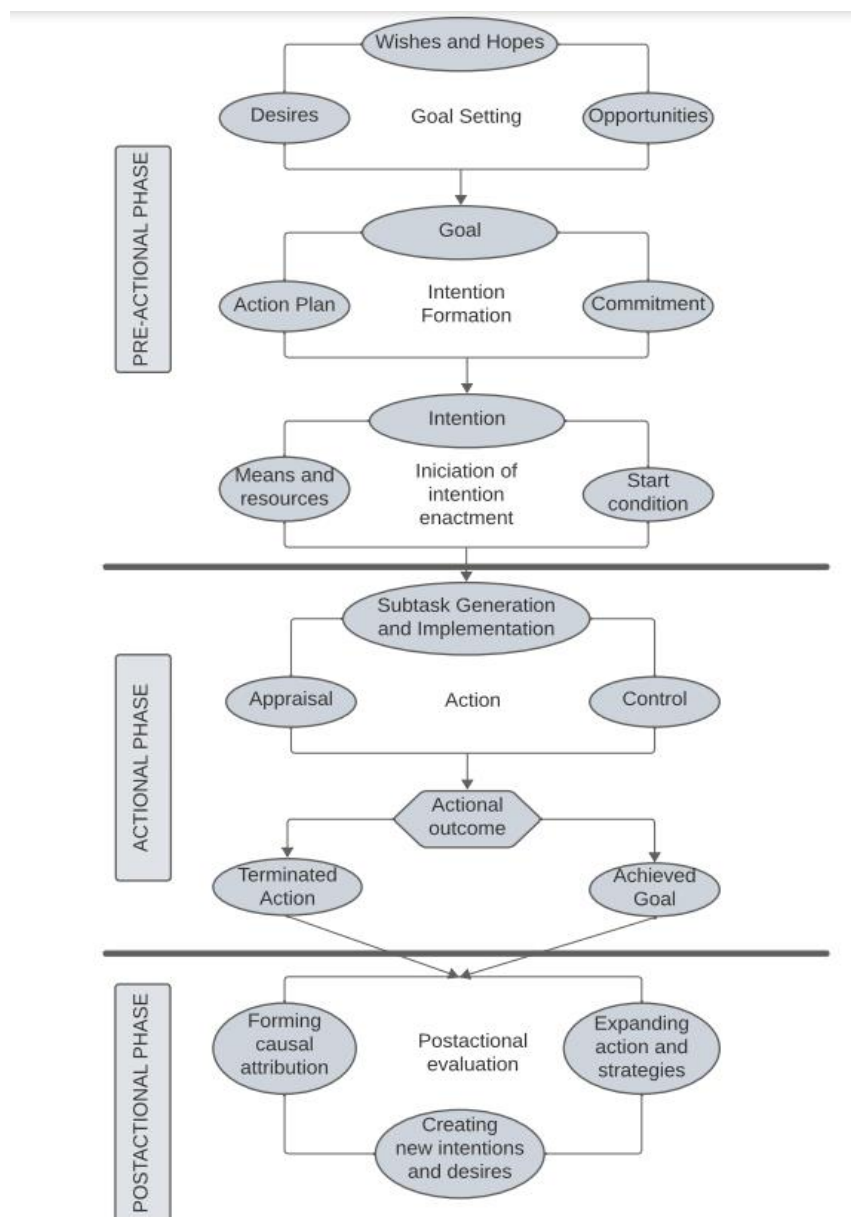
First, the pre-actional phase is when an individual chooses goals or tasks to achieve or do. This stage consists of three sub phases (goal setting, intention formation, and initiation of intention enactment). Goal setting refers to set wishes or hopes, desires, and opportunities that the individual wants to get. Intention formation refers to establishing a commitment that will drive the individual to take action to achieve the goal. Consequently, the individual will put together a plan of action that will allow him/her to establish the techniques and steps necessary to achieve the aim. Finally, initiation of intention enactment refers to the individuals'

needs to consider the availability of resources, means, and the condition of initiation. It includes the order in which the action plan will be executed according to the individual's priorities and the availability of resources.

Second, the actional phase is the most crucial stage in the motivational process because it leads to some qualitative changes. This phase consists of three important processes. First, subtask generation and implementation refer to the execution of the different tasks that were established in the action plan and those that are generated by taking action, which is an indication of significant learning. Then, a complex ongoing appraisal process consists of the constant evaluation of the different stimuli that exist in the environment and the progress that is being made throughout the action. Likewise, special care must be taken when failure has resulted from the performance of a task, as it may be reflected in the whole learning process. Finally, the application of a variety of action control mechanisms consists of the regulation of the process; for instance, making changes in case a certain situation is slowing down or causing negative effects.

The last phase of motivation is post-actional. It takes place when the goal is reached, the action is completed, or interrupted. In this phase the individual evaluates the outcome of the actions performed, the initial expectations with the way they turned out, and the extent to which the initial goal has been achieved. This phase permits the individual to expand his or her repertoire of actions and strategies to achieve future goals. It is important to emphasize that an accomplished goal opens the door to new desires, intentions, or objectives; so that once a goal is achieved, this process of motivation begins again.

Figure 1

Phases of Motivation

Adapted from Raza et al., 2015, p. 55

Motivation in Language Learning

According to Gardner and Smythe (1975), motivation in language learning is not a simple concept; it has two important constructs. First, the classroom learning motivation focuses on the individuals' perception of the task at hand. It is influenced by many factors, such as the teacher, the classroom environment, the course, the course materials, and the facilities, as

well as the learner's characteristics. Second, language learning motivation is a general characteristic of individuals who take advantage of any opportunity to learn a language.

According to Gardner (1985), motivation in language learning refers to the actions taken because of the desire to learn the language. Besides, Dörnyei (2014) argued that motivation in language learning involves various internal and external factors that influence an individual's willingness and drive to acquire a new language. It encloses the individual's personal goals, beliefs, and attitudes, as well as the influence of the learning environment and social context. In simple terms, the author mentioned that motivation is responsible for driving people's decisions, determining how long they will continue with a particular task, and indicating the intensity with which they pursue it.

Motivational Teaching Strategies in EFL Classroom

According to Thanasoulas (2002), the most important type of power in the classroom is motivation because it is learner-centered. Also, the author mentioned that the more motivated students are, the more responsibility the students will assume for their learning. It will provide learners with more autonomy; therefore, the more autonomous learners are, the more motivated they will be.

Also, regarding motivational strategies in the EFL classrooms, Al-Mahrooqi et al. (2012) mentioned that EFL teachers usually employ motivational strategies within the classroom taking into account students' backgrounds and classroom circumstances. In addition, they stated that teachers derive the motivational strategies from individual experiences or from the results of conducted research.

Dörnyei (2001a) defined language motivational strategies as the “techniques” (p. 28) which stimulate learners' behavior to achieve their goals. These strategies are responsible for consciously influencing individuals to obtain positive, systematic, and lasting effects. Furthermore, the application of motivational strategies should not be seen as prescriptive but rather they should be applied depending on the context in which learning takes place. These motivational strategies could work differently for teachers or students' groups; that is, different results could be obtained.

Also, Dörnyei (2001b) stated that language motivational strategies could be separated into four main conditions. The first one is to create the basic motivational conditions. It means that it is important to establish a strong connection between teachers and students, create a positive and supportive atmosphere, and promote collaboration and cohesion among the

learners. The second condition is generating initial motivation. To generate this initial motivation which includes enthusiasm among students, it is important to implement strategies that boost their confidence in achieving success and cultivate positive attitudes toward language learning as a whole. The third condition is maintaining and protecting motivation. It can be done by including stimulating and relevant activities that learners find enjoyable, creating opportunities for learners to experience success, and promoting learner autonomy. Additionally, encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation, and providing constructive feedback that helps students understand their progress and areas for improvement is crucial. Finally, the fourth condition is increasing learner satisfaction by creating engaging and meaningful learning experiences and offering grades in a motivational manner, such as focusing on growth and progress rather than solely on outcomes.

Furthermore, Dörnyei (2001a) proposed several language motivational strategies, but three will be highlighted as the most relevant to the research focus. First, he mentioned making the teaching materials significant for the students as a strategy. From this strategy, educators can create a more engaging and motivating learning environment. This can be achieved by relating the subject matter to real life contexts that reflect the interests of the learners and allowing them to be involved in the planning of the course topics. Secondly, there are certain topics that are often considered boring even though students want to learn. He mentioned that presenting tasks in a motivating way can change the manner in which learners perceive the activity. Therefore, a good introduction of the activity must be presented. It means to explain to students what they will do, what they will have achieved at the end of the task, and how the activity will be evaluated. Finally, the author mentioned that the use of a reward system such as additional marks/points is one of the most common motivational strategies. Also, he stated that such rewards can range from candies and certificates to grades, which can be used in most contexts. In addition, these rewards can help teachers achieve good student behavior and improved academic performance.

Motivating Students in Urban and Rural Educational Settings

Based on Atim et al. (2023), motivational strategies depend on several aspects. One of the most important is the location of the school. In this sense, urban and rural contexts present their own characteristics that must be taken into account when motivating students and/or applying motivational strategies.

Concerning rural schools, Colangelo et al. (1999) mentioned that these schools offer some benefits. They include a higher level of child-adult contact, more individualized learning,

learning through community involvement, and participation in multiple school events. According to the authors, these advantages increase students' sense of participation and make them feel integrated into their learning. In addition, they mentioned that urban schools tend to copy some of these benefits because of their positive effects. In contrast, according to Machfudi (2016), in rural settings, it is very difficult for teachers to apply motivational strategies and increase students' motivation to learn English. As Dasaradhi et al. (2016) mentioned, teaching English in rural areas is a challenge because students and teachers have several problems such as a lack of modern technological resources. It is very common that in rural schools there is no access to internet, overhead projectors, or computers. In addition, they stated that the use of the translation method is very common in these areas. Teachers try to mix the mother tongue with English; as a consequence, the students' understanding of English is poor. Finally, the lack of materials is one of the biggest problems. Sometimes these areas lack books, audio-video materials, and handbooks, which are necessary to teach English.

Regarding urban schools, Rivero (2014) mentioned that in the urban areas there are also some advantages for education such as the access to technology (computers and internet connection) and reading and writing content through communication means, which help teachers to bring students significant material that motivates them. In contrast, as explained by Curwin (2010), motivation in urban settings could be affected by several factors. One of the most important is class size. He mentioned that many urban schools are overcrowded and it is impossible for educators to effectively teach everyone. Another factor is that students often have trouble hearing the teacher. This can be caused either by the size of the class or by constant whispering among classmates. Consequently, students rarely let the teacher know that they cannot hear because for them the most viable option is to simply tune out. Moreover, cell phone use is a problem for concentration which affects motivation. In addition, the author pointed out that although cell phones are generally banned, students find ways to bring them to school. Therefore, it is easy for students to lose interest because they are using their mobile devices.

According to Hardré et al. (2008), there are four motivational strategies that can be highlighted as the most important in the rural setting. First, supporting learning and future goals helps to get students' intrinsic motivation because learners focus more on getting competences instead of good grades. Second, establishing relevance of the content and connecting to students' interests provides students with an understanding of the value of learning certain topics for their future needs. Third, treating students as uniquely valued individuals refers to having a friendly environment creating bonds between teacher-student and student-student. It provides social and emotional security to each learner, showing him or her the value of each one.

Finally, fostering student valuing and perceived competence is related with the knowledge or teaching that educators can provide to their students so that they can broaden their vision and apply it to their individual or social world.

Likewise, Debruin-Parecki and Teel (2012) mentioned that there are four strategies that are considered useful for the urban setting. First, a non-competitive classroom structure with effort-based grading which focuses on cooperative and individual effort without competition or comparison among students. Also, it looks for evaluating the students' engagement and the progress rather than their grades. Second, multiple performance opportunities refer to providing a variety of tasks for students to demonstrate their creativity and imagination. Third, increased student responsibility and choice highlights the idea of giving students more leadership to control their learning by taking important roles in the classroom. Finally, the validation of cultural heritage aims to talk about topics related to students' lives and current events. These strategies serve to increase students' motivation by involving them in the learning process, attending to their learning styles and interests.

Literature Review

In this section, empirical research about motivational strategies will be analyzed. The literature review will include studies about the motivational strategies in the EFL classroom, motivational strategies in urban and rural educational settings, and teachers' and students' perceptions on motivational strategies.

Motivational Strategies in the EFL Classroom

Maeng and Lee (2015) conducted a study about EFL teachers' behavior when using motivational strategies. They used a mixed method approach that included video recordings and a pilot test to analyze the lessons taught by the educators. The participants were 12 Korean secondary school teachers of English. The results of the study showed the motivational strategies used by the teachers were using audio visual aids, explaining to students the benefits of instruction, fostering collaborative work, providing content or tasks from simple to complex, allowing learners to control the pace of learning, providing application opportunities and feedback to correct students' knowledge and skills, praising students highly for having the right answer, and ensuring that performance requirements were consistent with learning objectives. These strategies had different purposes which were increasing attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction. Results revealed that despite the variety of motivational strategies applied, educators needed to improve them and their practice because some strategies were not effective in motivating students.

In the qualitative study conducted by Nugroho and Mayda (2015), motivational strategies used in teaching English were analyzed within Dörnyei (2001b)'s phases of motivation. The participants were three teachers and 123 seventh grade students who completed a questionnaire. The researchers found that two teachers successfully applied motivational strategies taking into account the four phases. Consequently, students responded positively to these strategies. In contrast, the remaining teacher employed motivational strategies omitting the initial phases, which resulted in a negative response from the students. In addition, the results of the questionnaires revealed favorable attitudes of the students towards the teachers who completed the phases, contrary to the students who were not exposed to the initial phases that reported negative perceptions. These results show that the way teachers implemented motivational strategies in EFL teaching significantly influences students' attitudes towards such strategies in the language learning environment. Similarly, Tiarsiwi and Amaniah (2020) in their study revealed that educators applied different strategies in each phase of motivation. The results showed that in the first phase, the most frequent strategy was developing personal good relationships with students. The second phase involved teaching materials that were relevant to the students. In the third phase, the most frequent strategy was presenting tasks in a motivating manner. Finally, in the last phase, providing positive feedback to students was the most recurrent motivational strategy used. The researchers reported that for the participant teachers, the four phases of motivational strategies were important to engage students in the learning process and to motivate them.

Motivational Strategies in Urban and Rural Settings

Lamb (2012) conducted a quantitative study about the motivation of young adolescents learning English in urban and rural settings. The participants were students from 13 to 14 years old from three settings: metropolitan city, provincial town, and rural area. Of these three contexts, the metropolitan city and the provincial town were considered urban areas. The results of this study showed that the students' ability to master English and their motivational levels depended on the area or setting in which learners were located. According to the study, the urban students remained positive and hopeful for a better future because they had access to more resources. On the other hand, the students in the rural area did not have enough intrinsic motivation because of the lack of resources. Furthermore, they could not imagine a future in which they could use the English language; therefore, they did not see the need to learn it.

Regarding the rural area, Mudra (2018) in his study about teachers' experiences in teaching practice in rural schools showed that some teachers used traditional methods, such as

audiolingual as their students find them less complicated. Also, the author found that many students find English classes difficult, so they show lack of attention and lack of motivation, which makes speaking English a challenge. Finally, according to the technological resources, the author showed that it is a problem because the absence of advanced technology in rural schools as teaching tools decreases motivation. In the same way, Wreikat et al. (2014) found that teachers and students faced a poor environment and lack of resources in rural contexts. The teachers mentioned that they used television, pictures, numbers, and handouts in their classes; however, all these resources were not sufficient. Therefore, the lack of resources in the teaching process made students unmotivated. In addition, teachers indicated that due to the lack of technological resources, they tended to use traditional methods for their classes.

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions on Motivational Strategies

Alqahtani (2016) conducted a quantitative study about motivational strategies and teachers' perceptions. The participants were 117 male and female EFL teachers. The author found that teachers believed that several motivational strategies could be important for boosting the motivation of Saudi students learning English. However, the three most important macro strategies that educators considered the most useful are demonstrating proper teacher behavior, familiarizing learners with L2 culture and L2-related values, and promoting learners' self-confidence. On the other hand, educators considered strategies such as increasing positive goals, developing realistic beliefs, addressing needs, and fostering group cohesion and norms to be less important in motivating students. Similarly, Wirentake (2017) in his descriptive qualitative study found that according to 10 teaching strategies used by the teacher, the three strategies that are seen as the most important in motivating students include building good relationships with students, bringing humor into the classroom, and showing enthusiasm for teaching. Additionally, students thought if these motivational strategies were used by their teachers, they would boost their motivation to learn English.

Regarding students' perceptions, Budiarti (2020) conducted a quantitative and qualitative study through observations, interviews, and questionnaires. The participants in this study were an English teacher and third grade students of SD Muhammadiyah Bodon. The results showed that the teacher fostered a good relationship with the students, giving appreciations (praise), using media, and forming study groups as motivational strategies. As for the students' perceptions, according to the results of the research, there were students who adopted motivational strategies more slowly; however, all students perceived them as effective.

Astuti (2013) conducted a qualitative research on teachers' and students' perceptions of motivational teaching strategies in an Indonesian high school context. The participants were two school teachers from a small town in West Sumatra. The instruments used in this research were classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, stimulated recall with teachers, and focus group interviews for students. According to the results of this study, teachers argued that having a friendly relationship, presenting the lesson in an interesting way, and providing motivational feedback were key to motivating students. In terms of students' perceptions, they said that the teacher is imperative in their learning, and they liked it when the teacher interacted with them. On the other hand, some students mentioned that they like the teacher to be funny, but not too much. Some of the students stated that they would like to have more time to practice and use games, songs, and poems.

Regarding urban and rural settings, Ma et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study about the motivational beliefs in urban and rural EFL contexts. The participants of this research were 6326 eighth grade students from the urban area and 2600 from a rural area in China. A self-reported motivational belief scale and an English performance test were used as instruments. The results showed that there are notable differences between urban and rural students in terms of self-efficacy, intrinsic and extrinsic value, and English performance. Urban students exhibited significantly higher levels in all these aspects compared to the students in rural areas. Additionally, it was observed that intrinsic value, rather than self-efficacy, emerged as the most influential factor in English learning for both urban and rural Chinese students.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Research Approach and Design

The qualitative approach was used in this study in order to collect and analyze data from the participants. This approach allows us to answer specific questions that cannot be answered with quantitative research (Busetto et al., 2020). Also, this study followed a descriptive design, which focused on describing the object of research without explaining why a given situation occurs (Manjunatha, 2019). This qualitative descriptive research allowed describing the strategies used by the teachers to motivate students in both contexts, urban and rural areas, without manipulating any variable. As mentioned before, this study also analyzed EFL students' and teachers' perceptions of the motivational strategies used in a public rural and an urban setting.

Participants and Context

The study was carried out in two co-educational public schools. A total of 165 participants took part in the study; 80 participants were students from a school located in a rural parish in Cuenca and another group of 85 participants from a school belonging to an urban area of the city; being 98 female and 67 male students between 15 and 18 years old. They studied in the first, second, and third grade of high school in the afternoon section; being the first grade students of the rural setting the only ones that studied in the morning section. The rural institution had three English teachers, two of them male; and the urban institution had two female English teachers. Three hours of English per week were taught from grades 1st to 3rd of high school in both settings.

To guarantee confidentiality and facilitate the organization of the data analysis and presentation of results, a code was given to each one of the participant teachers. The code was made of the letter R or U depending on the context (rural or urban), the letter T for teacher, and a number that identifies the grade of high school the teacher was working with at the time of data collection. That is, in the rural setting the three participant teachers were coded RT1, RT2, and RT3. For the urban setting, the two participating teachers were UT1-3 and UT2. In this setting, teacher UT1-3 was working with two different grades of high school (first and third grade).

Likewise, different codes were given to each one of the participant students. The code was made of the letter R or U depending on the area (rural or urban), the letter S for student, and a number representing each participant. As mentioned before, there were 15 participants per setting. In other words, in the rural setting, the participants were coded from RS1 to RS15; in the urban high school, students were coded from US1 to US15.

Before starting the study, the researchers asked the schools authorities for permission to observe the classes and interview teachers and students. The schools granted this permission (Annex D) and decided to obtain consent from the parents and teachers directly due to internal regulations; therefore, the researchers did not have to present informed consent forms to the participants.

Data Collection Instruments

As mentioned above, this research used a qualitative descriptive approach. The data was collected through observations registered in the form of field notes which according to Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) allow recording detailed and enriching descriptions of the subject under study.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and students, which helped to gather key information about the perceptions of different individuals (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Before being applied, the interviews were validated by three university professors and five students. First, it was taken into account that the professors were experts in research. This study's researchers provided professors with the interview questions. The professors analyzed them and provided comments and suggestions for changes. Second, in the case of the students, the researchers randomly selected five students that were not participants but had similar characteristics (age, school grade) as the participants of the study. They were asked to read the interview questions and provide comments related to their clarity. The researchers analyzed the comments and suggestions and came up with the final semi-structured interview questions (Annexes A and B).

It is important to mention that semi-structured interviews were carried out in the mother tongue, Spanish, since, according to Filep (2009), when asking about participants' feelings and perceptions, it is better to use the mother tongue as it allows participants to express themselves more effectively. This allowed students and teachers to share their perceptions of the strategies used. In the case of students, the researchers randomly selected a group of five students per grade, giving a total of 15 interviews in each school. Regarding educators, each teacher from each grade was interviewed, resulting in a total of five teachers, two from

the urban area and three from the rural area. In addition, the interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, translated, and then analyzed.

Data analysis

The field notes and the translated transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis. According to Lochmiller (2021), the objective of thematic content analysis is to investigate deeper into the experiences of individuals based on the information obtained through the questions addressed.

Chapter 4

Results

Results

During the study's data collection period, five classes of each high school grade were observed; each observation lasted 45 or 90 minutes, depending on the schedule for that specific day. In total 15 observations were conducted in each school.

The observations were recorded in the form of field notes. A set of guiding questions that emerged from the literature review and the theoretical framework were used to organize better how notes were taken during the observations (Annex C). These questions helped systematize the data, leading to the creation of tables that facilitated a comprehensive analysis.

Interviews were conducted with the five participant teachers and 30 students, 15 from the rural high school and 15 from the urban one; five students from each grade were randomly selected. Interviews lasted a maximum of 10 minutes with teachers and five minutes with students who were not talkative during the sessions. All of the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions of the interviews were sent to participants for member checking (Creswell, 2014) which means they had the opportunity to review and validate them. Once approved by participants, transcriptions were translated into English for later analysis.

Thematic content analysis was applied to examine the field notes from the observations and the interview transcripts, determining five themes from the triangulation of both sources (type of motivation, class materials, motivational phases, conditions of motivation, and challenges) and an additional theme from the interviews (activities to foster motivation).

The analysis of the data collected during the study in combination with the voices of the participants, including excerpts from the interviews, is presented in the following sections.

Type of motivation

When examining the observations, it becomes evident that extrinsic motivation predominated as the main type of motivation fostered by the participant teachers in both contexts. This is assumed due to the activities that were used during the classes. For example, engaging students through preparatory activities before class or the imposition of punitive measures,

such as requiring students to bring something to share with the whole class as a consequence of receiving a low grade or threatening them with a bad grade if they did not do their work well. Following this statement, RS12 claimed, “when, for example, someone doesn't respond quickly, he sends us to bring candies.”

In the three high school grades that were observed in the rural setting, a variety of motivational strategies were evidenced. At all grades in this institution, the integration of topics related to real-life contexts and feedback appeared as a repetitive and effective motivational strategy for teachers. In this regard, RT-3 in the interview mentioned, “It is very important to adapt the contents that I propose, for example, a text or a resource that you have, to adapt those contents to reality.”

Group work was implemented in the second and third grades of high school, encouraging collaboration and teamwork among students. In both grades, two and three, technological resources were used in different ways to make learning interactive and relevant. In the case of the second grade, RT2 often used the television to project activities, videos, or presentations. In the case of the third grade, RT3 allowed students to use their cell phones and made use of the computer laboratories in which the students used the computers and internet; the teacher used the projector. Motivational conversations were present in grades one and three, encouraging practice and improvement. Also, humor was a strategy that was integrated into the classes in grades one and three, creating a positive and pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.

In that claim, RT-1 pointed out,

I try to lower the tension, as you could see in my classes. Well, it is carried with joy; it is carried with dynamism. Trust is generated with the children, even treating them by name, highlighting their characteristics, and giving positive phrases when they respond.

In addition, in the third grade of high school, classroom arrangement was specifically observed; here RT3 was able to create a space to promote collaboration and interaction among students. It was noted that the Grammar Translation Method was used in grades one and two. For example, RS6 said, “sometimes, I translate when I can't. Because he tells us to do it first in Spanish and then in English. And then we can know the words more.”

Regarding the urban institution and taking into account the three grades of high school that were observed there, key information was noted. In terms of the type of motivation used by

the teachers in the classroom, the most evident one was extrinsic motivation. For example, UT1-3 employed punitive measures such as assigning extra homework for students who failed to recall a topic. Moreover, UT2 tried to grade all material copied in class to be sure students took notes.

Concerning the motivational strategies used by the teachers in each grade of this high school, we observed different ones applied. For instance, topics and readings connected to real-life contexts and cultures were very common in grades one and three, allowing students to relate the course content to their personal experiences and environment. Also, UT1-3 regularly provided feedback on students' pronunciation; nevertheless, some corrections were occasionally not accurate; for example, in regular verbs ending with -ed. Pre-class activities were occasionally used by UT2 to capture students' attention and create an active learning environment. In this regard, UT2 claimed, "it is usually applied as a warm-up as previous activities to not only focus on knowledge but also to go a little further."

Group work was a very common strategy used by the two teachers in the three grades of this high school, with students in grades one and three having the autonomy to choose their group members. Additionally, humor was integrated across grades one and three; however, it was rarely used. Moreover, the Grammar Translation Method was predominantly used in the three grades, with Spanish as the primary language of instruction, as teachers often asked students to translate passages or paragraphs from the readings into Spanish. In this line, participant US6 mentioned, "for example, the teacher sometimes puts an example on the blackboard and then translates it into English afterward."

During the interviews, a finding emerged that differed from the ones of the observations: intrinsic motivation in both contexts (urban and rural). In that vein, when rural students were asked about how they feel in their English classes or if they are motivated or not, they mentioned that they study English because they like the subject. For example, RS5 said, "I like English." Also, the participants mentioned that learning English will be helpful for them because it will help them in the future. In this regard, RS11 mentioned, "I know that although it is perhaps not much to my liking, it is very important for the future."

In urban settings, participants similarly reported positive feelings when they were asked how they rate their English classes. They mentioned that they rated their English classes as good because they liked the subject. For example, US7 said, "good because I do like English." Furthermore, they emphasized the opportunity that English gives them to be able to travel. For instance, US10 stated, "learning English can help us to travel to other countries."

Class materials

RT1 used the board as his main teaching resource. He always used it to explain grammar or to copy the exercises from the book. On the contrary, RT2 used printed and digital material. She provided students with copies of the book and used the television to show videos and conduct warm-up activities. For example, RT2 stated, “the computer, the internet; also, sometimes use other pages, for example, live worksheets and sometimes Quizzis as well.” In the case of RT3, he had three types of material for his classes. The materials were worksheets, copies of the book, and digital resources such as the website Quizzis. To illustrate, RT3 mentioned, “I am a great participant of modernity, in technology. Yes, I really like, for example, platforms, I don't know, like Quizzis.”

Regarding the students' interest in the material presented in classes, the learners who showed more interest were from the first and third grades of high school. Consequently, due to the use of all of these instruments, the students' interaction in the different grades of high school varied. In the higher grades, two and three, students seemed to be shy about participating in class; on the other side, students from first grade were actively involved and participated in class. One of the main reasons for this was the humor used by the teachers in their classes. For example, RS13 said, “I think it's good because the teacher knows how to make a lot of games and I mean it's not like the class is boring.”

In the case of the urban area, to start the class, UT2 presented some warm-up games, such as puzzles. In this line, UT2 pointed out that “the most attention-grabber for the kids has been games.” Furthermore, US7 corroborated the information by declaring “she does like dynamics and everything to learn better. Game about verbs.” In the case of UT1-3, she worked with worksheets for reading activities in the third grade of high school. In addition, UT2 and UT1-3 used copies of the book containing different texts and activities to complete. Regarding the use of the board, both teachers used it throughout the classes; but UT2 especially checked if students took notes on what she wrote on the board. Consequently, due to the use of these materials, the students of the second grade of high school were often engaged during the warm-up activities, but after they lost their concentration. In the case of the first and third grades, they were shy when using English, but they could share their thoughts or ideas well when they used Spanish.

Motivational phases

The application of the motivational phases described by Dörnyei and Otto (1998) varied in the grades of the rural high school observed. Regarding the first phase, the preactional phase, in

the first and third grades of high school there was a lack of observable evidence indicating its application. However, in the second grade of high school, RT2 provided the students with a clear agenda mentioning the objectives of the class, thus setting expectations for what is to be achieved within the class. Regarding the second phase, the actional phase, teachers of all three grades employed traditional methods to teach classroom topics, predominantly using copies of the textbook as the primary resource for instruction. For instance, when the student was asked about the kind of material that motivates them, RS13 stated, “sometimes he brings us, for example, some copies and we have to do activities or readings there” Additionally, RT2 engaged students proactively by incorporating interactive activities before class to stimulate motivation. In that claim, RT2 pointed out,

At the beginning of the class, I bring them games. Sometimes, a tongue twister, sometimes a motivational phrase, and I make them give their opinion, sometimes games too; for example, that game of Simon says, so that they get up and interact with each other.

In addition, RT2 used multimedia resources such as videos and presentations to enhance comprehension. In the case of RT3, he used websites to complement the teaching-learning process. Besides, RT1, RT2, and RT3 integrated activities from the textbook to reinforce the topic. In particular, in the third grade of high school, RT3 introduced supplementary worksheets to further reinforce comprehension. Finally, in the post-actional phase, it was evident that in grades one and two, after assigning homework, RT1 and RT2 followed a traditional method of evaluation by asking students to present their completed homework to review and correct mistakes together. In contrast, in the third grade of high school, RT3 took a different approach by avoiding assigning grades to homework. Instead, RT3 reviewed homework together to encourage participation.

Concerning the urban setting, the pre-actional phase was only applied by UT2. She started the class by presenting the objective of the lesson and the activities they would perform to achieve it. As for the second phase, the actional, UT2 elicited information from the students to build their knowledge. Then, she asked the students to answer some questions about the topic to reinforce their knowledge. As for UT1-3, she used to read the text and translate it orally as an example for students' translation activity. In this sense, US15 expressed, “many people don't understand what the teacher means, but after a while, she tells us in Spanish and we can understand it.” In addition, she asked the students to work in groups or pairs to answer questions and look for unknown words. She emphasized to the students that working in groups or pairs was for them to help each other. In this regard, US2 claimed, “the teacher tells us to

work in groups so that we can help each other.” Finally, in the post-actional phase, UT2 sent homework and then reviewed it in the next class. Similarly, UT1-3 always sent homework and checked it in the next class, providing feedback to the students.

Conditions of motivation

Regarding the different conditions described by Dörnyei (2001b), one of the most significant that appeared during the classes in the rural institution was the first condition called creating the basic motivational conditions. RT1 and RT3 could create a comfortable environment using humor. It was very important to incentivize the students to collaborate. This condition was present in the first and third grades. Also, the second condition, generating the initial motivation, appeared in the three grades. In the first and second grades, RT1 and RT2 used the Grammar Translation Method to build confidence in their students to answer questions, since when the teachers tried to use only English, the learners seemed even more shy, especially those students from the second grade. In this regard, RT2 mentioned, “I tell them, they can participate in Spanish, but as I say, as they are shy, some don't want to, but others do participate.”

In the case of the third grade, RT3 used English as much as possible. This teacher repeatedly indicated that it was okay to make mistakes or not know something; therefore, the students were confident enough to participate or answer questions. RT3 expressed,

...give them confidence that comfort zone so that they don't care if they make mistakes because, you know, they are just learning. So, that is the main thing that I do and I try in all my classes, to make them feel comfortable and enjoy the class.

Concerning the third condition called maintaining and protecting motivation, it was noticed in the three grades at a certain level. For example, in the three grades, the teachers encouraged students to self-evaluate their mistakes, such as if they were using a structure correctly or pronouncing a word well. Also, the teachers provided positive feedback and corrected the mistakes of the students. Another action done by RT2 and RT3, which is related to this condition, was presenting the activities in interesting ways. Both teachers used technological resources. For example, RT2 used a TV to project videos, did warm-up activities, and provided worksheets. In this regard, RS7 mentioned, “the teacher gives us a better education by watching videos.”

Likewise, RT3 used the computer lab to play online games like Quizzis and used worksheets too. Regarding the resources used by the teachers in their classes, RT3 said,

For example, I am very involved in social networks. The guys are full of social networks. We have pages in which they comment in English. For example, on WhatsApp, they make short presentations. I have even had them make videos on TikTok.

According to the last condition called encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation, the three teachers sent homework to check the progress of their students. In the next classes, they checked the answers to the homework and corrected errors together with the students. Only RT2 emphasized that she was going to give a grade. Concerning this, she expressed,

During the year, I do send the activities to the group. I have a Messenger group. But I have tried not to grade those activities, they are just for reinforcement, because some of them complain that they don't have internet and that it is complex. So, I just send them just like that for them to do. But I tell them that it is a graded assignment, it is like a duty.

In the urban area, for the first condition, UT1-3 and UT2 did not fully implement strategies to create a consistently positive and supportive classroom atmosphere although moderate humor was used by UT1-3 to try to create a positive environment. Regarding the second condition, UT2 sometimes began the class with a warm-up activity related to the topic to establish a positive environment and UT1-3 occasionally used strategies such as pair or group work to boost students' confidence and motivate them to learn. For example, when the students were asked about what activities make their classes motivating, US14 expressed, "in groups we understand each other more and each one gives his/her own idea." In the third condition, UT1-3 did not present students with stimulating activities, as the teacher mainly relied on the textbook and provided feedback, which was sometimes incorrect. In this sense, US13 mentioned, "she helps us read texts, uh, correct us in pronunciation." In the case of UT2, although her class was also based on book activities, she tried to do it interactively by organizing the activities in groups. To illustrate, UT8 said, "when the teacher does groups because you can be there with partners and they help you more," when asked about motivating activities in classes. Finally, in the fourth condition, UT2 assigned activities for students to complete, which were graded later. Also, UT2 systematically checked students' notes at the end of class and assigned them a grade for this task. In the case of UT1-3, she usually sent homework and students were punished if they did not do it. For example, she wrote reports to give to the school's principal.

Challenges

One of the most difficult challenges experienced by the teachers in the rural context was the shyness of the students which made their participation difficult. For instance, in the second and third grades of high school, the students did not want to participate voluntarily; RT2 and RT3 needed to point out learners in particular. Regarding this, RT2 mentioned,

Some of them don't like the subject; and sometimes, they want to participate, but they don't have the vocabulary. Although I allow them to do it in Spanish too, they are very shy, they don't want to participate. Better, sometimes I make them write and then I read, because even when I ask them to read, some of them don't want to read.

Similarly, RT3 said,

For me, the biggest challenge is the mindset of the students. It is the predisposition of the students. This has been very difficult for me. I think I am trying to change that mentality that English is very important, but I don't think the students, at that age, are so clear about it.

On the other hand, the students of the first grade of high school participated in classes despite their shyness because RT1 gained their confidence using humor during the classes.

In addition, another challenge evidenced was the lack of books. RT2 and RT3 used other materials such as worksheets and digital resources; nevertheless, the internet connection was not good enough. To illustrate this, RT2 mentioned, "fortunately I have that TV, but sometimes the internet is not very good." Similarly, RT3 said, "there is a huge digital divide. We have to adapt to that. For example, when I do some activity, whether it is research or something else, I share my cellular data with them."

In the case of the urban area, teachers faced several challenges that affected student motivation. One of the challenges was that UT2 could not control students' discipline since they were very noisy and usually spent time discussing topics unrelated to the subject matter to disrupt. Also, the low tone of voice of UT2 caused the students to avoid paying attention and get distracted easily. In the case of UT1-3, the biggest challenge was the students' lack of knowledge, so she always had to send extra homework on basic vocabulary to help students remember information. In this regard, UT1-3 mentioned, "they communicate to me at least one paragraph in English, a complete and correct paragraph because they can do it, but sometimes there are mistakes," emphasizing it as one of the challenges she faces.

Additionally, in the interviews, the participant students highlighted that the lack of commitment is challenging for them. For instance, US11 stated, “I would say regular because I have a lot of classmates who do not take the classes seriously.” The lack of books, internet, and technology were the biggest challenges in this institution. In this sense, UT2 said, pointing out the lack of technology,

Unfortunately, we don't have a lot of material for us to be able to use as a room that is just for our English area. We have to ask for the computer lab and many times it is not available or other teachers are occupying it.

Furthermore, the noise from the cars outside made it difficult for the students to concentrate as this school is located near a busy market in the city.

An interesting finding appeared by analyzing the interview transcripts; some students lacked interest in the subject, so they felt bored in the classes. In this regard, SU3-4 said, “I don't understand the teacher at all,” and SU1-3 mentioned, “I'm a bit bored because I don't understand” when they were asked how they felt in their classes.

Activities to foster motivation (recommended by the students)

During the analysis of the interview transcripts, an additional theme was identified related to the importance of knowing students' needs and interests. Although it does not fit within the other themes proposed, it is imperative to mention and analyze. One of the findings in the rural area was the strong students' preference for studying outside, taking advantage of the natural environment, and making use of the green spaces available at the school, mentioning that these activities could be relaxing and fun for them. To illustrate, RS11 mentioned, “using the green spaces we have here at school and going out and doing the activities outside, I think is also a bit relaxing at the same time, being outside and sharing with our classmates and the teacher.” Also, they highlighted the importance of artistic activities such as drawing and painting that allow for creative expression and make learning more enjoyable. In this regard, RS13 mentioned, “it can be like activities that have to do with drawing or painting.” In addition, the students suggested making learning more interactive through the use of games more regularly, transforming traditional teaching to a more interactive one. For example, RS2 suggested one activity that could be included in his/her English classes, “some recreational games. Because some classmates have a hard time learning.”

In the urban area, the suggestions made by the students resemble those given by the rural students. However, new recommendations emerged, such as the use of music, audio, or

podcasts to improve their listening and speaking skills and create a more comfortable environment. Also, they recommended the use of videos to have a clearer explanation than the one given by the teacher. For example, US11 said, “more different podcasts and a little more improvement in the pronunciation of each of us.” Also, US1 stated, “when we do some reading that I don't know, it could be by listening to audios.” Finally, US4 declared, “videos because it would be clearer how she can represent some activities.”

According to the data analysis, rural and urban students showed a degree of intrinsic motivation towards learning English, often due to their personal interests. They also recognized the benefits English can bring to their future. This finding differs from Lamb's (2012) study, which highlighted intrinsic motivation among urban students while emphasizing a lack thereof among rural students.

Maeng and Lee (2015) identified various motivational strategies in an EFL context, including audiovisual aids, highlighting the benefits of instruction, fostering collaboration, providing feedback, and offering praise. Based on the analysis of data collected for this study, similar motivational strategies were found. First, humor was employed in rural and urban settings, although it was more prominent in rural high school classes, particularly in the first and third grades. Also, the course content in both contexts was adapted to real-life situations. Besides, providing feedback and prizes, such as extra points, was used to motivate students in both settings. Collaborative work emerged as one of the most used motivational strategies across both settings. Moreover, technological resources were predominantly employed in rural high school classes, particularly in the second and third grades, with a higher intensity observed in the latter. Finally, motivational conversations were used primarily within rural classrooms, serving as another motivational strategy. Some of these strategies were highlighted by the students as ways of motivation.

Regarding the rural setting, two of the teachers used resources such as television, projectors, and websites, Quizzis, WhatsApp, and TikTok, which were used when they had access to internet in the classroom or when they went to the computer laboratory; however, the teachers also indicated that the greatest difficulties encountered were the lack of books, poor internet connection, and limited access to technology. This situation is in line with the findings of Wreikat et al. (2014) who explained that teachers used television, images, numbers, and handouts in their classes; but in the same way, resources were not enough so they tended to apply traditional methodologies.

Based on the observations, it was found that technological resources were employed as a motivational strategy to some extent in the rural setting while they were not used in the urban one. This finding differs from Mudra (2018) who stated that technological resources are lacking in the rural setting.

According to the information collected on the motivation phases, the most popular strategies applied in each phase were different. In the first phase, the most common in both contexts in the second grade was to share with students the class agenda and goals. According to the second phase, the most popular strategy in the rural area was to conduct interactive activities before class to stimulate motivation. In the case of the urban area, the most popular was to obtain information from the students to build their knowledge. As for the third phase, teachers tried to apply motivational resources or strategies in both contexts. The most popular strategy in the rural area was the use of multimedia resources such as videos and presentations to improve comprehension. In the case of the urban setting, it was to ask students to work in groups or pairs. Finally, in the fourth phase in both contexts, teachers sent homework and provided feedback. Tiarsiwi and Amaniah (2020) had similar results in their study where educators applied different strategies in each phase of motivation. Focusing especially on the results reported in that study, the most frequent strategy in the first phase was developing personal good relationships with students, which is the only one that differs from our results. The second phase involved teaching materials that were relevant to the students. In the third phase, the most frequent strategy was presenting tasks in a motivating manner. Finally, in the last phase, providing positive feedback to students was the most recurrent motivational strategy used.

Wirentake's (2017) study stated that good relationships with students, bringing humor into the classroom, and showing enthusiasm for teaching are the most useful strategies to motivate students. Likewise, according to the rural teachers' perceptions obtained during the interviews, the educators mentioned that a good relationship between students and teachers is considered as an effective motivational strategy because learners seem more confident and enjoy the class. Also, the teachers said the use of humor and enthusiasm helps to create a positive atmosphere in the classrooms.

In the case of the urban teachers' perceptions gathered through the interviews, they identified several motivational strategies considered as the most effective, including the use of games, multimedia, videos, and advice to students about being bilingual; however, the use of videos and multimedia was not seen during the observations. Astuti (2013) obtained similar findings,

showing that teachers perceive having a friendly relationship and providing motivational feedback as key to motivating students and presenting lessons in an interesting way.

Regarding rural and urban students' perceptions, the motivational strategies that they consider as the most effective ones are quite similar in both contexts. The students mentioned that they enjoy the classes when they do activities in groups because they can help each other. Also, the learners said that the use of multimedia such as videos, television (in the rural area), and a speaker (in the urban area) are motivational tools for them. Furthermore, the urban learners stated that they enjoy classes when the teacher provides them with prizes such as extra points. In the same way, Budiarti's (2020) study pointed out using media, forming study groups, and giving appreciation (praise) as motivational strategies for students.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This study found the motivational strategies used in urban and rural EFL classrooms through observations and semi structured interviews. After collecting and analyzing the data, it was concluded that the motivational strategies used in urban and rural areas were using humor, adapting content to real-life situations, working in groups, giving rewards, and providing feedback. Through these strategies, the teachers tried to motivate the students, creating spaces where they felt the desire to participate actively in their learning process in a comfortable environment. In this regard, Filgona et al. (2020) mentioned that motivation goes hand in hand with the learners' energy to complete learning activities.

According to Hardré et al. (2008), four motivational strategies stand out as particularly significant in rural settings, all of which were corroborated by the findings of this research. First, fostering students' intrinsic motivation and future goals was achieved through the use of technological resources. During interviews, students expressed an understanding of the importance of English for their future and stated their enthusiasm for studying it. This resembles the theoretical basis of Ryan and Deci (2000) who defined intrinsic motivation as engaging in an activity or task because it is interesting, enjoyable, or satisfying. This finding differs from the theoretical foundations of Dasaradhi et al. (2016) and Rivero (2014); as stated by the former authors, teaching English in a rural setting is a challenge due to the lack of technological resources, while the latter pointed out that an advantage of the urban setting is access to such resources. However, this study contradicts these statements by finding no evidence of using technological resources in the urban setting. Second, the teachers established the relevance of the content as they adapted it according to real-life situations according to the context of the students. Third, teachers created a friendly atmosphere within the classrooms by fostering positive relationships with them, as well as among the students by effectively employing humor. Finally, by using technological resources and contextualizing the learning materials within real-life situations, as previously mentioned, the teachers provided their students with the knowledge and skills necessary to broaden their visions and apply their learning in both personal and social contexts.

In the case of the urban context, the findings of this study coincide with the ideas presented by Debruin-Parecki and Teel (2012); four effective strategies for student motivation were found. First, the employment of group work fostered a collaborative atmosphere where students supported one another, though there was a notable difference in the assessment approach. While teachers did assess student progress, their emphasis remained on grades rather than on engagement and progress as Debruin-Parecki and Teel (2012) suggested. Regarding the second strategy, the teachers implemented collaborative tasks and assigned translation and research homework to enhance vocabulary acquisition; however, these tasks were not varied. The third strategy, emphasizing increased student responsibility, was less evident in the urban classroom, where more traditional teaching methods were employed. Finally, the teachers incorporated content relevant to students' real-life experiences and situations, aligning to connect classroom learning with their everyday lives.

In examining the frequency of motivational strategies employed within classroom settings, it was essential to consider Dörnyei and Otto's (1998) four-phase model of motivation. Consequently, both urban and rural areas exhibited variability depending on the teacher.

In rural settings, the first-grade teacher carried out the actional and post-actional phases, using traditional instructional tools like the board and providing feedback through graded homework. On the contrary, the second-grade teacher integrated all three phases by providing students with an agenda, encompassing both technological and traditional resources, and providing feedback with grades. Meanwhile, the third-grade teacher fulfilled the actional and post-actional phases, employing a blend of technological and conventional resources while offering feedback and avoiding grading. These phases were consistent in all observed classes.

In urban settings, the teachers of the first and third grades fulfilled the actional and post-actional phases. This was achieved through activities, such as text readings and translation, group work, graded homework assignments, and feedback. Additionally, the second-grade teacher incorporated all three phases by structuring classes with agendas, building the students' knowledge through questions, and sending and checking homework with a grading system. These phases were applied across all observed classes as in the rural setting.

The last conclusion of this study points out that teachers' and students' perceptions of the motivational strategies used in the classes in both contexts are positive. In the case of teachers, they perceive that connecting the contents with the reality, not only focusing on learning the language, but learning the new culture is very important. Also, the use of multimedia and warm-ups can empower students to actively participate in class. With the use

of these strategies, teachers mention that they perceive how students enjoy the class. All these strategies are considered the most relevant ones as they may have positive effects on the students (Dörnyei, 2001a).

Regarding the students' perceptions, it was found that they consider technological resources and the use of humor in classes as the most effective strategies because they motivate students to learn and make the classes more interesting and dynamic.

It is important to mention that although teachers and students in the urban context stated they perceived positive results when applying and using motivational strategies, a different reality was observed in the classes. According to the observations, the students were not engaged at all times during the lessons. Also, the noises from outside of the classroom could have been a factor that distracted the students. Furthermore, the teachers of the first and third grades of this high school sometimes expressed ideas that did not encourage students. All these factors could have affected the urban students' motivation.

Recommendations

One effective strategy is to actively involve students in the planning process by listening to their recommendations and incorporating their suggestions into lesson plans. For that, teachers should include open discussions with their students about their learning experiences within their classes to be aware of where they are failing to better reach their students. By giving students a voice, teachers can adapt their teaching methods to meet the needs and interests of their students, making the learning experience more engaging and relevant. Techniques such as projects, making use of the institutions' green spaces, using music in the classroom either as a form of relaxation or for educational purposes, gamification, role-playing, among others, could increase motivation, but also develop critical thinking and interpersonal skills. Also, teachers will be able to create a dynamic and motivating educational experience for their students.

Furthermore, particularly in the urban setting, educational authorities of the institution need to facilitate access to computer labs for teachers. Such access provides educators the opportunity to employ innovative strategies, fostering student motivation within the English learning-teaching process. Additionally, the Ministry of Education must address the technological needs of both rural and urban areas, ensuring adequate equipment and connectivity to enable the establishment of new motivational strategies including the technological material that is part of the current era. Also, the Ministry of Education should ask for a demonstrative class as a mandatory requirement for hiring teachers.

During this research, more detailed information was obtained by informal conversations with teachers but it could not be included as part of the findings due to ethical considerations. Therefore, future research should go beyond traditional interview methods and incorporate open-ended conversations as a complementary method to obtain more meaningful information to enrich the research. While interviews offer valuable opportunities for in-depth exploration, they can overlook crucial information that emerges more naturally in informal conversations. By integrating informal conversations with interviews, researchers can create a more relaxed and informal environment that encourages participants to share their opinions more freely. In addition, informal conversations could provide researchers with the opportunity to establish a good relationship with participants, fostering trust that can help gather hidden information that contributes to a more complete understanding of the research. Additionally, further research could analyze in depth additional factors such as the backgrounds or circumstances of the students' families which could also affect their motivation.

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Annexes

Annex A: Teachers' interviews

Spanish version

1. ¿Usted siente que sus alumnos están motivados? ¿Por qué?
2. ¿Cuáles son las estrategias motivacionales que usted usa?
3. ¿Qué tan seguido utiliza esas estrategias motivacionales?
4. ¿Cuáles son los recursos que usted utiliza para crear su material motivacional?
5. ¿Cuáles son los retos a los que se enfrenta al motivar a sus estudiantes?
6. ¿Qué factores influyen en el tipo de estrategia motivacional que usted usa en clase?
7. ¿Piensa que las estrategias motivacionales que usted utiliza en clase son efectivas para motivar a los estudiantes? ¿Por qué? ¿Cuál es la más efectiva? ¿Tiene alguna rutina para incluir estas estrategias?

English version

1. Do you feel that your students are motivated and why?
2. What are the motivational strategies that you use?
3. How often do you use those motivational strategies?
4. What resources do you use to create your motivational material?
5. What are the challenges that you face when motivating your students?
6. What factors influence the type of motivational strategies you use in class?
7. Do you think the motivational strategies you use in the classroom are effective in motivating students? Why? What is the most effective? Do you have any routine to include these strategies?

Annex B: Students' interviews***Spanish version***

1. ¿Cómo te sientes durante tus clases de inglés? ¿Por qué?
2. ¿Qué actividades hacen que tu clase de inglés sea motivadora? ¿Por qué?
3. ¿Qué materiales y recursos que utiliza el profesor de inglés te motivan a aprender?
¿Por qué?
4. ¿Cómo calificarías tu clase de inglés (buena, regular, mala)? ¿Por qué?
5. ¿Qué tipo de actividades te gustaría que use el profesor para motivar tu aprendizaje?

English version

1. How do you feel during your English classes? Why?
2. What activities make your English classes motivating? Why?
3. What are the materials and resources the teacher uses in class? Do they motivate you to learn? Why?
4. How do you rate your English classes (good, regular, bad)? Why?
5. What kind of activities would you like your teacher to use in class to motivate your learning?

Annex C: Guiding questions for observation

Types of motivation presented in the classroom (intrinsic or extrinsic)	
Motivational Strategies Use in the Classroom	
What is the material used by the teacher for the class?	
Does the activity/material presented by the teacher arouse the students' interest in learning? Do the students seem to be motivated?	
Students' Interaction in the Classroom	
Does the teacher use the phases and/or conditions of motivation described by Dorney?	
Challenges that teacher face within the classroom in terms of motivation.	
Does the class motivation look affected by the area (rural/urban) in which it takes place? Why?	
General Observations	

Annex D: Schools' permission letters



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ASUNTO CERTIFICADO. Fecha: 17 DE MAYO del 2023.

EL SUSCRITO MGS VINICIO PERALTA Z
RECTOR DE LA INSTITUCION EDUCATIVA MIGUEL MORENO ORDOÑEZ.

CERTIFICO:

Que las SRTAS. KATHERINE SAMANTHA CORONEL OTAVALO y SRTA ANDREA SHAKIRA PUCHI LARGO , realizarán el Proyecto de tesis TEACHING STRATEGIES TO MOTIVATE EFL STUDENTES IN RURAL AND URBAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, para el año lectivo 2023 2024. Es todo lo que puedo certificar en honor a la verdad.

Esperando que el peticionario haga el respectivo uso a la presente certificación anticipo mis sinceros agradecimientos.

ATENTAMENTE,


MGS VINICIO PERALTA Z.
RECTOR
0984767659
C.I. 0102831377

