

The American English Institute at the University of Oregon presents

Teacher Investigations of ELT Practice

ACE Action Research 2018

Edited by Beth Sheppard and Andy Halvorsen



**Teacher Investigations of ELT Practice:
ACE Action Research 2018**

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Beth Sheppard and Andy Halvorsen	
Flipped Classrooms: A New Perspective to Enhance Students’ Questioning Skills.....	7
Reina Ruiz	
Using Short Stories to Enhance ESL Teaching and Learning: A Case Study of Egyptian Students.....	31
Rasha Osman Abdel Haliem	
Motivating Zootechnical Students Through Innovative Materials and Authentic Texts	55
Luiz Carlos Pacheco	
Student Dropout in an Ethiopian Peacekeeping Language Center	75
Geremew Garda Wozie	
The Effect of Short Story Books on Students’ Attitudes and Motivation Toward Reading Comprehension	95
Augustin Palenfo	
The Effectiveness of Scaffolding in Learning Punctuation for Primary Level EFL Students: Action Research in Pakistan	116
Muhamad Younas	
Using TED Talks as Authentic Videos to Enhance Students’ Listening Comprehension and Motivation.....	130
Sandy El Haj Hassan and Zeinab Haj Hassan	
The Effects of Listening Journals in the Development of University Students’ Listening Skills	151
Mariana Ruiz Nascimento	

Introduction

In 2017, the University of Oregon welcomed the first cohort to its Advanced Certification in ELT (ACE) program*. Educators from more than 20 countries exchanged ideas, formulated teaching philosophies, analyzed and revised the courses they teach, developed skills in an area of specialty, and planned an action research project. We are tremendously proud of every teacher who found the motivation and the time to complete their certification and become ACE alumni.

In this volume, we are pleased to present eight articles reporting on action research projects completed by ACE alumni in 2017 and 2018. In action research, teachers use techniques such as surveys, observations, and document analysis to systematically collect information within their own teaching context. The process begins with reflection to identify problems or issues that affect the classroom. This kind of reflection is central to teaching, and so is the practice of reading or discussing these issues to identify possible solutions. In action research, teachers take the further step of planning for systematic data collection before, during, and/or after the implementation of their proposed solution. The collection and analysis of this data allows action researchers to move forward with greater confidence as they adopt their solution into regular classroom practice, or further refine their ideas for another round of research. It also allows action researchers to share their findings with other teachers in reports like the ones in this volume.

Teaching is fundamentally a reflective practice, and the authors in this volume demonstrated the value of reflection on teaching throughout their participation in the ACE courses. In these papers, the authors present research conducted on three continents, in educational contexts ranging from primary school to high school to technical institutes and universities. They explored problems that affect their classrooms and tried out interventions that

they had discussed with their cohort during ACE. To answer their research questions, the authors collected student surveys, performed interviews, observed students in class, invited colleagues to observe them, kept journals, gave pre- and post-tests, and analyzed students' written and spoken work. In the following paragraphs we will give a brief overview of the individual projects.

In the first article of this volume, Reina Ruiz looked into the value of the flipped-classroom model for training pre-service teachers in Venezuela. Through the data she collected, Reina was able to demonstrate that the use of a flipped-classroom model increased the students' in-class questioning skills and also corresponded with an overall heightened level of critical inquiry within the classroom.

Working with students in a technical institute in Egypt, Rasha Osman explored the integration of literature into the curriculum, and she specifically looked at the impact of short stories on the teaching and learning process. Rasha found that integrating short stories into the general English classroom enhanced both students' motivation to participate in the classes, and their overall critical thinking skills.

Luiz Carlos Pacheco studied his teenaged students' response to two types of innovative materials, popular songs, and authentic texts from the students' technical field of specialization. He collected information about students' subjective experience using a survey and interviews, and also noted higher average grades in the class where he used these innovative materials.

Geremew Garda Wozie wanted to know why so many students were dropping out of ESP courses for military and law enforcement personnel. He explored a variety of possible reasons via student surveys and teacher interviews, in an effort to determine what interventions might reduce the drop out rate.

Augustin Palenfo added an extra assignment for his high school students, asking them to read and present summaries of several short stories within one term. He analyzed their written work and oral summaries to report on students' ability to participate actively and autonomously. He also interviewed the students to learn how they felt about reading the stories, to look for changes in confidence and motivation.

In his action research project on the scaffolding necessary to help students effectively acquire knowledge of English punctuation, Muhammad Younas worked with his students in a government public school in Pakistan. Muhammad divided his students into both an experimental and control group, and increased scaffolding was provided during instruction for the experimental group. Data collected suggested that students in the experimental group acquired knowledge of punctuation more quickly and efficiently than students in the control group.

In Lebanon, Sandy and Zeinab Hassan experimented with the use of TED Talks to enhance listening comprehension and motivation in their military students. In student self-report data, participants suggested that the use of TED Talks in the classroom helped them with the overall retention of information. In general, the use of authentic videos in the classroom served to support student listening comprehension and enhance their motivation.

Mariana Ruiz Nascimento implemented listening journals with her ESP students in a university context. She let them individually select out-of-class listening practice, and report on their selections online. She used a survey to investigate students' response to the activity and examined whether they became more comfortable with listening comprehension, reducing resistance to these activities.

As the editors of this volume, we have been grateful for the opportunity to work with these educators, both during their ACE training and in the process of carrying out and writing up their action research projects. They are an inspiring group, as you will see when you read their work. Enjoy!

-Beth Sheppard and Andy Halvorsen

*For more information about ACE, you can visit <https://aei.uoregon.edu/programs/teacher-training/ace>

Flipped Classrooms:**A New Perspective to Enhance Students' Questioning Skills**

Reina Ruiz

*Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador-Instituto Pedagógico de Maturín***Abstract**

This action research project explores the use of a flipped classroom model for pre-service teachers in Venezuela. After struggling with an insufficient allocation of class time for teacher training courses and a lack of critical engagement in the classroom, the researcher chose to implement a flipped classroom approach. In particular, research looked at the impact of a flipped classroom model on the development of student questioning skills. Data collected through surveys, journals, and analysis of classwork suggest that students in this context responded positively to the implementation of a flipped classroom. In-class student questioning increased, and level of critical inquiry in the classroom overall was impacted positively. This research suggests that the flipped classroom model may be one way to strengthen student engagement and critical questioning skills in an in-service teacher training context.

Introduction

In the last nine years, I have encountered different types of pre-service teachers in EFL contexts, and in all groups, I repeatedly saw evidence of the absence of questioning in class and during academic work in general. Also, the levels of cognition in my students' comments and answers were always centered towards the bottom of Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) – understanding information and remembering it. It seemed that the problem was in the methodology that I was using over the past years because I, certainly, was focusing the class more on my work and my participation than my students'. However, I recently changed the path of the development of my teaching and centered activities more on the students' participation. Nonetheless, I noticed that even though they were clearly more involved and active in the class, they did not improve their thinking abilities.

Over the past two years, I have reflected on the possibility that the problem might be that the class time is not enough to cover all the information related to the course and that for this reason students never have enough time to reach HOTS (higher orders thinking skills) or cognition levels. According to Lindahl (2016), many teachers worldwide struggle to promote HOTS in the classroom, so, as guidance, they apply Bloom's Taxonomy in order to identify the levels of cognition in students. This taxonomy classifies low levels of cognition or thinking skills such as remembering, understanding and applying; and high levels of cognition or thinking skills such as analyzing, evaluating and creating.

For the purpose of this research, I worked with students studying to become language teachers in a course called Grammar I. This course aims to study the different language schools of thought and the development of language. Thus, sometimes the class stays in the lower levels of thinking (understanding, remembering and applying). That is to say, students tend to limit

themselves to manage information to pass the test, and many are unable to transfer this knowledge into real-life situations. Therefore, I wanted to enable my students to enhance their critical thinking and questioning abilities through the use of flipped classrooms, which in the words of Aidinopoulou & Sampson (2017) is a “technology-supported pedagogical innovation” (p. 1) whereby students first are exposed to new materials and resources prior to instruction, and then are asked to practice and assimilate knowledge inside of class. According to Brame (2013) the flipped classroom instructional model benefits students’ learning process because “students gain first-exposure learning prior to class and focus on the processing part of learning (synthesizing, analyzing, problem-solving, etc.) in class” (np). This allows students to actively participate in the learning process, activating their cognitive processes before the class due to the fact that the teacher reverses the typical class setting. The classroom is transformed from a place to repeat and reproduce to a place to analyze and create. The student is empowered for the class before entering the classroom. Thus, in the same way, this instructional model allowed me to design activities that students could work on at home in order to activate their cognition prior to the class.

Research Question

All this led me to design a research project to explore the following research question: *What impact will the introduction/implementation of a flipped classroom instructional model have on students' questioning?* Moreover, through this research, I aim to know if this model could help us to have deeper discussions in the classroom, and if we could move to a higher order of thinking (analyzing, evaluating, and creating) through questioning.

Literature Review

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking involves the active participation of both students and teachers in building knowledge. However, in ELT settings, we can observe that teachers tend to teach by repeating theories without questioning much about our context and reality. According to Schafersman (1991), critical thinking is not an innate skill. It means that we have the capacity to think, but we need to train ourselves to think critically. Thus, teachers should know that they have to foster the enhancement of critical thinking in the classroom. This author explained that teachers need to be critical thinkers in order to promote critical thinking because “trained and knowledgeable instructors are necessary to impart the proper information and skills” (p. 1). That is, teachers must develop their critical thinking skills to guide students to high orders of critical thinking. I believe that thinking critically is difficult for many people because everything seems to be ready for them. Everything is so automatic that they do not have to stop to think about what they are doing or if there is a better way to do things. According to Ramsey, Gabbard, Clawson, Lee and Henson (1990) “most of the questions asked in a typical classroom require only recitation of memorized material and are on the lowest cognitive level” (p. 2). Schafersman (1991) also explained that people tend to stay in a low order of thinking, which he defined as “sufficient for personal survival” (p. 1). Nevertheless, as teachers, we have to think about the need for higher cooperation in our society. Therefore, we cannot conform to having individuals that are able to solve one problem if you give them the solution in advance.

CT and Questioning

There is a close relationship between critical thinking and questioning. Elder and Paul (2003) explained that thinking is not directed by the answers but by the questions that we ask. This means that students should be motivated to ask questions and not only to repeat set forth answers. In this regard, Yang, Newby, and Bill (2005) stated that “the level of thinking that occurs is influenced by the level of questions asked” (p. 164). For that reason, it is important to analyze the relevancy of questioning and the impact it generates in the learning process. According to Paul and Elder (1996) “questions are the force that powers our thinking” (p. 1), and the teacher must understand and internalize how both work. The teacher has to know what the elements of thought are, and also how to ask effective questions.

According to Cashin (1995), the issue dwells in the fact that teachers normally tend to focus on closed-ended questions in the class. These questions only lead to verifying the comprehension of a certain topic or content, but they do not promote higher orders of thinking skills. Therefore, teachers should foster open-ended and divergent questions. These types of questions activate the cognitive process in our students because they invite students to actively think about the question to reach a “viewpoint.” Furthermore, for making good questions, teachers should consider other aspects such as “time” and “class atmosphere” (Ramsey et. al, 1990). Students need time to absorb the question and discuss it with their classmates in private in order to provide an answer. Thus, the teacher can scaffold questions by providing time for the students to participate without directly asking anyone at once, but giving time for students to work on it. Furthermore, students need to feel comfortable when answering the questions. Ramsey et. al (1990) further stated, “In a secure atmosphere, questions can become powerful catalysts for learning and provide excellent models for other students” (p. 4). Therefore, teachers

must create a welcoming atmosphere in which students feel the freedom to provide answers and also to ask questions.

Flipped Classrooms to Trigger the Metacognitive Process

Throughout my research, I found a lot of information about the benefits of flipped classrooms to improve critical thinking in students. Also, I found some articles about the importance of questioning to improve critical thinking, but I did not find the combination of flipped classrooms and questioning. Therefore, through this research, I would like to explore how the combination of both of them contributes to enhancing students' thinking skills; and, in order to do so, the analysis was built on triangulating between theoretical knowledge, students' experiences, and my own perspective as the teacher.

Flipped classrooms are based on a constructivist theory of learning that is triggered in collaborative environments according to Strayer (2012). This means that the approach is student-centered, and students take action in their learning. Bishop and Verleger (2013) explained that the flipped classroom “represented a unique combination of learning theories once thought to be incompatible—active problem-based learning activities founded upon a constructivist ideology” (p. 1).

In the same sense, Bergmann & Sams (2012) emphasized that flipped classrooms allowed the use of interactive technologies to help students take an active role in the class. That is to say, through this model, students are empowered to take action in their learning process and more importantly in knowledge construction. This is paramount for the learning process because they are engaged in learning activities outside the classroom that allow them to trigger their metacognitive process before entering the class. Once students are more active in learning, the teacher can plan the class for a more question-driven environment, in which students are led to

ask more and more divergent questions. All in all, the connection between questioning skills and flipped classrooms dwells in the opportunity that students receive to start their cognitive process in a more student-centered environment in which they will truly be protagonists of the learning process.

Methodology

In this study, students' questions were used to classify their levels of critical thinking skills. This is relevant because teachers' and students' questions impact the way students think. Through this research, I could visualize how questioning influences students' thinking processes, due to the fact that questioning shapes thinking; through the use of flipped classrooms, students were given the opportunity to start their metacognitive process before arriving at the classroom. The intention was for students to be able to question in higher orders of thinking since they had the time to check the material several times in advance.

Research Context

This research took place in Maturín, Venezuela. The educational system in Venezuela is divided into seven subsystems from primary education to higher education. It is important to say that the education system is free throughout all subsystems and only mandatory until general middle education. In this research, I worked with a university responsible for the formation of future teachers in the country, UPEL (Universidad Pedagógica Experimental Libertador), specifically Instituto Pedagógico de Maturin. In this institute, we can find the English Language Teaching Program. In this program, students take different classes that aim at the study of language, culture, literature, pedagogy, methodology, and evaluation, among others. Grammar I is one of the subjects students take during their sixth semester in the university. When they take

this class, they are challenged to read intensively and extensively, discuss, make oral presentations, and write texts about language theories in English. This study took place at the beginning of the academic period 2017-II, from October 2017 to February 2018.

Participants

The students participating in the research were pre-service teachers from UPEL Maturín. These students have already studied English for three years in their career, so they are able to communicate orally and in written form in the target language. For that reason, all of the data collection process was fully in English. I had a total of ten students who showed their interest in the research. Out of the ten participants, six were female and four male. Their age range was 20 to 25. Also, they all had digital skills to manage the flipped classroom instructional model, and they had access to the Internet and to a computer.

Now, I would like to share with you a little bit about myself. I have worked as an English teacher for nine years at UPEL Maturín. I hold a degree in English Language Teaching and a Master's Degree in Higher Education. I am currently enrolled in a Doctorate in Education, and I am in the process of writing my thesis. My research fields are Teacher Education, ELT, EFL, Linguistics, Grammar, English for Specific Purposes, Flipped Classrooms, Critical Thinking, Questioning, and Young Learners. I have a passion for education because I believe that teacher education is key to building a better future for my country.

The Intervention

In the first week, students were invited to participate in the research. After a week, during a special class, students were handed a text about language schools of thought in English. They had 20 minutes to read the text, and then 20 minutes to think about two questions about the reading in English. The students were asked to write their names to be able to follow up on any

changes during the second part of the test. The week after, students were asked to join a virtual classroom on Canvas where they had access to different pieces of information about the topic of the second part of the test. In the fourth week, in the same fashion, they were asked to read a text about morphemes for 20 minutes, and after that, they had 20 minutes to write two questions about the reading.

I created a Google Forms document and sent it to students to find out what their attitudes towards flipped classrooms and questioning were. This allowed me to have a starting point or reference for the study. Finally, I kept a journal to have a written record of my actions and their progress, and this information was used for the analysis and reflection of the research process.

Data Collection Procedures

So far, I have briefly explained how I worked to find out more about the impact that flipped classrooms have on questioning. The collection of the whole data took five weeks. In order to obtain the necessary information for the research, I used three data collection tools: a class document analysis (Revised Ennis-Weir Critical Thinking Essay test), a survey, and a journal.

Revised Enis-Weir CT test.

In order to design a research tool that suited my participants, my study used a tailored version of the Ennis-Weir Critical Thinking Essay test presented by Hasan and Sevki (2008), in which they analyzed the importance of questioning behavior to enhance critical thinking skills using Bloom's Taxonomy as a reference for classification. This test consisted of presenting students a text and requesting that they write questions about the text. So, first, I presented students with a reading about language schools of thought; after reading, they wrote two questions about the reading. I classified their questions using Bloom's Taxonomy as a reference

to establish their questioning level. Then I applied the test again using a different text and with the implementation of flipped classrooms.

Survey.

Using Google Forms, I designed and applied a survey in English to the ten students who participated in the study (see Appendix A). Through the survey, I provided students with six open-ended questions to find out about their perspective towards questioning, and their attitudes towards the implementation of flipped classrooms. The survey was sent after the implementation of the two tests mentioned above in order to give students the opportunity to express their opinions and thoughts about their experience, and also about the relationship between questioning and thinking and the benefits of the implementation of a flipped classroom instructional model in this learning process.

Keeping a journal.

I designed a journal sheet to keep a written record of all the steps of the research with my actions and reactions of the students; also, I wrote down my observations of the activities, and the changes and progress produced in the whole process.

Data Analysis

All the data collection tools described before were used to perform a discrete data analysis with the purpose of ensuring the triangulation of the information and the generation of a validated analysis to help me understand the impact of flipped classrooms on questioning and especially on thinking.

Revised Enis-Weir CT test.

I used students' questions to analyze what levels of critical thinking skills students had, using a rubric based on Bloom's Taxonomy; all this was done with the purpose of analyzing and

categorizing the questions written by students. This helped me diagnose the questioning skills of the students in order to understand the way students thought, and after the second part of the test, I was able to see the improvement in their questioning skills due to the implementation of the flipped classroom instructional model. For example, if a student's question aimed to verify information that was given in the text, such as "What is langue and parole?" or "Is the study of language prescriptive?" I classified it at the bottom of Bloom's Taxonomy as "remembering" because the student was only attempting to memorize information.

Survey.

The information given by the students provided useful information that helped me understand students' perspectives toward questioning and flipped classrooms. I analyzed students' answers to the six questions, and after I got the results I used a framework of categories to systematically organize students' answers by categories according to their responses (see Appendix B). Once I categorized students' responses, I created new categories that emerged from the analysis.

Keeping a journal.

The information was recorded weekly for five weeks. It was used to analyze and reflect meaningful on my teaching practice, and my students' improvement throughout the research. In the end, I used this journal as guidance to write my final comments and results about the research. This helped me to reflect on students' progress during the whole process.

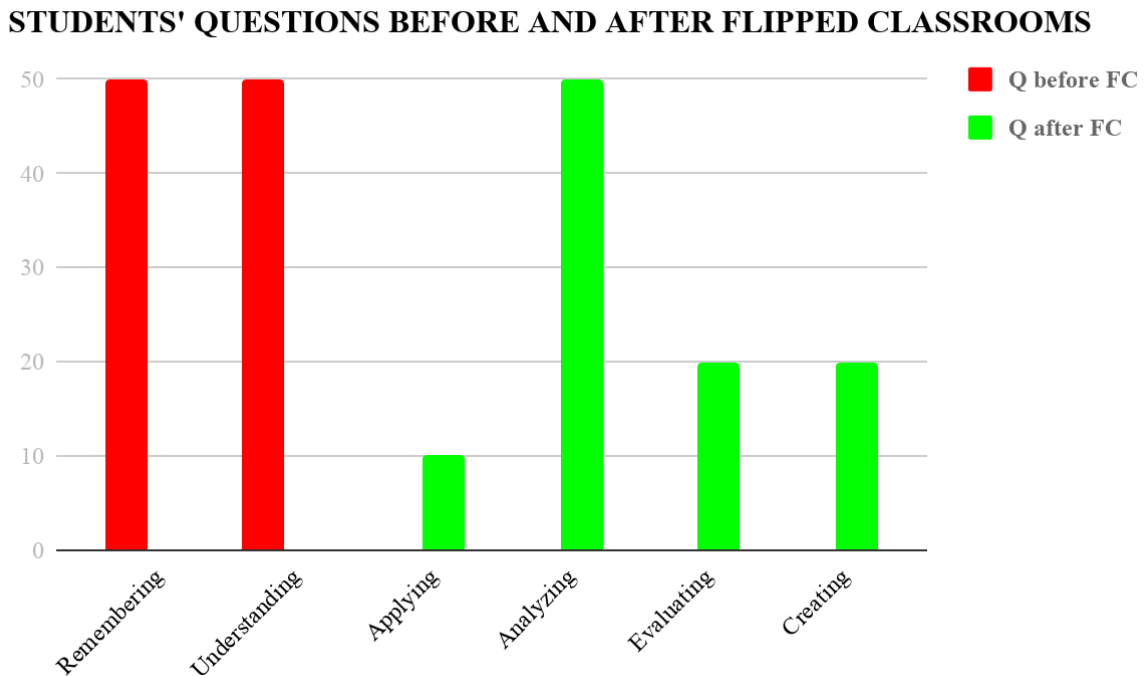
Results

Findings

Revised Enis-Weir CT test.

Figure 1 shows students’ questioning progress as measured in percentages. At the beginning of the study, the majority of questions were either on the level of remembering or understanding. These two levels are considered to be linked to low orders of thinking. On the other hand, after the implementation of flipped classrooms, students’ questions moved to higher orders of thinking. The majority of questions were in the level of first, analyzing; second, evaluating and creating; and in third position, applying. This figure shows the progress of students’ questioning skills after the implementation of flipped classrooms.

*Figure 1:
Students’ questioning progress after the implementation of flipped classrooms*



In order to show the questions and also the improvement, Table 1 gives one example of a question in each session, and also the way they were classified.

Table 1:

The classification of students' questions using Bloom's Taxonomy.

ORDERS OF THINKING	SESSION 1 Questions before flipped classrooms	SESSION 2 Questions after flipped classrooms
LEVEL I REMEMBERING	-What are langue and parole?	
LEVEL II UNDERSTANDING	-Did North American Structuralism pay attention to the semantic aspect of language?	
LEVEL III APPLYING		-Explain how allomorphs operate in spoken language.
LEVEL IV ANALYZING		-How do you think morphemes, allomorphs and words are connected?
LEVEL V EVALUATING		-How does knowing the notions of morphemes, allomorphs and words impact your awareness of error correction?
LEVEL VI CREATING		-What techniques or strategies would you use to teach words, morphemes and allomorphs?

Survey.

The purpose of the survey was to give students the opportunity to express their ideas about flipped classrooms and more importantly to have time to reflect on their own learning process. As a result, six new categories emerged from students' answers: 1) Active Participation,

2) Knowledge Construction, 3) The Path to Thinking, 4) Creation, 5) The Need and 6) Commitment.

Students' experience with flipped classrooms was represented as active participation in the learning process. All the students agreed that flipped classrooms allow students to take action in the learning process. Students expressed that through flipped classrooms, they could construct knowledge, and that they were not only receivers of information. They expressed that they felt a new responsibility within the process. Two students were very emphatic about it. One student stated, "It make[s] students try to construct their own knowledge and produce ideas by themselves." Another explained, "there is a feeling of more responsibility towards learning."

In terms of the importance of questioning, students agreed that questioning was the path to thinking because it is the way to build their own knowledge and to produce new ideas. Students expressed that in the learning process, questioning is key to pass from receiver to producer. Regarding the relationship between thinking and questioning, all the students agreed that they were both linked and that one cannot have one without the other. Therefore, the category "Creation" describes the perception of the students since they expressed that through questioning you are able to create new ideas, thoughts, and knowledge. One participant noted that, "When you ask [it] is because you are really learning and you have the necessity to understand things better."

Students' attitudes towards questions in class varied and were somewhat opposed. On the one hand, half of the population expressed that they did ask questions in class because it allowed them to learn and that questioning was very important in the learning process. On the other hand, the rest felt that they did not like to ask questions in class because they preferred to ask their

classmates, wait for someone else to ask, or research on the Internet. Also, some students confessed that they did not ask questions because they were shy.

Answers to survey questions regarding the impact of flipped classrooms in students' questioning gave rise to a new category of "Commitment." The majority of students declared that through flipped classrooms students were more committed to their own learning process and to questioning. Most of the students agreed that the flipped classroom enhanced their questioning and that it not only motivated students but also empowered them to take active participation in the learning process. For example, a student stated, "In a flipped classroom we are not only receivers of information because the professor acts as a guide, who provides help. She expects we can talk and ask questions, so, even if we are shy we need to do it."

Journal.

The aim of keeping the journal was centered on the need for reflection during the research process. Through this tool, some key aspects of students' reactions were noted and recorded.

1. At the beginning of the project, half of the students declined to participate. Many did not understand the value of questioning in the learning process. Only ten students showed interest in the research and committed to participate during the five weeks.
2. During the first session and first test, prior to the application of flipped classrooms, students had a hard time articulating their questions because they felt they were being evaluated. Many students expressed that they did not usually write questions because normally the teacher provided the questions.
3. Students were invited to join the virtual classroom on Canvas, in which they found different types of information about morphemes (video, text, mind map, mental map,

etc.). They got excited about the idea of having a virtual space with the information for the class at all times. They expressed that they felt more confident since they could check the information at any hour during the day and also as many times as needed.

4. During the second session and second part of the test, after the implementation of flipped classrooms, students asked questions beyond the low orders of thinking. They expressed that their curiosity was not centered in understanding the topic, but in finding out what other possibilities this topic could bring in relation to their context and learning process.
5. Students received a survey with questions about the experience they had with flipped classrooms and questioning. Many students expressed that they felt empowered using the flipped classroom instructional model and that it did influence their questioning and thinking.

Discussion

This study had the purpose of evaluating the impact of the implementation of the flipped classroom instructional model on students' questioning skills. In this research, students' experiences, ideas, perspectives, attitudes, and thoughts were considered in order to nurture the analysis and provide validated information about the learning process.

As stated earlier, at the beginning of the study, some students declined to participate because many did not understand the influence of questioning as a reflection of their thinking process. The research results suggested that this had to do with the traditional setting because usually students are not challenged to reflect on the learning process, but to only memorize or "learn" what they need to pass a course or a subject.

The results indicate that participants really benefited from the implementation of flipped classrooms in terms of reflection, ownership, critical thinking, creativity, and commitment to the

learning process. Also, there is evidence of flipped classrooms being a constructivist learning approach and a tool for students, which is consistent with the ideas of Strayer (2012). The majority of students agreed that they felt more empowered to form questions after the implementation of flipped classrooms, due to the fact that they were given the chance to take active participation in the learning process. The impact of flipped classrooms was evident in students' confidence and questioning.

The students that participated also demonstrated more comfort with the whole process. They said that they could understand the topic much better and they got to think about the relationship the topic had with their learning process. The fact that students were able to make connections between the topics and their learning process showed evidence of higher orders of thinking because they were able to go beyond the low orders of thinking and move into higher orders through the reflection that originated from questioning, which is what Yang, Newby, and Bill (2005) referred to in their study of the connection between questioning and thinking.

Another positive aspect of the research was that students learned the link that exists between questioning and thinking. Many agreed that questioning was the path to thinking. These results are consistent with Elder and Paul (2003) when they expressed that questions are the engine of thinking; hence one could not have real learning without the two.

Furthermore, this study showed that through the implementation of flipped classrooms students were not only motivated but able to be more creative and confident about their ideas. In this sense, the research provided valuable information that supported the claim that we have to prepare students to be active thinkers not only in the classroom but outside the classroom as stated by Seker and Komur (2008). All of this is especially important in the context of this research because the participants are pre-service teachers. That is, these students will be teachers

soon, and their growth will definitely impact their classes and future students. Hopefully they will switch the way they view the goal of education, from preparing to pass a test to preparing for life itself. Overall, research data showed sufficient evidence that through the implementation of flipped classrooms students felt empowered to be more active in their role as students and as future teachers as well.

Conclusion

As shown in the research, questioning is linked to thinking and to understanding the world. Therefore, any educational setting should aim toward the development of citizens that can interact with others in a more understanding and comprehensive manner. Thus, education should help students unveil their minds and understand their thinking in order to visualize that all humans have different ways of thinking and that it is due to their own questioning level. Once we are able to do this, we can give new and fresh steps into a new and better way of thinking in and outside the classroom. As stated by Rojas (2001), “The first step is the breaking away from the shadows of our conventional knowledge and believing that the questioning process is the beginning of knowing what we have learned” (p. 330). We need to allow ourselves to be engaged in the metacognitive process. The ELT class has to stop being the place where the teacher only asks about the things he already knows and students are quiet. So, the invitation is to create more spaces where questions are welcome and students can feel ownership of knowledge in the learning process and be active participants through class experience and more importantly in their lives.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study was the access to a computer and to Internet not only for students, but for teachers as well. Unfortunately, in Venezuela, not all the students and teachers have this privilege. Therefore, this study had to be carried out with students that qualified in this aspect. All over the country, students complain about having to spend a lot of money on Internet access with really slow bandwidth to be able to watch a video or even download documents. Thus, this is the biggest limitation of the research. I suggest that other researchers create a digital folder with the information on a computer in the workplace that students can use when they are free to be able to work offline.

Future Directions of Research

All this made me reflect on teacher education, and also on the teachers that are now in service. Usually, these teachers do not have time to analyze what happens in the classroom because they are forced to submit a lot of documents during the school year, and they have to work with over 40 students in one class. Therefore, I would like to modify this research a little and adapt it to other levels in the subsystems of education in my country, such as high school or even elementary school, as a way to analyze students' thinking and teachers' questions, with the purpose of providing teachers with a new perspective to enhance questioning skills of students through the implementation of flipped classrooms.

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Appendix A: Survey

FLIPPED CLASSROOM: A NEW PERSPECTIVE TO ENHANCE STUDENTS' QUESTIONING SKILLS

Email address*

1. Have you experienced flipped classrooms before?
Yes () No ()
If your answer is "yes", describe your experience.
2. Do you think that the implementation of flipped classrooms motivate students to take action on their own learning process?
Yes () No ()
Justify your answer
3. Do you think questioning is important in the learning process? Why?
4. How does questioning relate to thinking?
5. Do you usually ask questions in the classroom?
Yes () No ()
Justify your answer
6. Do you think that flipped classrooms could help students to be more engaged in questioning?
Yes () No ()

Justify your answer.

Appendix B: Framework of Categories

Question	Answer	Category I	Emerging Category	Conclusive Approximation
Experience with Flipped Classroom	Protagonist, exciting, challenging, meaningful, external, understand, dynamic, refreshing	Experience	Active participation	Through the use of flipped classrooms, students feel more active in the learning process.
Motivation of students to take action in the learning process through Flipped Classrooms	Active, comfortable, responsibility, building knowledge, diversification, ownership, production	Motivation	Knowledge construction	Students expressed that they felt a new responsibility for the process, and the need to construct their knowledge
Importance of Questioning in the Learning Process	Thinking, reflection, understand, builder, productive, development, evolving, meaningful	Importance	The path to thinking	The majority of students agreed that questioning is the path to thinking. It is the way to build our own knowledge and new ideas.
Relation between Questioning and Thinking	Think deeper, organize, creation, thinking process, real learning, doubts, reflection	Relation	Creation	Through questioning, emerges the possibility of creating new ideas and dive deep into knowledge.
Attitude towards questioning	Need, clarification, specific, research, point of view, quiet,	Attitude	The need	Students who ask questions are more conscious about the learning process, and

Question	Answer	Category I	Emerging Category	Conclusive Approximation
	learn, improve, shy, active			understand that questioning is necessary. Other students are too shy to ask, but try to answer their questions through internet and classmates.
flipped classrooms to engage students in questioning	Active, opportunity, push, commitment, interesting, creative, production, perspective, confidence	Engagement	Commitment	flipped classrooms allow students to feel empowered and committed to the learning process. It is the opportunity to be creative and confident about your ideas.



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**Using Short Stories to Enhance ESL Teaching and Learning:
A Case Study of Egyptian Students**

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Abstract

The integration of literature into the curriculum is advocated to improve students' language skills, their communicative and cultural competence, and enhance their critical thinking skills. Research showed that using literature in language teaching is very beneficial as it motivated students, enhanced critical thinking skills and led to developing linguistic knowledge and cultural awareness. This research paper shows how short stories were integrated in the general English classroom in the Higher Technological Institute, Egypt, Students were surveyed and interviewed to identify changes in their motivation and critical thinking skills. An analysis of students' written reflections on the stories also indicates improved language skills.

Introduction

The appearance of the Communicative Approach in the late 70s and very early 80s led to the disregard of using literature in the English classroom. Teachers aimed at teaching language functions and grammar. However, since the 1980s, the integration of literature and especially short stories in the ESL classroom has emerged. This integration of literature into the curriculum was done to improve students' language skills, their communicative and cultural competence, and enhance their "critical thinking" (Butler, 2006) skills. Besides, studies, like those of Lazar (1993), Carlisle (2000), Ellis (2011), and Fitts and Brower (2013), advocate the integration of literary texts into the ESL/EFL curriculum to develop language use and cultural awareness. Maley and Duff's (2007) research on integrating literature in the English classroom favors a content-focused curriculum. Morrow (2004) asserts that most of the time teachers disregard motivation. This current action research focuses on the integration of literature into the EFL curriculum of the Higher Technological Institute in Egypt, and the issue of motivation as well.

Formal Statement of Research Question

This research project was primarily designed to answer the following research question: *How does the addition of short stories to the curriculum impact students' interest and motivation for the course?* A further sub-question is *What impact does the addition of short stories have on students of all levels of proficiency and will it help improve students' critical thinking skills?*

I think that adding short stories to the curriculum will help all students of different proficiency levels. Students of all levels will learn something from reading the short stories. They will see vocabulary in context, grammar in use, and they will be exposed to the language. Writing their opinion on the short stories will improve their critical thinking skills and they will

gain confidence that they can express themselves. The idea of choosing short stories on more than one topic is motivational and interesting to students. It will enhance the idea of independent learning via reading on all subjects they like.

Literature Review

The short story is one of the most convenient genres of literature that can be added to the ESL class as it can be covered in one or two teaching sessions. The themes should be challenging but understandable and the language should be within the students' range (Lazar, 1993, p. 206). Reading whole, unabridged and non-simplified literary texts helps students gain confidence. Howie (1993) agrees with the benefits of using literature and asserts its role in enhancing students' critical thinking skills as students learn to "make judgments, be decisive, come to conclusions, synthesize information, organize, evaluate, predict, and apply skills" (p. 24). Literature really adds a new dimension to the ESL curriculum. It can enhance the literary, cultural, and higher order thinking skills. Murdoch (2002) asserts that if "short stories are selected and exploited appropriately . . . they will greatly enhance ELT courses (p. 74). Obediat (1997) notes that literature, especially short stories, enhances motivation. Paran, (2006) in his research, asserts that students who read literary texts improve in vocabulary and reading.

Literature, and especially short stories, has long been used for reading exercises in English as a first language (L1). In recent years, there has been a growing interest in utilizing short stories in second language (L2) classrooms. Integrating short stories into L2 learning can create a learning environment that will provide comprehensible input and a low affective filter. Short stories can be used in both intensive and extensive reading.

Benefits of Using Literature

Collie and Slater (1990) advocate integrating literature in the classroom as it exposes students to valuable authentic material and leads to cultural enrichment, artistic evaluation, language enhancement and personal involvement. Langer (1997) asserts the relevance of literature: “Literature plays a critical role in our life, often without our notice. It helps us to explore both ourselves and others, to define and redefine who we are, who we might become, and how the world might be (p. 5).” Langer (1997) believes that when literature is absent, learners do not practice language through personal and meaningful engagement and thus lose the opportunity of developing their skills (p. 613). Rodrigo et al. (2004) explain that integrating literature into L2 learning can create a learning environment that will lead to comprehensible input and a low affective filter. Strong (1996) asserts the relevance of integrating literature in the ESL curriculum as it develops students’ reading strategies and knowledge of non-fiction and literary texts; acquisition of new vocabulary as well as grammatical forms; and offers the opportunity to explore cross-cultural values (p. 291). Widdowson (1977) explains that literary texts have a unique advantage over non-literary ones as literary texts depend on the reader’s interpretation as each literary work is “separate” and “self-contained” (p. 36). Hess (2006) calls for adding literature, especially short stories, for their cultural and educational values (p. 29).

Literature and Culture

Studying literature from other cultures gives learners insight into the values and customs of other places. Strong (1996) asserts literature is a powerful tool in teaching the relativity of cultural values and the innate problems in cross-cultural communication (p. 303). Paran (2006) explains that literature does not only enrich the language but also the culture. McNicholls (2006) notes that rich cultural content is embedded in literature, and literature is a powerful tool that can

tell learners about their own culture, themselves, the world, and others (Hancock, 2000). Also, as Butler (2006) notes, literature can enhance ESL learners' critical thinking skills as they learn to appreciate the similarities and tolerate the differences between their culture and other cultures.

Teaching Short Stories Rather Than Other Genres

The short story is a universal literary genre across all cultures of the world. Owing to this universality, it is a natural part of language learning experiences of people in every culture. It is "one of the most fundamental uses of language known to humans" (Butler, 2006, p. 19). Short stories can be a natural bridge between cultures. According to Ellis (2011), stories are a powerful educational tool as they provide rich, authentic and meaningful context for reading. Pardede (2011) further explains, "By reading literary works, learners learn to see a world through another's eye, observing human values and a different kind of living and discovering that others are living in very different societies" (p. 16).

Notable researchers such as Banks (1989), Ellis (2011), Murdoch (2002), Erkaya (2005), Paran (2006), and Pardede (2011) have all asserted the effectiveness of the implementation of literature in the language classroom. The world of short fiction both mirrors and illuminates human lives (Sage 1987). Leahy and Lo (1997), Wang and Guthrie (2004), Thiyagarajan (2014), and Lowe (2015) note the value of short stories in teaching language. It is also clear that the inclusion of short fiction in the ESL/EFL curriculum offers many educational benefits (Arıoğul, 2001), and reading short stories helps develop students' cognitive and analytical abilities (Sage 1987, p. 43).

Integrating Short Stories to Motivate Students

Research on short story teaching and L2 acquisition shows that it enhances students' motivation. The more short story topics, the better the results, as students feel more involved and

learn something new with every new story. Integrating short stories in the ESL curriculum also leads to emotional involvement, and enriches students' learning experiences. ESL teachers should choose short stories according to the students' level of English proficiency.

Research indicates that literature and specifically short stories can be used to increase students' motivation. Kim (2004), Krashen (2004), Cho et al. (2005), and Cemin (2009) state that reading literature especially short stories, enhances students' motivation and eventually students start doing extra activities on their own. Fisher and Medvic (2003) identified seven components of an effective short story choice: appropriateness to students' interests; emotional and social involvement; selection and previewing by the teacher; clear purpose for reading the text; teacher involvement; use of animation and expression; periodic students' questioning to focus on specifics of the text; and connections to independent reading and writing. Reading short stories with appropriate practice, students gradually realize that they can achieve a higher level of comprehension by reading larger meaningful units of texts rather than focusing on individual units. They begin to understand punctuation signals, stress, and intonation. Teachers could use direct questions regarding setting, characters, and plot which can be answered by specific reference to the text. Questions may be open-ended that can help students make speculations and interpretations as well as present their own point of view (Stern 1991, p. 332).

Methods

After carefully analysing available research and publications in this field, I developed a variety of steps for the implementation of the action research. Each of these steps is explained below in more detail.

Research Context and Description of Participants

I teach in the Higher Technological Institute. I am highly interested in improving the quality of my teaching and making a real difference in students' lives. I believe in a student-centred approach. This made me try to use literature, especially short stories, to enhance students' motivation, critical thinking, and language proficiency. The action research was carried out in the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018 (September–January term).

The group (class) was comprised of 65 students; 45 students were males and 20 were females. The whole group was enrolled in the action research program. The students' ages were 18-23. Their proficiency in the language varied, as they came from different educational backgrounds. The students in the action research came from all over Egypt: Cairo (50%), Ismailia (15%), Suez (5%), Sharkiya (10%), and Upper Egypt (20%). They were mostly middle and upper-middle class. 80% of the enrolled students were graduates of public schools. Only 20% were from either private or international schools (19% private schools and 1% international schools).

English is a secondary subject in comparison to the subjects in students' majors, so they lack motivation. Still, all students understand the importance of English in enhancing their educational and professional opportunities. As such, many students attend class and do assignments. Some work on extra-curricular activities at their own pace and take courses. The problems I continuously face in the classes I teach are students' different levels of proficiency and interest. I want to make students interested in learning English and improve their critical thinking skills, so I thought about adding short stories to the curriculum.

Intervention Procedure

Students were given 12 short stories over the course of a term (15 weeks). The format of these stories was both paper-based and electronic in order to engage the students in the readings. Four short stories were tackled in class and eight were given as home assignments. Over the course of 12 weeks, three questionnaires, an interview for eight students, and four teaching reflective logs were written. Forty-five students responded to the first questionnaire, 48 to the second questionnaire and 43 to the third. Only eight students of the 65 agreed to be interviewed. One of the most significant drawbacks of the current research is the limited time slot which hindered the researcher from keeping track of all material. Besides, not all the students did all the assigned short stories.

The short stories covered a range of topics. I tried to use short stories written by writers from all over the world. Among the short stories I integrated in the ESL curriculum were stories written by Arab writers writing in English and short stories translated from Arabic texts written by renowned Arab writers. The texts I used were short stories collected in *The Director and Other Stories from Morocco*, by Leila Abouzeid, *Naguib Mahfouz at Sidi Gaber: Reflections of a Nobel Laureate, 1994-2001* by Naguib Mahfouz among other short stories. The administration's acceptance of the idea of adding short stories to the curriculum of general English was a major concern. To make things go smoothly, I spoke to my colleagues and supervisors before taking steps. I was also concerned that the students would struggle to express their opinions as Egyptian students are not used to expressing their opinion. I spoke to students and explained to them the relevance of expressing opinion and how self-expression is a skill that can be improved.

Data Collection Procedure

I collected data from various resources: questionnaires, students' and teachers' reflective journals and student interviews. All formal data collection was conducted in English.

Questionnaires.

Questionnaires helped me collect as much information as possible on the impact of using short stories for enhancing students' motivation and critical thinking skills. Three questionnaires were conducted: at the beginning of the course, at the mid-point, and after the course. The three questionnaires were paper-based. The first questionnaire consisted of five open-ended questions related to adding short stories to the curriculum. The mid-course questionnaire consisted of 22 scale questions and two open-ended questions. The final questionnaire consisted of five scale questions. The three questionnaires are included in Appendix A.

The interviews.

The interviews were conducted after the course. There were five interview questions:

1. Did you like adding short stories to the curriculum? Why?
2. Did reading short stories develop your language skills? How?
3. Did it improve your personal reflection?
4. Did reading short stories increase your cultural understanding/tolerance? How?
5. Did reading short stories motivate you to read on your own?

Careful notes were taken during each interview, and these notes were reviewed later for qualitative data analysis. Interview questions and sample responses can be seen in Appendix B.

Student reflection and teacher reflection journals.

Each time they read a short story in class or at home, students were required to write a reflective paragraph and commentary on the short story and the learning experience they

attained. The main reason was to make sure that the chosen short story was beneficial. Writing reflections made students gain the habit of reflection and provided me with valuable qualitative data. I also reflected on integrating short stories in the curriculum using teacher reflective journals. I reflected after each class and after reading students' reflections. My reflections complemented students' reflections and responses to the questionnaires. The tools supplemented one another.

Data Analysis Procedures

I analyzed the different answers provided by the students to make sure the action research plan was well conducted or if it needed adjustment. Qualitative data was collected in this action research. The qualitative data collection was done through the questionnaires, interviews and reflections. The method of descriptive analysis was then used to analyze the data. The qualitative data that was collected from the eight students who participated in the interview is reported in the paper. Students in the interviews were asked to explain the meanings of their statements in order to produce better understanding of their experience. The notes that I took during the interview were read repeatedly and were then sorted and summarized in a systematic way (Banks, 1989). Themes were generated to produce meaningful interpretations (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). These themes were then organized to produce a comprehensive analysis that was then interpreted in the findings.

Quantitative data was also collected from scale questions on two of the questionnaires. Student responses were compared, and the results supplemented the qualitative analysis.

Results

Findings

Findings are presented below for each of the instruments analysed, and themes from these findings are summarized in the discussion section which follows.

First questionnaire.

Forty-nine out of 65 students answered and submitted the first questionnaire. Thirty out of 49 noted they liked adding short stories to the curriculum. Twenty out of the 49 noted it would be great to read stories written in English by Arab writers or stories written by Arab writers translated into English, while 29 preferred stories written by native writers. As for the themes, 20 asked for themes related to love, 20 for stories related to immigration, 20 for themes related to life challenges, and 5 for themes related to women's lives.

Mid-course questionnaire.

The second questionnaire was answered by 55 students. The 22 scale questions dealt mainly with the way the teacher supported students in class, and the choice and the impact of the short stories on motivation. A large number of questions were concerned with the theme of motivation and doing extra readings, exploring new ideas, and re-reading the short stories to understand difficult concepts and master the language. Thirty-three students (60%) responded in some way that reading short stories enhances motivation. Another group of questions looked at critical thinking. Here, 28 students (50.9%) suggested in their responses that the reading of short stories also helps in the development of critical thinking skills.

The two open-ended questions further enforced the idea of the role of short stories in enhancing motivation. A large number of students stated that reading short stories helped them

improve as it "motivated" them to "read more," "encouraged" them to "do extra work," and "persuaded" them that "reading is fun" and "made" them "inspired."

Third questionnaire.

Descriptive statistics related to student responses to the third questionnaire are listed below. The clearest results are that students felt reading short stories significantly enhanced their imaginations and motivated them to read more.

*Figure 1:
Questionnaire three results*

	Not at all	Somewhat true	Very true
1) Reading the assigned short stories enhanced your imagination.	10	10	45
2) Reading the assigned short stories make the learning process interesting.	12	10	43
3) Reading the assigned short stories enhanced your creativity.	9	20	23
4) Reading the assigned short stories motivate you to reflect upon your views.	9	18	38
5) Reading the assigned short stories make the learning process interesting.	8	18	39

Interviews.

Eight students agreed to be interviewed after the end of the course. Six students were males and two were females. All names of participant students have been changed to maintain participants' anonymity. Six out of eight answered that they liked adding short stories to the curriculum as it opened up their minds that language can reflect their culture (through the text written by Arab writers). Adding short stories to the curriculum made them learn that people around the world face the same challenges. It also added to their vocabulary range. Two students,

Manar and Yara, did not like it and said, “It is not practical and training on standardized tests would be more beneficial.”

As for reading short stories and personal reflections five out of the eight said the questions that followed the short stories helped them think. Mohammed said, “The questions of opinion made me think and try to put thought on paper. At first, I thought it would be difficult and my teacher would not accept my views but I learned that all opinions are acceptable as long as they are supported by reasons and evidence.”

Abdel stated, “Reading short stories made me think and understand that any writer may include many ideas in one piece of writing. Also, discussing with my classmates made me get the idea that different people understand the idea differently. I liked the idea of commenting on the short stories as it made me think about them.”

Three students noted that reading short stories did not improve their reflection. Yasser stated, “Even though the teacher asked us to comment and reflect on the stories we read I feel it was not worthwhile. I think reflection is on one’s interests, one’s experiences and not on short stories.”

As for the question related to cultural understanding five out of eight noted that reading short stories increased their cultural understanding especially those texts about American life.

The fifth question related to reading and motivation, and four out of eight noted that reading short stories was motivating. Mounir said, “Reading short stories made me understand that there are interesting texts that make me have fun, learn and improve. I will read on self-help topics. The Internet is full of resources that are free and interesting and I think self-help topics include many tips and practices.” Full interview questions and sample student responses are included as Appendix B.

Discussion

The present action research showed that reading short stories motivated students and enhanced critical thinking skills. The students' responses to the questionnaires indicate that when short stories were integrated in the general English classroom it motivated students and fostered critical thinking. Students reported that after reading the short stories and doing the activities assigned, they were able to formulate and express their independent opinions as well as present their own interpretations to texts more effectively. Additionally, results from the take-home assignments indicate that students had improved their language competencies in the area of reading and writing. Adding short stories to the curriculum was not only a vehicle for showing language use and cultural differences, but also a vehicle for enhancing self-expression. Practicing this approach showed that the most suitable kind of literature to be added to the general English curriculum is the short story since some students expressed their disinterest for poetic texts on the one hand, while other students who like to act in drama found it time consuming.

From observing the students, when a variety of topics were introduced through short stories, students seemed more engaged and interested in their class activities. Based on these findings, it seems more practical that teacher practitioners of ESL should try to add short stories to the curriculum as it really motivates students and enhances students' cultural awareness and critical thinking. However, the caveat is that teachers' success in integrating short stories will depend on text selection. A text should be selected based on its facility to allow students to play a role in it. Texts should not be above students' linguistic level but should still be challenging enough to achieve learning. Exercises that enhance self-expression can be summarizing, commenting, and comparing between two short stories. Exercises that enhance critical thinking have open-ended questions and discussion.

While using short stories, the focus is not only on providing an authentic model of language use but also the literary and cultural elements. The use of a single short story varies from one classroom to another and from one teacher to another. In addition, it can be used to provide different activities like reading, listening (in case of audio-stories), vocabulary development (vocabulary exercises and vocabulary journals), writing (summaries and commentary), and speaking (discussion activities). Using open-ended questions, discussion and commenting on the short stories read enhances critical thinking and interpretative skills as students understand that each one of them has a different point of view and there is no single way of representing one's viewpoint.

As such, using short stories will in turn promote motivation and instil self-confidence among second language learners. Therefore, the action research has important implications for English teachers and ESL/EFL learners. Teachers should be aware of the effectiveness of adding short stories to their curriculum, and they can integrate sessions dedicated to studying short stories. Teachers can also extend the learning beyond the walls of the classroom by giving students assignments on short stories and opening up reading clubs. Discussing short stories offers learners a chance to articulate their opinions and find their voice. Discussion also promotes collaboration between classmates and makes students become involved in the learning process.

Conclusion

Using literature and namely short stories in the English classroom is an old practice that came back as a trend. The benefits of adding short stories to the curriculum comprises enhancing students' language skills, increasing students' motivation, and enriching their cultural and

linguistic background. Adding short stories to the curriculum is also beneficial as it allows students to question, interpret, connect, and explore. It also creates a highly motivating, amusing, lively curriculum that helps create proficient, culturally competent, and active critical thinkers. This study has important implications for English teachers and ESL/EFL learners. Teachers can be aware of the effectiveness of integrating short stories in the curriculum and thus can add short stories to the syllabus by studying them in class or by assigning them as homework. Studying short stories offers a chance for learners to articulate their opinion and find their voice. Researchers could look at the impact of studying short stories in coordination with young adult literature and autobiographical texts on ESL students' motivation and proficiency.

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Appendix A

Questionnaires and interview questions used to collect data from students

First paper-based student questionnaire:

Answer the following questions. Feel free to write as much as you like to fully explain your answer.

- 1) Would you like to add short stories to our curriculum? Why? Why not?
- 2) Would you like to read short stories written by Arab writers in English or translated short stories written by famous Arab writers? Why? Why not?
- 3) Do you think reading short stories would be interesting? Why?
- 4) What themes (ideas) would you like to read about?
- 5) Would you like the short stories to be paper-based or electronic?

Mid-course student questionnaire:

This survey is anonymous. Your teacher will not see your individual response.

1. Adding short stories to the curriculum helped me enjoy the curriculum.

1	2	3
Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
2. When we read the short stories together, the teacher encourages us to express ourselves, explain our view point and share ideas and opinions with one another in class.

1	2	3
Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
3. The teacher tries to help when I am struggling to express my opinion.

1	2	3
Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
4. The short stories help us understand the cultural aspect of the language.

1	2	3
Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
5. Discussing the short stories help me improve in the language.

1	2	3
Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
6. My teacher asks me to criticize the short story, explain and give reasons for what I think.

1	2	3
Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
7. I can engage in all the learning activities related to the criticizing the short stories in class and out of class.

1	2	3
Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
8. My classmates and teacher listens to my opinion when discussing the short stories.

1	2	3
Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true
9. The assignments push me to think hard about what we are studying.

1	2	3
Not at all true	Somewhat true	Very true

10. Reading short stories encourages us to build on and extend other people's ideas.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
11. My classmates and teacher respect my opinion and encourages my ideas.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
12. I can understand, explain, and master the ideas I learn through the short stories.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
13. Reading short stories at home gives me the opportunity to really explore and understand new ideas, learn vocabulary and new expressions.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
14. The teacher encourages us to read different stories than the one assigned and discuss them with our classmates.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
15. My teacher does not let me relate the stories to my life.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
16. My teacher does not allow students to comment on other students' ideas in class.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
17. My teacher makes sure that students don't say anything negative about each other in class.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
18. My teacher lets us ask other students when we need help with our work.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
19. Even if the ideas expressed in the short stories are difficult and hard to understand, I can learn them.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
20. My teacher really wants us to enjoy learning new things.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
21. I'm certain I can figure out how to do the most challenging assignments.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |
22. My teacher encourages us to work on our own, try hard and take chances.
- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Not at all true | Somewhat true | Very true |

Answer the following questions. Feel free to write as much as you like to fully explain your answer.

Appendix B

Two students' reflective opinions

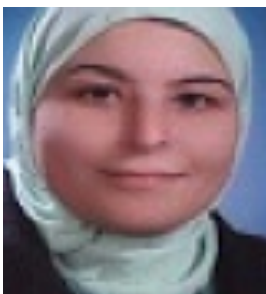
Students' names are changed to maintain anonymity:

Osama:

I think that the idea of adding short stories to the course was really beneficial. It added up to my vocabulary and improved my reading skills. It helped me understand that the meaning of words differ according to context, words should be substituted by others in order to make the writing style more interesting [substitution]. It helped me understand that each writer has a certain idea in mind that he tries to reflect via writing his short story. I believe we should add more short stories as an optional reading activity. Especially those written by Egyptian and Arab writers translated into English. It made me feel proud that other cultures are interested knowing more about us through reading our literature. Reading the short stories also shattered my idea that literature is useless. The short stories we read helped me understand that literature is interesting, informative, edifying, and helpful as science. They also helped me understand that there are hidden messages behind the lines and that I should not take what I read as it is but I should think about anything I read. I also learned that people have different opinions about the same topic they read and different ways of expressing different opinions.

Nada:

I like the idea of adding short stories to our classes. I also liked the idea of giving reading assignments at home. When we did the readings in class, I liked the chain reading, the re-enactment, the role playing and the discussion. This helped improve my reading ability, reading skills and speaking skills. It helped me develop the summarizing skill. I also learned to understand that a text has an explicit idea and an implicit one. Reading short stories also helped my pronunciation and fluency a lot as the teacher corrected our pronunciation and made us discuss the short stories. This made believe that I have opinions and that I had the ability to discuss them. I like the stories which are written by Arab writers in English and the translated Arabic texts into English. I think we can contribute to the syllabus by bringing in texts we choose and also by trying to translate interesting Arabic short in English. I also liked reading about other cultures in English. I learned about America, China, and Morocco. This was not only interesting but also impressive.



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Motivating Zootechnical Students Through Innovative Materials and Authentic Texts

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Abstract

Two types of authentic materials were introduced in a Brazilian high school, including popular songs and texts from the students' field of specialization. Following this intervention, student motivation was explored through interviews, class observations, and a comparison of student grades. Students described dissatisfaction with their previous English learning experiences and expressed enjoyment of the new texts, even requesting more. They were actively engaged during lessons with the new materials and earned higher course grades than students in another section of the same course. The use of innovative materials and authentic texts appears to be associated with higher student motivation in this study.

Introduction

For many years I have been teaching English at a public federal institute of education in Brazil to intermediate technical/high school students who are enrolled in a full-time course called “Technician in zootechnics integrated to high school.” They have two 50-minute English classes per week. English is part of the regular curriculum that consists of 20 subjects, so the learners do not have much time to dedicate to English. They are always very busy with so many other subjects. Our students come from different socioeconomic contexts. Most of them don’t have a high level of proficiency in English. They are originally from public schools, and some of them come from rural areas.

In Brazil, Portuguese is the mother tongue. English is part of the curriculum but there are few good quality public English courses for people who want them. Therefore, students get unmotivated. In Brazil, it is often said that students study English in the public educational system only as an obligation, but in fact most of them learn almost nothing. It seems that the English language is not a priority to the Brazilian education system. In fact, however, English is an essential addition to any program in our globalized world.

In my context, it has been said that it is very difficult for public school students to learn English well and become independent in reading, listening and speaking. This can be true in some ways, but I thought it was time to investigate and make some needed changes in order to improve the process of teaching and learning. I was motivated by Ferrance (2000) who stated, “. . . educators can also investigate what effect their teaching is having on their students, how they could work better with other teachers, or ways of changing the whole school for the better” (pp. 28-29). Therefore, investigation is needed in order to implement actions to motivate students and

make them understand the importance of learning English and use it as an international tool of communication and a professional key to success.

During the time I have been teaching English, it has been very common to hear students repeating the same demotivating words or habits all the time. Most of them usually repeat that they have not learnt anything in English. They say teachers have worked with grammar only, and the verb “to be” has been taught in class all their life. The teaching has been teacher-centered, not student-centered, and not communicative or focused on the learners. Grammar translation has been the focus instead. I think this picture gives us some idea why students are unmotivated. That’s why I decided to investigate and try to implement a new approach to teaching in order to get successful outcomes.

My idea was to enter the students’ world. This means that materials used in the classroom should be relevant to the students. Maybe something they like a lot, or even love. Therefore, I decided to introduce innovative materials in my classroom with the expectation that they would increase my students’ interest and motivation. The new materials would be interesting to students because they connect with students’ real lives in one of two ways: first, they connect to students’ personal interests through technology and pop culture, and second, they connect with students’ professional interests through authentic English for Specific Purposes (ESP) texts on zootechnical topics. I thought that using something that makes sense to students could be motivating and we could get good outcomes. That’s how I got to my action research question: ***If I add innovative materials connected to my students’ context, incorporating pop culture and authentic zootechnical texts, will learners be more motivated to learn English?***

Literature Review

Motivation

Motivation has a very important role in the process of teaching and learning. According to Ryan & Deci (2000), “Motivation concerns energy, direction, persistence and equifinality . . . Perhaps more important, in the real world, motivation is highly valued because of its consequences: Motivation produces” (p. 69). People do things better if they are motivated. Corder (1981) thinks that if motivation exists, success in language learning is guaranteed. According to Travers, Elliot & Kratchwill (1993), motivation is a topic that can mean the difference between success and failure in the classroom. According to Gardner (1985), motivation is the most important factor for success in language learning. It is even more important than specific ability in languages. Gardner has been a key figure during the last few decades in the development of theories of motivation in language learning. It has been said that the most effective and extensive research on the role of attitudes and motivation in second language acquisition (SLA) was carried out by Gardner and Lambert (1972), who are considered to be the pioneers in the field. They also formulated a social-psychological theory of motivation in language learning, which distinguishes between extrinsic (outside, “social”) types of motivation, and intrinsic (internal, “psychological”) types.

ESP Materials

There are no perfect course books or printed teaching materials which fit every student’s needs in terms of General English (GE). It is important to remember that GE is the most popular English form of English instruction all over the world, while ESP teaching is not a very common approach. Since ESP is a specific teaching approach, it is more difficult to find good materials

for specific needs. Furthermore, materials that are appropriate for a particular ESP course or area may not prove so effective for other ESP courses or areas. That's why ESP practitioners might be required to develop materials or adapt the available materials for a particular learning situation.

Bocanegra-Valle (2010) summarizes in a flowchart the steps for evaluating and designing materials for the ESP classroom. According to her, we should find out if there are materials available for the course. If yes, we should evaluate the materials. If no, we should design and develop in-house materials or adapt authentic materials. Then we implement and review. This can be a continuous process (p. 145).

Authentic Materials

In order to better motivate students and prepare them for real situations, I decided to use authentic materials. But, what are authentic materials? The scholarly literature on this subject contains a variety of explanations. Swaffar (1985) says that "an authentic text, oral or written, is one whose primary intent is to communicate meaning" (p. 17). According to Little, Devitt, and Singleton (2001), an authentic text is "created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced" (as cited in Guariento & Morley, p. 347).

In this study, authentic materials mean something close to Little, Devitt, and Singleton's definition. Here, authentic materials mean that they were produced by native speakers and have some social purpose in the language community in which they were produced. An American pop song was used because it makes sense to the students. They love videos. An authentic American zootechnical text was used because it is connected to the students' course.

Tomlinson (2012) reports that authentic materials can “provide meaningful exposure to language as it is actually used, motivate learners and help them develop a range of communicative competencies and enhance positive attitudes towards the learning of a language” (p. 161). Gilmore (2007) states that “authentic materials, particularly audio-visual ones, offer a much richer source of input for learners and have the potential to be exploited in different ways and on different levels to develop learners’ communicative competence” (p. 103). Spelleri (2002) notes that “authentic materials offer real language that is contextually rich and culturally pertinent” (p. 16). Peacock (1997) empirically investigated the use of authentic materials in the classroom and concluded that motivation and on-task behavior increased significantly when learners used authentic materials.

To summarize, we can say that authentic materials are beneficial because they offer great learning opportunities to students. Authentic materials “expose learners to language that serves a useful purpose, provide a refreshing change from the textbook, focus more closely on learners’ interests and needs, provide information about a variety of topics, increase learners’ motivation, and connect the classroom with the outside world” (Thomas, 2014).

When selecting locally relevant authentic materials, teachers should concentrate on surface culture topics such as the arts, customs, food, holidays, places, situations, and traditions that are relevant to the local context; in addition, they should give students opportunities to engage in critical thinking about cross-cultural nuance by adding deep culture topics such as attitudes, perceptions, and values, while avoiding any possible risk of offending the students.

Locally relevant topics help students to stay connected to their reality: the local context is the world in which they live outside the EFL classroom. The learners’ personal interests should

also be considered, and authentic materials should be kept engaging, short, and appropriate to their proficiency levels. Finally, teachers can invite the students to contribute by bringing their own examples of authentic materials, and facilitate opportunities to work with the same text in various ways—for example, with speaking, listening, reading, writing, grammar, and vocabulary activities (Thomas, 2014).

Methods

Participants

I did this research project in a class at the technical/high school described in the introduction. The class had 25 students, 14–19 years old. They have two 50-minute English classes per week. I selected a representative sample of 12 students to interview, representing strong, mid, and weaker learners. Table 1 shows us the details about the participants: number, gender, and age.

Table 1
Age and Gender of Interview Participants

GENDER	STUDENTS' AGE				
	15 years old	16 years old	17 years old	18 years old	19 years old
Male	01	02	01	01	01
Female		03	03		

As we can see, there is a broader age range among male students, while the female ones are almost all at the same age, that is 16 and 17 years old.

Intervention Procedure

I wanted to look at how students feel working with authentic zootechnical texts. As a warm up, however, I used some popular video clips connected to their context and likes. The

first aim was to motivate students to get involved in learning activities in the classroom. That's why a pop song was chosen, even though its vocabulary was very different from the text used on the second activity, the reading activity. At first, I thought of choosing a country song connecting to the text for the reading activity, but I realized that the country song didn't make sense to the students. On the other hand, most of them had been listening to popular songs on their cell phones.

Based on those facts, a popular song was selected for the listening activity. The strategy was not only to give students the opportunity to watch the video and sing along, but also to practice their listening skills through a fill-in-the-blanks exercise. After that activity, students became motivated, relaxed, and confident that they could go further in learning English. It was time to introduce the second and more challenging activity, using the abstract of a technical text on animal science.

Based on my experience, I believed that by adding innovative materials to my teaching, students would be more motivated and they could learn much more English. Descriptions of sample activities with innovative materials can be found in Appendix A.

Data Collection and Analysis

Interview questions.

The questions were carefully selected. Students first talked about their experience before coming to the Institute where I work. Then they talked about their experience here, up to now, and later they reflected about the changes in their way of studying English and what it can do for them in the future. I also left an open question in which they could talk about anything they

would like. It's the appropriate space for students to talk about anything remarkable that is connected to the theme of this research.

These are the questions students answered in the interview:

1. Please, tell us about your experience in studying English before coming to our Institute.
2. Comment about the differences or challenges you have faced here and how you overcame them, if you could.
3. What do you think about the innovative material we use in your course, (videos, songs, podcasts, recordings, etc.), as supportive tools to English learning? Explain how those materials encourage you or not, please.
4. In this course we also have been using some texts on zootechnical. Have those texts enhanced your interest in reading, or not? Explain your reasons, please.
5. Please, compare the previous way English was taught to you and the new approach using innovative materials and authentic texts. Has the new methodology made any difference to you? If so, give an example(s) and tell us how it can help in your career. Be as authentic as you can.
6. Please, feel free if I forgot to ask anything else you would like to comment on.

After completing the interviews, I analyzed them qualitatively, drawing an overall impression of student answers for each question.

Observation of class activities.

During the observations, I recorded classes and took notes of everything related to motivation during a regular lesson and later on the following lessons, after introducing the innovative materials. It was possible to check how students acted in class while using the

traditional methodology and how they reacted when the innovative material was incorporated in my teaching and what happened to their motivation.

Teaching is a complex and dynamic activity, during a lesson many things occur simultaneously. It is not easy to capture everything that happens in the class, so, I tried to be as objective as I could. After observing the activities, I wrote my impressions to myself and refined my plan for future actions.

Comparing student grades.

I teach several classes at the Institute, so I decided to compare the grades of different classes, in order to better understand the impact of the innovative materials. I compared the average grades of two classes, at the same level. In one of them I used the innovative material and in the other I used traditional teaching.

Throughout Brazil, a 0–10 grading scale is used. “0” is the worst grade and “10” is the best. In my Institution the passing grade is 6/10. I used a t-test to analyze the grades of the two groups, to determine whether any differences between the means were statistically significant.

Results

Findings

Interview answers.

The aim of the interviews was to check if incorporating innovative materials to authentic EAP texts significantly increased students’ motivation, but I could not simply ask a single direct question about it. First, I needed to understand how and why my students got to the level of English proficiency they had attained. That’s why questions about their learning history were

asked. In fact, even though many students come from different cities and different family structures, there were no big differences in their answers. When asked about their studying history before coming to the Institute, all interviewed students had almost the same complaints. They said that the verb “to be” was taught throughout their life and they didn’t even know what for. Most of them said that, in fact, they learned nothing. Just a few students, two 17-year-old girls, said that they think they learned the verb “to be,” only. One of them said that English used to be much easier at her former school and now it demands some studying. For this reason she doesn’t like English anymore. A 19-year-old male student, classified his former school experience as something horrible. According to him, the English teacher barely used to appear for class. He declared that he didn’t learn anything there.

About the differences or challenges in this context (question # 2), the students answered that they had to work hard to adapt to the Institute. Most of them said they realized that they didn’t know anything and they needed some help from senior students and others to continue at school.

Regarding materials, all of the students loved the video clips and they even suggested that I should use videos in all of my classes. They stated that they would like to suggest some videos. I accepted the idea, under the condition I could evaluate the videos before using them.

All of the students also said that using authentic texts was a very good methodology. According to them, associating language to zootechnical texts encourages them to learn not only English but also zootechnics. In other words, they say that it is a content and language integrated learning methodology.

While answering question #5, the students largely repeated the complaints from question #1, about the non-communicative teaching they had to face in the past. However, the learners recognized that after two years at the Institute they have changed a lot. Nowadays, they are able to understand some spoken English, read English texts and communicate in English to some degree. A few of them can even use spoken English at an intermediate level. They pointed out the importance of using innovative materials in class and said that they are eager to be interacting all the time and learning more. Finally, in question #6 they reinforced the idea of using innovative materials and creating a more integrated communicative teaching system.

Observation of class activities.

Video activity.

Observing the video activity really confirmed my hypothesis that incorporating innovative materials and authentic EAP texts can significantly increase students' motivation. Students got so involved in the video activity that they decided to create a group which they call "the choral," and they have made some presentations at the school. I included their singing presentations and videos in their grades. I also use the song's lyrics to work on vocabulary, language use, and grammar, when it is needed. I always try to connect the song's message to the real world and their context.

Reading activity.

The reading activity also worked very well. I chose a text directly connected to the students' course. So, even though the text is in authentic English and the students are not upper intermediate students, they managed to deal well with the text.

The students were divided into groups of four. All of them received a handout that contained a text and a list of questions about the text. I told them that they would receive the answer sheet only in the last phase of the work. So, for the time being, they should work collaboratively. They had to read, discuss and take note of everything because they needed it for the final phase: creating a paragraph and commenting about the text. Students were moved from group to group three times.

Comparison of course grades.

The students did good quality work. Some of them did even better than expected. We had seven groups in class, and just one group did not meet expectations. This shows that the students were really motivated and got good results. Student grades at the end of the term can be seen in Table 2, below. Class 2^a D, where innovative materials were incorporated got an average grade 22% higher than the Class 2^a A, where only the traditional methodology was used. A t-test confirmed that this difference of means is statistically significant, with $p < 0.0001$.

Table 2
Average Grades of Participants in Both Classes

CLASS	N	METHODOLOGY	MEAN GRADE	Standard Deviation
2 ^a A	32	Traditional materials	6.17	0.85
2 ^a D	25	Innovative materials	7.12	0.90

Discussion

Interviews, observations, and grades helped me answer my action research question. In the interviews, the students revealed that traditional, noncommunicative teaching does not meet their needs and that they desire something authentic and innovative connected with their context and needs. In other words, they desire something motivating. The interview showed that, when

motivated, students not only complete their regular activities assigned by the teacher, but also they want more and even suggest new innovative activities.

Observing my students was a very important experience. It was possible to check how they acted in class while using the traditional methodology and how they reacted when the innovative material was incorporated in the teaching and what happened to their motivation.

Those students' attitudes are reflected in their grades. The data indicates that the innovative material really made a very positive impact. Students became motivated as they were encouraged to use authentic material connected to their major. They reacted positively to the activities and got good results.

The result of this research was very remarkable to me, and I think it can be remarkable to others as well. People learn something when it makes sense to them. Some motivation is needed; otherwise, learning may not happen. That's why I decided to try to motivate my students through an innovative approach. My hypothesis was that adding innovative materials and incorporating them with authentic texts from the zootechnical field, connected to my students' context, learners would be more motivated to learn English. My goal was that my students not only learn English but also incorporate some new culture and be able to connect to global information in their career. Based on students' responses to interview questions, observations of their participation in new activities, and their higher grades, the answer to my action research question confirmed my hypothesis: **If I add innovative materials including authentic zootechnical texts, connected to my students' context, my learners will be more motivated to learn English.** As shown in this paper, students got motivated, improved their grades, and suggested that the teacher should expand the project.

Conclusion

This paper provides information about students' language learning history in the Federal Institute of Education in a small city in Brazil. It shows how their motivation can be enhanced if innovative materials are added, including authentic technical texts connected to students' context. No doubt the examples here may be useful to some other parts of the world. In my international teaching and learning experience I have heard many stories similar to those reported on this paper. Therefore, incorporating innovative materials and authentic ESP texts could probably increase the development of students' motivation in other locations as well.

As shown in the interview data, students had very difficult learning experiences in the past. The experiences presented here show that adding innovative materials can make positive changes. Students became more motivated and participative, and their grades were 22% higher than the traditional teaching and learning group. More than just getting better grades, students showed a very positive attitude to learning. The proof of motivation is the fact that the learners themselves proposed new activities involving innovative materials, authentic texts, and communicative methodology. The results indicate that this approach works well.

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Appendix A

The first activity involves a popular American song. The objectives for this activity were:

- a) motivate students to get involved in learning activities;
- b) develop listening skills and vocabulary.

The second activity is a reading activity. An authentic American text on international animal agriculture was used. The objectives for this activity were:

- a) motivate students through authentic text connected to their course;
- b) develop their reading skills working in groups, cooperatively.

Video Clip Activity

For this activity a new song from a popular singer was chosen. It is a Demi Lovato video clip that will be used in two versions. Links are given below for 1) official version and 2) lyrics version.

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QwRk4Hjzq8>
2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hgo8rsROG8s>

First, students watch a video clip (official version) then the lyrics one. The teacher will clarify new vocabulary and pronunciation of new words. Later on, the video will be played again, (official version) and this time learners will do an exercise, filling in the blanks with some missing words while listening to the song. After making sure that they have done their job, completing the missing words, they will check their answers on the key answers sheet, that is shown on the multimedia screen system.

The video lyrics version will be played again at a lower volume, and students will sing along and they will be recorded. Their video may be used as an assessment and a learning tool.

Listening Exercise

Directions: Fill in the blanks according to what you hear on the song
(Underlined words are blanks on student copy)

Tell Me You Love Me

By Demi Lovato

Oh no, here (01) we go again

Fighting over what (02) I said

I'm sorry, yeah I'm sorry

Bad at love, no, I'm not good at this

But I can't say I'm innocent

Not hardly, but (03) I'm sorry

And all my friends, they know and it's true

I (04) don't know who I am without you

I got it bad, baby

Got it bad

Oh, tell me you love me

I need someone on days like this, I do

On days like this

Oh, tell me (05) you love me
 I need someone
 On days like this, (06) I do
 On days like this
 Oh, can you hear my heart say
 No, you ain't nobody 'til you got somebody
 You ain't nobody 'til you got (07) somebody
 And I hope I (08) never see the day
 That you move on and (09) be happy without me
 Without me
 What's my hand without your heart to hold?
 I don't know what I'm living for
 If I'm living without you
 All (10) my friends, they know and it's true
 I...

Reading and Writing Activity

Directions: In groups of 4, read the text below and discuss the following questions about it, please. According to your teacher's instructions you will be moved from group to group, more than once. So, be collaborative and take note of everything. You will need it at your last group for developing the final work. Then, produce a paragraph summarizing the ideas and expressing your opinion on the topic. (See question #8) You may be against or in favor of the topic ideas. Give convincing justifications for your position.

Teaching international animal agriculture

By S. D. Lukefahr

Abstract

Students who major in animal science at U.S. institutions are generally exposed to a curriculum that emphasizes commercial, large-scale production of the few traditional food animals: cattle, poultry, sheep, and swine. Globally, most farmers live in lesser-developed countries under limited-resource conditions of land, feed supplies, equipment, and capital. The promotion of commercial animal production enterprises may not be appropriate for such farms because it can subject farmers to considerable economic risk. Rather, use of limited numbers of large livestock, locally adapted breeds, or smaller livestock (e.g., ducks, goats, guinea pigs, and rabbits) may be more appropriate under subsistence, integrated farming systems. In this global context, a course in international animal agriculture has been taught for 15 yr to undergraduate and graduate students. The course consists of a review of traditional and potential livestock species well suited for impoverished families on small farms and methods to implement sustainable livestock projects, including feasibility, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation stages. To enhance student understanding, global food issues and challenges are illustrated with case studies. A term paper is also assigned for which students choose three suitable livestock species or local breeds that would be complementary on a small crop farm (< 5 ha). Daily dietary

requirements of protein and energy per family member are calculated. Itemized enterprise budgets and production tables are prepared. Early in the course, the general consensus of students was that people who are malnourished and live in poverty have low personal ambition and motivation, and that their problems should be amenable to solution by application of American technology and expertise. The course modifies such attitudes and enhances a student's critical thinking and problem-solving abilities and communication skills. Course evaluations indicated that students believed that it is important to acquire some international knowledge and understanding when seeking a job, and that certain animal science courses should contain some international content. Students gain an understanding of global animal agriculture and an appreciation of the complexity of food production and hunger issues.

<http://www.animalsciencepublications.org/publications/jas/abstracts/77/11/3106>

Questions:

1. What is the theme of the text?
2. What kind of curriculum is showed to students who major in animal science in US?
3. Is that kind of large scale production aplicable to most farmers? Explain.
4. What has been done in order to adapt the course to meet small farms and and local impoverished families' needs?
5. What is done in order to enhance students understanding of global reality and needs?
6. In the very beggining of the course, what was the general consensus about people who are malnourished and live in poverty and what happenned at the of the course about that idea? Explain.
7. What can we infer about the students' view about the complexity of food production and hungry issues, at the end of the course?
8. Develop your paragraph.



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Student Dropout in an Ethiopian Police University College Peacekeeping Language Center

Geremew Garda Wozie
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Abstract

This study investigated the reasons why learners drop out of the Ethiopian Police University College Peacekeeping Language Center. The data for this research was generated through questionnaires and interviews to collect the opinions of language center teachers, learners, and former learners. The results show that learners mainly drop out because of pressure from their working places. Learners said they would drop out less if they could learn the whole day, or off duty.

Introduction

Background of the Study

The Peacekeeping English Project (PEP) is funded by the UK government and managed by the British Council on its behalf. The project provides assistance in English language training to stakeholders in different countries. The PEP in Ethiopia is working with the Ethiopian Ministry of National Defense (EMOND), the Ethiopian Federal Police Commission (EFPC) and regional police commissions.

As the result of work by the EFPC, the peacekeeping English language teaching center was opened in October 2013 after a memorandum of understanding was signed between EFPC and the government of the UK. The center runs two kinds of classes: regular classes and the evening classes. The regular classes are conducted in two shifts, one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. The morning shift starts at 09:00 a.m. and finishes at noon. The afternoon shift starts at 13:00 and it finishes at 16:30. The center basically provides two language courses: English for the military, and English for law enforcement. The courses are given across three different levels.

English for the military, as the name indicates, is a course designed for military personnel and comes with course books for each level. English for law enforcement is suitable for law enforcers from a wide range of different backgrounds, including the police, border guards, customs officials and security personnel. Unlike English for the military, English for law enforcement has only one course book to be used across all three levels. Overall, these two courses take about sixteen weeks if they run without interruption for half a day every day. Learners dropping out is one of the biggest challenges the language center is currently facing. The purpose of this case study is to find out why learners drop out and answer the research

question “*What changes could reduce dropout rates?*” along with the following research sub-questions:

1. Will learners drop out much less if the language setting is changed?
2. Will learners drop out much less if learners learn the whole day?
3. Will learners drop out much less if the teachers’ qualification are improved or advanced?
4. Will learners drop out much less if they know that they will be deployed after completing lessons in the language center?
5. Will learners drop out much less if the material in the language center is improved?
6. Will learners drop out much less if lessons given in the language center are relevant and important to their professional and personal development?

The purpose of the study was to find out why learners drop out of the Ethiopian Police University College Peacekeeping Language Center. The research provides recommendations for the Federal Police Commission to reduce dropouts and help the success of the language center.

Review of Related Literature

Reasons Why Learners Drop Out

Learners drop out for different reasons. Mindy Crain-Dorough (2003) points out that dropout occurs because of factors which learners cannot control. According to Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) and Johnston and Rivera (1965) cited in Park and Choi (2009), lack of organizational supports, financial problems, and time constraints have been known to be crucial obstacles to adults’ participation in learning because adult learners are associated with various roles in their lives. So, the reasons for our learners dropping out could be pressure from their workplace or the reason for dropout could be other external factors.

Park and Choi (2009) indicate that some learners drop out of a course even before they start because of external reasons. External factors include organizational supports, financial problems, and time constraints. In addition, external factors and internal factors (which are factors within learners' control) are likely to interact with each other. For example, one of the major issues in most adult education courses according to Pelikanova, Gabriel and Joel (2009) is the problem of students fitting in their courses with many other demands on their limited time and resources such as children, work, leisure, and financial restraints. Even the most interested students may find unexpected problems that interfere with the completion of a course. The reality is that once a student starts to miss classes, the motivation to continue quickly falls.

When learners do drop out, it leads to financial costs. According to Pelikanova, Gabriel, and Joel (2009), high dropout rates are extremely costly to language schools, colleges, and course managers in planning and resource management. In addition, students suffer financially and educationally by not achieving positive results. Student dropout is also detrimental to teachers as they see their planning and preparation being rejected. Nothing is more demoralizing for a teacher than to see half of his students not completing his course (Pelikanova, Gabriel, & Joel 2009).

Park and Choi (2009) offer two theories to explain why students leave a course. The first one is the student integration model, in which persistence is related to the match of students' motivation and academic ability to the institution's academic and social characteristics. This match affects a person's commitment to the institution and to completing their studies. The second theory predicts students' persistence based on their intentions, which are shaped by beliefs and attitudes.

According to Rumberger (2011), there are two different perspectives for understanding the phenomenon of student dropout. One framework is based on an individual perspective that focuses on individual factors associated with dropping out; the other is based on an institutional perspective that focuses on the contextual factors found in students' families, schools, communities and peers. Both frameworks are useful and necessary to understand this complex phenomenon.

A framework was developed by two groups of authors which explains that students who drop out can be *pushed out*, *pulled out*, or they can *fall out* of school. According to Doll, Eslami, and Walters (2013), pressures on students can be push and pull factors and may lead students to drop out. Students are pushed out when adverse situations in the school force them to drop out. These adverse situations may include tests, attendance, and discipline policies. On the other hand, students are pulled out when a factor inside the students diverts them from completing school. Financial worries, out of school employment, and family issues are some possible factors that can pull a student out. Jordan et al. (1994) added a third factor called falling out of school, which occurs when a student drops out because he or she is discouraged after not showing significant academic progress.

Strategies for Preventing Dropout

To avoid dropout, we should focus on making learning relevant, raising the academic bar and rethinking schedules. Roberta Furger (2008) mentions learners may drop out if they are bored and see no connection between academic life and real life. If learning is relevant, learners may not drop out because they will be engaged. Lessons and materials that are below learners' expectations could also be reasons for learners' dropping out. As a result, we should ensure that lessons meet the learners' expectations and language proficiency level. Finally, some learners

could face problems with school schedules because of the demands of a job or family responsibilities, so we may be able to reduce dropout rates by arranging school schedules that meet students' needs.

On the other hand, Rumberger (2011) has three additional suggestions to prevent learners from dropping out. He starts by saying that dropping out is influenced by both individual and institutional factors, so intervention strategies can focus on either or both sets of factors. Rumberger (2011) adds that because dropping out is associated with both academic and social problems, effective prevention strategies must focus on both arenas. That is, if dropout prevention strategies are going to be effective, they must be comprehensive by providing resources and supports in all areas of students' lives. And because dropouts leave for a variety of reasons, services provided them must be flexible and tailored to their individual needs.

Methods

This case study deals with the phenomenon of learner dropout. Therefore, a questionnaire and an interview were prepared for three groups of research participants: learners who were learning at the time the research was conducted, students who dropped out, and teachers from the language center. The questionnaires and the interview questions tried to find out whether or not materials used by the language center, the setting of the language center, teachers' qualifications, relevance of the curriculum for learners' personal and professional development, learners' possibility of being deployed to peacekeeping, and pressure from the workplace were reasons for learners to drop out. The questionnaire and interview questions are available in Appendix A and B.

Participants

The two student groups referenced in this study are the students studying at the language center (SLC) and students who have dropped from the language center (SDC). The questionnaires were given to students who were learning at the time of the research, and students who dropped out of the language center. At the time of the survey, 60 students were currently learning in the language center (SLC). Of these, 10 were surveyed, a sample of 17%. The sample included four women and six men, all over 35 years old. There were 17 students who had previously dropped out from the language center (SDC), and ten of these were selected to take part in the survey. The sample represented about 59% of SDC. Most of them were over 35 years old and three of them were women. Both SLC and SDC were selected randomly.

Interviews were conducted with teachers at the language center (TLC). All three of the language center teachers were interviewed, and all three were between 30 and 45 years of age.

Procedure

Ten questions were prepared for the questionnaire. From these, one was open-ended and the remaining questions were multiple-choice questions. The survey questions are provided in Appendix A. The questionnaires were distributed on paper to answer during class. All dispatched questionnaires were completed and returned. Both SLC and SDC were not asked to identify themselves except providing information which was important to the research.

The TLC were asked three interview questions. They were asked about their willingness to participate in the survey, and they were happy to help. The interviews conducted with TLC lasted for about five minutes each. The interview questions are provided in Appendix B.

Data Analysis

Questionnaires for SLC and SDC were analyzed by tallying each multiple-choice response. Answers to the final open-ended question were collected in a list, and recurring themes were noted. Answers from the questionnaires can be found in Appendices A and B.

TLC interviews were recorded, transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted. Findings and recommendations were drawn from the interpreted data. The transcribed data was interpreted and analyzed with literature. Transcriptions of the TLC interviews are attached in Appendix B.

Results

Findings

Questionnaires.

The first part of the questionnaire asked SLC to confirm they were learning, and the respondents confirmed it. SDC were asked to confirm that they had dropped out, and they confirmed it. A summary of student responses to questions 3-9 can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Student Responses to Questionnaire

No.	Questions	Responses of SLC			Responses of SDC		
		yes	no	n/a	yes	no	n/a
3	Pressure from working place is a reason for dropping out.	30%	0%	70%	50%	0%	50%
4	If I learn off duty or the whole day, I may not drop out.	50%	0%	50%	50%	0%	50%
5	The lessons of the language center were relevant and important for personal and professional development.	100%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
6	The language center teachers	90%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%

No.	Questions	Responses of SLC			Responses of SDC		
		yes	no	n/a	yes	no	n/a
	were qualified and helpful for development of English language skills.						
7	The language center setting was a reason for dropping out.	10%	90%	0%	10%	90%	0%
8	Teaching materials were very good and motivating.	90%	10%	0%	100%	0%	0%
9	Being not deployed in peace keeping mission after completion of lesson in the language center was a reason for dropping out	10%	90%	0%	0%	100%	0%

Question 10 was an open-ended question which asked, “What else would you like to add about reasons which lead learners to drop out from the language center teaching programme?”

The following were answers given by respondents:

- Pressure from office, difficulty of the lesson, and the language is a foreign language
- Pressure from work, lack of motivation
- Pressure from office and learning while working
- Pressure from office, lack of support from the commission and they knew that they may not participate in a peacekeeping mission
- Learning time is uncomfortable for learners
- The lesson is difficult and they have not time to study
- The lesson is very difficult to them
- Mostly because of repetitive meetings
- They learn half a day and work half a day. As a result, they are under pressure from the office so they drop out.

- There are different urgent duties in the commission and learners miss classes for personal reasons.

Interview for the language center teachers.

All three teachers in the center (TLC) were interviewed, and they were named Teacher One, Teacher Two and Teacher Three. The first question they were asked was about the complaints they heard from the learners. Teacher One said learners complain about workloads in their office and lack of time for studying and work pressure from the office. Teacher Two said learners complain about not separating work and learning, and Teacher Three said learners complain about lack of time for learning and pressure in their office.

The second question asked, “Why do you think learners drop out?” Teacher One said students are very busy at work, so it is difficult for them to continue learning while also working in the office, so students dropped out from the center. Teacher Two said job pressure is a significant reason. Teacher Three said the main reason is related to the learner’s job, since they learn while on duty. It is inconvenient for them so that is why they drop out.

The last question the three teachers were asked was “What do you think a solution will be for learners’ dropout?” Teacher One said the only solution would be to make students free from work while they take the language course, since in that case they will be able to invest their full time in learning. Teacher Two responded that fulfilling learners’ expectations and appropriate attendance control could help reduce dropouts. Teacher Three said the solution is to get learners to attend full day classes so they may find it easy to attend the class. At least the organization needs to require them to attend class regularly.

Discussion

SLC and SDC were asked about whether or not pressure from the workplace is their reason for dropping out. SLC and SDC confirmed that pressure from the workplace is a reason for dropping out. Park and Choi (2009) said learners may drop out because of external factors, including pressure from their workplace. According to Rumberger (2011), learners drop out as the result of an institutional perspective that focuses on the contextual factors found in students, families, schools, communities and peers. Based on the responses of SLC and SDC, learners drop out because of pressure from their office or working place. This was the main finding of the questionnaire, and helps answer the main research question: “What changes could reduce dropout rates?” If pressure from work is the main reason given by learners for dropping out, the solution should be to reduce pressure from work. This was not a predicted result, so it does not appear in the research sub-questions.

The next question posed to SLC and SDC asks if learning off duty or the whole day would cause them not to drop out. The majority of SLC and SDC confirmed that they may not drop out if they learned off duty or the whole day. Therefore, not learning the whole day or off duty appears to be a reason for learners to drop out (see research sub-question 2). It may be best to change the schedule of the learning center. Roberta Furger (2008) also talks about rethinking schedules of classes to solve the problem of learner dropout.

The next question provided for SLC and SDC was about the relevance and importance of lessons of the language center for personal and professional development. SLC and SDC responded saying the lessons given in the language center were very important and relevant for their personal and professional development. From this we can get an answer for sub-question 6:

“Will learners drop out much less if lessons given in the language center are relevant and important to their professional and personal development?” It seems that learners’ decisions to drop out are not related to the relevance of lessons to their development.

Roberta Furger (2008) also indicates boredom and disengagement as two key reasons students stop attending class and eventually drop out of school. SLC and SDC said the teachers were helpful and qualified. From this it is possible to confirm that teachers’ qualification and willingness to help learners develop their English skills were not the primary reason for learners’ dropping out, providing an answer to sub-question 3: “Will learners drop out much less if the teachers’ qualifications are improved or advanced?” A change in teacher qualifications would be unlikely to make a difference in dropout rates.

The majority of SLC and SDC responded saying that the language center setting was not the reason for learners dropping out, so this answers research sub-question 1. The language center setting appears not to be a reason for learners dropping out.

SLC and SDC also confirmed that teaching materials were very good and motivating to learn and the teaching materials were not a reason for learners dropping out. Thus, research sub-question 5—“Will learners’ drop out much less if the material in the language center improved?”— may also be answered. This factor appears not to be the reason that learners drop out.

The last question presented for SLC and SDC was about not being deployed on a peacekeeping mission after the completion of lessons in the language center. The SCL and SDC responded by saying that not being deployed was not a reason for learners’ dropping out. Thus, research sub-question 4 is answered in the negative. This factor would also be unlikely to reduce dropout rates.

In the open-ended question, SLC and SDC confirmed that learners drop out because of pressure from their office or workplace, and learners would drop out less if the class took place when they were off duty, or the whole day. SLC and SDC had similar responses for all the questions and there was no significant difference in their responses.

The second part of the interpretation deals with interview questions of the language center teachers. The teachers were asked three questions from which the first question asked what the complaints they hear from the learners were. TLC said that learners complained about workload and pressure from their office. This response indicates that workplace pressure was a pulling factor as mentioned by Doll, Eslami, & Walters (2013).

The second question asked TLC to tell why learners were dropping out. The responses indicated that learners drop out because of work pressure and because they learn half a day. This showed that learners need to get ample time to learn and the language center needs to rethink its schedules as Roberta Furger (2008) advises.

In the third question, TLC were asked about possible solutions for dropping out. TLC suggested learners need to learn the whole day or off duty, proper attention was needed from the police commission, and appropriate attendance control was needed. Generally, the response of TLC showed that institutional intervention is important to solve the problem of learners dropping out, as it was indicated by Rumberger (2011).

Conclusion

The purpose of this case study was to find out why learners drop out and answer the research question: “What changes could reduce dropout rates?” Based on the student questionnaires and teacher interviews, the following overall findings were identified:

1. Learners drop out because of pressure from their workplace. Learners are expected to fulfill their office duty and they are not given enough time to learn and to study. This is clearly indicated in the above interpretation of the responses of students who were learning during the research time, students who dropped out of the language center, and teachers of the language center. Jordan et al. (1994) confirm that learners could be pulled out of the course as the result of external pressures.
2. Learners would drop out less if they learned the whole day, or off duty. Most of the learners have other pressures from their workplace while they are learning, and they are forced to drop out as a result. This agrees with Furger's (2008) suggestion that uncomfortable and inappropriate learning schedules could be a reason for learners dropping out.

The recommendations drawn out from the findings are the following:

1. As shown in the findings, many learners drop out because of pressure in their office. Therefore, the Federal Police Commission needs to make learners free of some duties and give them ample time to learn and study.
2. Most learners said they would not drop out if they learned the whole day, or off duty. Therefore, as much as possible, the Federal Police Commission needs to look at ways to allow whole day or off duty class schedules. The Commission has to make learners free from unscheduled meetings or find ways that learners can participate in the meeting but not miss the class.
3. Finally, the police commission should give proper attention to the language center, and, as a result, the language center can solve some of its problems.

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Appendix A

Questionnaires and Answers

Questionnaires for learners who are learning in the Federal Police University College Peacekeeping Language Center (SLC). The number of participants giving each response is indicated in parentheses.

INTRODUCTION/CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT

Hello, my name is **Geremew Garda** and I work for federal police university college peace keeping language center as Instructor. I am conducting research on students who have dropped out from peace keeping English language center. All the questions I ask you will be confidential and no responses will be reported. The results of this survey will help the language center and students who will join the language center in the future. If any question makes you feel uncomfortable or you would prefer not to answer, you may skip it. If you don't understand the question or do not know how to answer, that is ok and you can skip to the next question. You may also stop the survey at any time. Thank you for your cooperation in advance.

1. Are you learning in federal police university college language center?
A.Yes(10)B.No(0)
2. If your answer is yes for the above question, do you think you can complete the level you are learning now?
A.Yes(8)B.N C. I am not sure (2)
3. If your answer for the above question is B or C the following could be reason for that
A. The lesson is difficult think so, I do not I will finish
B. The lesson is not interesting so, I do not think I will finish
C. Because of pressure from my workplace, I do not think I will finish(3)
7 say nothing
4. Which one is true for you? I will not drop out if,.....
A. I learn half a day(5)
B. I learn the whole day(5)
C. I learn off duty
D. B and C
5. The lesson given in the language center is....
A. Not important and relevant for my carrier and personal development
B. It is important for my carrier and personal development(10)
6. The teachers in the center are....
A. Well trained and help learners to develop their language skills(9)
B. Not well trained and not helpful for learners to develop their language(1)
7. If the language center setting is not improved...
A. I will drop out
B. I will not drop out
8. The language center teaching materials are...
A. Very good and motivating for learning(9)
B. Not good and not motivating for learning
Isaid needs to be more attractive
9. Will you drop out if you know you will not be deployed in peace keeping mission

- D. For another issues(3)
3 did not say anything
4. I would not dropped out if:
- A. I learned half a day
 - B. I learned the whole day(4)
 - C. learned off duty
 - D. B and C(1)
- 5 did not say anything
5. The lesson given in the language center was :
- A. Important and relevant for my carrier and personal development
 - B. Not Important and relevant for my carrier and personal development(10)
6. The teachers in the language center were:
- A. Well trained and help learners to develop their language skills(10)
 - B. Not well trained and do not help learners to develop their language skills
7. I dropped out because the language center setting:
- A. Was not comfortable for learning(1)
 - B. For some other reasons(9)
8. The language center teaching materials were:
- A. Very good and motivating for learning(10)
 - B. Not good and not motivating for learning
9. You would have dropped out if you knew you would not deployed in peace keeping mission
- A. No
 - B. Yes(10)
10. What else do you like to add about reasons which leads learners to dropout from the language center teaching programme
- The following are the responses from ten respondents

1. Pressure from office and they would not have dropped out if they learn off duty
2. Pressure from office and they would not have dropped out if they learn off duty
3. Pressure from work and long meetings
4. Pressure from office
5. Pressure from work and personal reasons
6. Personal issues
7. Pressure from office and personal issues
8. Pressure from office, the training is interrupted for different reasons and learners miss classes for personal reasons
9. Pressure from office

Appendix B

Interview Questions, Responses, and Transcriptions

Thank you for volunteering for the interview. I will ask you some question concerning students who dropped out from our language center and about students who are currently learning in the language center.

1. What are the complaints you hear from the learners
2. Why do you think learners dropout?
3. What do you think will be solution for learners' dropout?

We have four teachers in the language center including me for the time being so I forwarded these questions for the teachers in the language center. I named them saying teacher one, teacher two and teacher three.

Teacher one

- 1) What are the complaints you hear from the learners:

Well the most commonly said complaint about from the part of the students or from the learners is that you know are not happy about the fact that they are learning here the same time while working after class and that is the most serious issue they have so far and you know it seems to be creating a problem on their performance at the end of the day at the of the course so students are always complaining about workloads at their office and the fact that they are unable to study and practice the language and that this thing is creating on their performance specially on exams at the end of the course.

- 2) Why do think learners dropout well learners dropout day to different reasons. But the most commonly heard reason the most commonly mentioned reason specially from the students part is that they are very busy at work that is difficult for them to continue learning which working the same time working in the office because of that most students drop out from the center. 10% to 15% may drop out for personal reason

- 3) What do you think will be solution for learners' dropout?

The only solution would be to late students learn the course by making them free from work that way they will be able to invest their full time on learning and they will take responsibility.

Teacher two

- 1) What are the complaints you hear from learners?

They are not satisfied with the service given to them. They have complained about the location of the language center. They are not provided by necessary learning materials CDs and books. The organization the commission does not have proper calendar. As the result they stay away from learning for different immediate jobs.

- 2) Why do you think learners drop out?

There might be many factors. They got very motivated at the beginning of the lesson but through pass of time they got dissatisfied because they do not get what they expect from teachers and office. Job pressure or burden reason for their drop out

- 3) What do you think will be solution for learners drop out?

The center has to receive attention and the lesson has to be up to learners expectation. The learners has to be deployed after they finish the course .Students dissatisfaction has to be answered. Appropriate attendance control has to be set.

Teacher three

1. What are the complaints you hear from learners?

There is lot of complaints the most repeatedly ask complaints that they do not have enough time to attend class for example they are busy of office works and going for mission in the regional states

2. Why do you think learners drop out?

Mainly the learners who drop out are level two and level three in our case level do not drop out that much. I think the reason is sometimes getting fed up with class and when they become frustrated and they dropout. I think the main reason is related with their job as you know they learn being duty. So for that matter they find inconvenient learn and they drop out.

3. What do you think will be solution for learners' dropout?

The solution is to get them attend the full class or the whole day at that time they may find it easy attend the class. At least the organization has to let them to attend the class regularly.



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**The Effect of Short Story Books on Students' Attitudes and Motivation Toward Reading
Comprehension**

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Abstract

In a public high school in Burkina Faso, English learners showed limited motivation and skill. With the support of school administration and parents, students began reading short stories, completing reading sheets, and presenting information from the stories. For three months, they read a story every two weeks. Data collected from reading sheets, observations of presentations, and student interviews showed that students' attitudes and motivation improved. They were more confident and autonomous, and they participated more actively.

Introduction

Reading is a very important skill in English Language Teaching (ELT). It is part of the receptive skills that the learner needs to develop his/her language. It is difficult and even impossible to succeed in English language learning without developing the skill of reading. However, its acquisition is not without any challenge for learners in general, and those learning in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. As a teacher, I can't deny that I am sometimes confronted with some difficulties when teaching this skill. "[Reading] can be challenging to teach because we can't actually see our students' performance. Listening/reading comprehension occurs inside the learner's mind, and teachers have to depend on some other aspect of students' behavior to make inferences about what they understood" (Sheppard, 2016, 1). If teaching receptive skills is challenging, it is more challenging when students do not show much interest or when the context in which the teacher operates is impacted by factors such as student recruitment and limited language proficiency.

I teach in Burkina Faso, a French speaking country in West Africa where English is taught as a foreign language. It is challenging because learners are discovering a new language that they must learn in addition to the languages they speak already, without any objective goal for most of them. This can result in a poor attitude or low motivation. At the same time, reading is one of the most important skills the students must acquire in order to succeed in English language learning, in placement tests, and in high school or university entrance tests. Reading comprehension is based on literary texts that the students are required to read, understand, and provide the information expected by the teacher. Unfortunately, this does not always occur the way it should. One important thing that caught my attention concerning reading comprehension classes is that most of the students failed to complete the tasks. When participating in class, they

were very slow to react, hesitant and passive. When they were selected to provide their findings, they did not show any motivation. They could hardly provide correct answers because they found the text too difficult to understand.

In Burkina Faso, French is taught as a second language, and teaching French includes reading novels and short stories to help the students develop their vocabulary to better succeed in writing and speaking tasks. This is what inspired and guided my choice to experiment with using short stories in English teaching too. In order to raise students' interest for reading and help them increase their success rate, I introduced activities based on reading short story books. My research question was formulated in this way: ***If I include short story books in my teaching, how will it affect my students' attitudes and motivation toward reading comprehension?*** My hypothesis was that the students would react positively to the newly integrated material, and the students would have a productive reading experience.

Literature Review

Reading in ELT

English language teaching in Burkina Faso resulted from the political ambition to give a chance to students who would like to pursue their studies in the English Department or would need the language for further studies abroad. As Halvorsen (2016) stated, “Many of us have realized that our students today need new sets of skills to prepare them to be successful participants in the globalized society of the future” (1). Indeed, this is why we focus on the four skills: listening, speaking, writing, and reading for communicative purposes on the one hand, and on the other hand to strengthen the students' autonomy in language use in order to conquer their studies and be more competitive in terms of English language use. The communicative skills in

general and reading skills acquisition in particular necessitate enough time for practice. In effect, the amount of time allocated for English language learning depends on the learner's needs. In Burkina Faso, five hours are allocated to the beginners per week and then progressively reduced to two or three hours per week for advanced learners.

Krashen (1989) suggested that comprehensible input would aid language acquisition while incomprehensible input would not. What is it that makes a text difficult to read and understand? Some researchers look at word and sentence length (Wallace, 1992), on the premise that texts with longer sentences and words will be more difficult to understand than those with shorter ones. Others, however, claim that the critical issue is quite simply the number of unfamiliar words which the text contains. So, if readers do not know half the words in a text, they will have great difficulty in understanding the text as the whole. To be successful, they have to recognize a high percentage of the vocabulary without consciously thinking about it (Paran, 1996).

Past Research About Story Books in ELT

Short stories and novels are included in French teaching in Burkina Faso to help the students develop their vocabulary to better succeed in essay writing and other writing and speaking tasks. The selection is made from among local books to better adapt to the students' context. Through reading, the students could find a solution to a particular problem they were going through. The short stories entertain the readers and raise awareness about some social evils that are part of their daily life. So, implementing this in English language teaching will not be unfamiliar to the students. If stories have produced a lot of changes in French learners' attitudes, why should it be different in English?

Extensive reading is a program of reading in which students are generally given short stories or simplified novels. It is often done for pleasure and in a leisurely way, and usually takes

place when the students are on their own. This program is very helpful, for it improves their overall comprehension skills and gives them a wider passive and active vocabulary. “Any classroom will be the poorer for the lack of an extensive reading program, and will be unable to promote its pupils’ language development in all aspects as effectively as if such a program were present” (Davis, 1995, p. 335). Day and Bamford (1998) agree, citing as two of the many goals for extensive reading, enabling students to read without constantly stopping, and providing increased word recognition. What these commentators and others are claiming is that extensive reading is an excellent way for students to develop automaticity (that is the automatic recognition of words when they see them). It can help improve their English reading and writing overall. David (1995) also claims that an extensive reading program will make students more positive about reading.

Student Attitudes and Motivation

Attitudes are beliefs and behaviors towards something. They represent an individual’s state of mind regarding a value and they influence the individual’s thoughts and actions (Wikipedia, 2018). Attitudes have cognitive, behavioral, and affective components (Gan, Humphreys and Lyon, 2004). For ELT, the first component (the cognitive) refers to the beliefs, thoughts and attributes that the learner associates with English language learning, the negative or positive attributes he/she associates with these studies. The second one (the behavioral) refers to the past behaviors or experiences regarding language studies. And the last one (the affective) refers to the feelings or emotions linked to language studies. All these components can deeply influence (positively or negatively) the student’s attitude toward learning, and thus affect language acquisition. This is why Wenden (1991) suggests that attitudes related to students’ evaluations of their own role in learning and their learning ability have a strong effect on their

ability to learn autonomously. Additionally, the psychologist Carl Rogers says that learners need to feel that what they are learning is personally relevant to them, that they have to experience learning (rather than just being taught) and that their self-image needs to be enhanced as part of the process (Rogers 1994). Yet, Bem in his self-perception theory of attitude change (1972) suggests that people infer their attitude from their own behavior much as an outside observer might and are often unaware of attitude changes. Instead, people believe that the views they currently hold are the views they have always held.

Attitudes can also affect the learner's motivation to acquire a language. In fact, motivation is some kind of internal drive which pushes someone to do something in order to achieve something. Motivation can be intrinsic (the learner's personal motivations) or extrinsic (external factors) (Ryan & Deci, 2000), so it is not always related to the teacher. Allwright (1977) argued that we cannot be responsible for all of our students' motivation. In the end it is up to them. Further, Williams and Burden (1997) suggest, "Motivation is a state of cognitive arousal which provokes a decision to act as a result of which there is sustained intellectual and/or physical effort so that the person can achieve some previously set goal" (Williams & Burden, 1997, p. 120). They go on to point out that the strength of that motivation depends on how much value the individual places on the outcomes he or she wishes to achieve. The students need to be intrinsically motivated and interested in the subject they are studying, as well as in the activities they are presented with. In fact, most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting (Illich, 1972). Of course, to make change occur in a situation, new action needs to be taken.

Methods

Participants

My students were between 17 and 21 years old, and they were registered in the school from two major sources: The first group was made up of students who were recruited directly by the school through an entrance test that takes place every year before classes open. The second group was those who were posted by the Ministry in charge of education. When they passed the national exams that give access to high school, they were transferred from their grammar schools into the public high schools where they attend the upper grades. The classes are mixed classes (girls and boys) with an average of 20 - 25 students. In most of the cases, the students' had an extremely limited proficiency in English, certainly due to the fact that they could not practice the language once they were out of the classroom. They were allocated only two hours of English instruction per week in the past.

Instructional Procedure

For three months (the first term of the academic year) the students read short story books, but it was done first with their agreement and then with the agreement of their parents, for it was an additional task that would require more work time from the learners. This additional work that was required could affect the student's performance in some other disciplines if it were not done correctly. That's why this new experiment had to be implemented with care, because the objective was to solve a problem, not to create new problems. It required the commitment of the school, colleagues, parents, the concerned teacher, and students. Here are the steps I took to implement short story reading in my class:

Step 1: I addressed a correspondence to the different stakeholders—the head of school, the

parents, and my colleagues—to explain clearly what I intended to do, and to ask for their

commitment. They had one week to reply. No reply from a parent after one week meant disagreement. In that case, the head of school approached the parent to understand why.

Step 2: I received replies confirming agreement for the project and also the commitment of other stakeholders.

Step 3: I asked the head of school to grant two more hours for the English class to help cover ten presentations every week (see step 7). With the contribution of other colleagues, I selected a series of short stories in English that did not exceed 50 pages (see a list of stories in Appendix B). The short stories were about daily life issues such as corruption, hatred, love for money, love, the thug life, cheating, respect, etc.

Step 4: A first wave of 10 students selected their short story books and started their reading while the second wave waited one week in order to create a space between the first and the second group. Students were expected to read two books per month.

Step 5: The students were expected to complete a reading sheet (see “Results” for an example reading sheet). They filled out their reading sheets providing information about the title of the book, the author, the theme(s) developed in the book, the characters, the most striking issue, and the summary. The second part of the sheet concerned the appreciation of the reader. How did he/she like the story? What did he/she learn from the story? What were the challenges? How did he/she overcome the difficulties? What new words did he/she acquire?

Step 6: The students were required to return a first draft of their reading sheet after one week. This allowed me to check students’ progress and prepare feedback on the sheets. It also allowed me to talk with colleagues about the sheets, to share information and collect their suggestions.

Step 7: After two weeks, the first wave of students gave a 10-minute presentation followed by five minutes of questions if necessary. After one presentation, followed by classmates' questions, I provided brief feedback before giving the floor to the next student. My colleague attended these presentations and held a video recorder. After the last presentation, my colleague and I provided feedback and appreciation and closed by encouraging the students.

Step 8: I organized an interview with the students before they started their second short story. I asked questions of the students in order to collect details related to the student's personal feelings after reading, such as the effect of the story on his/her own life and what he/she learned from the story (see Appendix A for the interview questions).

Step 9: Using the different notes taken down on the sheet, the colleague's observations, and the students' testimony during interviews, I produced a report about each student's presentations. The report pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of the students' presentations and made some suggestions for improvement. One copy went to the student himself/herself, another to the head of school and the last one to the parents. The report provided an update on the student's progress.

Step 10: After that came the second wave of students. They participated in the same steps. The whole procedure was repeated every two weeks for a total of three months.

Data Collection Procedure

The data was collected from three main sources: the observation of the students' presentations, the students' reading sheets, and the interviews.

Observations of student presentations.

During each presentation, the student delivered the details mentioned on his/her reading sheets; I followed along on the revised draft provided by the students previously. I made sure that there was not any difference between what was said and what was written. The colleague holding the video recorder made a video of the presentation in order to capture even the smallest details that could be helpful in the review for constructive feedback. I listened and observed the student's attitude (the way he/she presented the work) to see if he/she was comfortable presenting his/her own work. I took notes about striking details related to weaknesses and strengths. After the presentation, five minutes of unexpected questions from classmates allowed me to observe and note the student's reaction to new questions that were not on the reading sheet. This revealed additional information on the comprehension of the book, the new vocabulary acquired, the fluency, and the correctness of sentences.

Reading sheets.

After reading the short story book, the students filled out the reading sheet and sent a draft to me. I went through them checking the form and content before providing comments if necessary and returned the sheets to the students for revision. The students revised the sheet and provided an updated draft for me before his/her presentation. I kept the revised draft as data.

Interviews.

The structured interview involved the teacher and the students in a discreet talk to collect information. I directly asked the students to rate their agreement with a series of 10 questions, and also asked them to provide additional comments if they had something else to say. While interviewing the students, I filled in a chart with the answers provided by the students, lodging each answer in its column. I interviewed the students again after each story they completed.

Data Analysis Procedure

All the collected data were analyzed to determine common themes, and to make a final decision concerning the effectiveness of the newly integrated material.

Observations of student presentations.

The three sources of the data collected from the students' presentations were the teacher's notes, the recordings, and the colleague's notes. First, both notes were compared to separate the similarities from the differences. The similarities were considered as evidence while the differences were discussed in order to come to a consensus about the student's current attitude. After that, the recordings were reviewed together (the colleague and I) to better understand the student's actions. The colleague commented on the videos and explained details he noticed. When I had my colleague's viewpoint about the presentations, I compared it to my vision of things and drew a conclusion. This conclusion was compared to the previous ones to determine whether the student had made progress.

Reading sheets.

I collected the students' reading sheets and read them one by one, making sure that they completed all the parts. From these sheets, I could know if the story was understood or not. After that I considered the accuracy of the answers, the correctness of the sentences, and the words used. I proceeded this way up to the end, compiling the best products and the lower performers that would constitute another accurate analysis. This part of the work was compared to the interview sheets to make sure that there was coherence between what was said and what was written. I classified them according to the success rate: from the least satisfying answers to the most satisfying ones.

Interviews.

I tallied students' responses to interview questions to appreciate the students' viewpoint. The interview sheets were arranged according to the success rate: from the least positive answers to the most positive. The latest sheets were also compared to the previous ones to see whether there was any positive change. Answers of "not at all" or "somewhat" meant that there were still hesitations or lack of confidence; it also revealed that some problems related to comprehension still existed.

Results**Findings**

The purpose of this action research was to improve the students' attitude towards reading comprehension by getting them to solve their own difficulties through story book reading. It covered a period of three months during which the students gave presentations, produced reading sheets and attended interviews with the teacher. The following data gives details on the students' performance at the end of the third month.

Observations of student presentations.

During the presentations, my colleague and I were impressed by two major things: the presenters' attitude and the audience's attitude. These aspects came out in both of our notes as positive facts. The presenter was often confident when performing and the students were eager not only to discover the story but also to see their classmate perform. They were careful and interested in the activity. We could see, when reviewing the recordings, some students taking notes and some others formulating questions about aspects on which they needed more details.

There was not any hesitation in the presenters' attitude; they could deliver information from their reading sheets and answer unexpected questions using correct sentences. Their answers were convincing and showed that they actually understood the story they read. Another positive fact we noted was the instantaneous reactions of students. They laughed together when the presenter said something funny; they reacted to correct a little mistake that occurred. These actions also proved that they could understand what was said. The motivation they showed during the presentations was much better than what they used to show before this action research.

Reading sheets.

Twenty students took part in the experimental reading and completed the reading sheets. For each student, I compared the entire sheet first, checking the form and the contents of the responses. From the last short stories that were read, I collected 20 sheets fully completed by the students. The students' names were replaced by the letters from A to T which correspond to 20 students. I made sure that all the parts were fully completed before selecting one at random among them. The example sheet shown in Table 1 is from Student L.

Table 1
A Student Sheet after Reading

READING SHEET #	
Reading period	August 9 - August 16
Reader's identity	Student L
The book title	Too late to claim
Writer's name	George Nasser Haick
Major issue developed	Unwanted pregnancy
Other theme(s)/issue(s) developed	Rape The weight of tradition Forgiveness Irresponsibility of the youth
The main character(s)	Abena the orphan girl
Other characters	Aunt Mercy Owusu John the law student Mrs. Owusu's kids Abena's son

	The doctor The nurses, etc.
<p>Make a short summary of the book</p> <p>Abena an orphan girl living with Mr Owusu her aunt was got pregnant by John, the law student and Aunt Owusu's son after a rape. She mentioned John to be responsible unfortunately he denied it. So, Abena was thrown out of the house with her pregnancy. She gave birth to a boy. Year later, John was victim of an accident and was near to die if there were not any compatible donor to save his life. The only one donor was his rejected son who accepted to save his father's. After recovering, he wanted to take his son with him, but it was too late. . .</p>	
The most striking detail	Abena had forgiven all the evil she was victim of and came the rescue John.
<p>Comment</p> <p>(How did you like the story? What did you learn from the story? What were the challenges? How did you overcome the difficulties? What new words did you acquire?)</p> <p>The story was very interesting, full of actions that could put tears in any reader's eyes. I was impressed by Abena's capacity to forgive. I learned that whatever you do, good or bad, you will harvest in a long round. I used a dictionary to understand difficult words, I also ask for help to my mother and my senior sister. I acquired words like: rape; a well- to- do business woman; pregnancy; law study; vehemently whole; disappointed raged etc</p>	

When we have a simple look at the chart, we can easily notice that there is not any empty space left by Student L. All the parts were perfectly completed. She succeeded in providing clear answers corresponding to the questions. Moreover, the paragraphs were well written with simple and correct sentences and expressions, something that most of the students could not do few months ago.

Interviews.

All 20 student participants were interviewed. The final evaluation revealed that only two students showed a small degree of confidence for the first question, whereas 12 showed higher confidence and six were entirely convinced that the books were adapted to their level. For questions 2, 4, and 10 the responses are all “mostly” or “yes, very.” For questions 3, 5, 6, 7,

8, and 9 all the students gave the highest response (“yes, very”). See Table 2 for complete results of the interview.

Table 2
Student Responses to Interview Questions

Questions	Number of responses			
	not at all	somewhat	mostly	yes, very
Were the short story books adapted to you level?		2	12	6
Did the topics developed fit your context?			4	16
Did you like reading the short stories?				20
Did the reading tasks meet your needs?			3	17
Did you learn from the readings?				20
Is the new vocabulary helpful?				20
Is there any improvement?				20
Will you recommend it to your friends?				20
Has it enriched your reading skill?				20
Do you feel enough confident when given reading tasks?			5	15
Supplementary comment				
I worked a lot with my dictionary				
I asked for help when it was necessary (not all the time)				
I enjoyed reading the short stories				

Discussion

This action research was guided by the question: “**If I include short story books in my teaching, how will it affect my students’ attitudes towards reading comprehension?**” The question was motivated by the fact that my students were showing serious weaknesses in their reading skills. During reading comprehension activities, they could hardly complete the tasks related to the text because they could not understand the text. So, it was about getting them to show a more motivated attitude during classroom activities.

When we consider the data above, the tendency is positive. I could observe major changes in the students’ attitudes. Except for the first interview question, most of the students’

responses showed mostly or completely confident attitudes. They liked reading the short stories, and they worked with dictionaries and asked for help only when it was necessary. It means that they succeeded developing a more autonomous attitude. They developed techniques to overcome their own difficulties. They felt more confident in their presentation, and discussions were more active in the classroom. They interacted with each other inside and outside the classroom.

Reading a short literary excerpt was no longer a big deal for them because a short story was 10 times the length of a short excerpt. Students had more positive attitudes and this could be seen through their participation during classes. The students felt comfortable reacted better during classroom activities. The short story reading activities had considerably changed the students' attitude towards reading comprehension. Now, they are able to achieve what they could not do before.

Conclusion

Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a very difficult task. Each teacher has his/her own experience depending on the teaching context. The context may be less challenging if the students are motivated to learn the foreign language due to goals such as travel or studies abroad. On the other hand, the teaching context can be difficult if the learners do not have any other motivation to learn the new language except for the fact that they need it to pass an exam. When I added the reading of short stories to cope with some learning difficulties in my personal context, students' attitudes improved and their motivation increased. This improved the teaching process as well as the learning. This technique calls for the commitment of many stakeholders: students, teacher, colleagues, the head of school and the parents. They worked hand in hand for the good of the students.

If students can read a story of up to 50 pages with a positive attitude, a short literary excerpt is no longer difficult for them. Including short story reading showed that it is possible to improve student motivation. The most striking thing that the students discovered through this experimentation is that “the things we discover for ourselves are absorbed more effectively than things we are taught” (Lewis, 1986, p. 165). Indeed, this is more important than the acquisition of factual information (Williams & Burden, 1997). The collaboration of the different stakeholders working together for the success of the project is also an important contributing factor to the success of this project.

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Appendix A: Teacher Interview Chart

Questions	not at all	somewhat	mostly	yes, very
Were the short story books adapted to you level?				
Did the topics developed fit your context?				
Did you like reading the short stories?				
Did the reading tasks meet your needs?				
Did you learn from the readings?				
Is the new vocabulary helpful?				
Is there any improvement?				
Will you recommend it to your friends?				
Has it enriched your reading skill?				
Do you feel enough confident when given reading tasks?				
Supplementary comment				

Appendix B: A Sample of Short Story Books Studied by the Students

- “The Boy with a Tail” by Harriet Decker, 2008 Harrimore Exclusive Graphix
- “Too Late to Claim” by George Nasser Haick
- “I Blame My Mother (A Convict’s Confession)” by Asante Yeboah
- “Tribal War” by I. K. Donkor
- “Celebration” by Abraham Kumasi
- “Passion for Money” by I. K. Donkor
- “The Midwife with Seven Eyes” by Daniel Edzorna Darkudzi
- “Double Game (Who Are the Greatest Cheats, Men or Women?)” unknown author
- “The Pregnant Virgin” by Isaac Adu Asamoah
- “Some Friends Are Dangerous, Take Care!” by Otoo Joyce
- “Why the Cat Kills the Mice” by John Ato Sarbah



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**The Effectiveness of Scaffolding in Learning Punctuation for Primary Level EFL Students:
Action Research in Pakistan**

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Abstract

The aim of this action research project is to discover the effectiveness of scaffolding in learning punctuation marks for better writing skills at the primary Grade 5 level in my school. The action research is also being conducted to bring changes in my own teaching practices for better quality teaching. For the purposes of the investigation, I divided Grade 5 into two main groups which were experimental and control. The control group was not provided the scaffolding during class activities, and they were supposed to get assistance from peers only. On the other hand, the experimental group was provided proper scaffolding during different individual or group tasks until they became autonomous. A pre-test and post-test were conducted to investigate the effect of scaffolding. The results showed that scaffolding helped the learners to acquire knowledge of punctuation marks. The research has some implications in providing training to teachers about scaffolding with punctuation to achieve better results in EFL classroom situations.

Introduction

Education System in Pakistan

Education in any country serves as the backbone in its development. It invokes the sense of responsibility among the community. Education brings social and economic strength, and an environment of trust. Pakistan is a developing country. Its economy is not strong. According to a report issued by UNICEF (2005), a lot of challenges like terrorism, sectarianism, poverty, insecurity, corruption, and the instability of democracy are big constraints for the promotion of quality education in Pakistan. The government allocates only 4% of the annual budget for education, which is quite low, to fulfill all requirements of quality education. Some of the problems mentioned by Louis (1987), including a lack of an adequate budget, a lack of policy implementation, a defective examination system, poor physical facilities, and a lack of teacher quality, are still present today.

Another alarming factor in the promotion of quality education is teacher quality. All social and economic factors are responsible for quality education, but the most important agent is the teacher. If the quality of teachers and teacher training is low, no hope for standard education can be expected. According to Rehman and Khan (2011), the government teachers are still using traditional ways of teaching and they never use new techniques and strategies in the classroom. They only rely on the lecture method of teaching where students sit passively and the teacher does his part actively. The main purpose of the examination is to check the recall of students rather than their performance. Students are supposed to cram facts and reproduce this in their exam sheet in order to be promoted to the next level (SPARC, 2005). Although the above mentioned scenario is still in practice, the provincial government of the KP (Khyber Paktoon Khawa) region is taking drastic measures to provide quality education in government institutes.

Motivation for the Action Research Project

Action research based on one's own classroom gives the opportunity for teachers to bring more improvement in classroom practices and refine his or her way of teaching. Richards, Platt, and Platt (2002) define action research as “. . . teacher-initiated classroom research which seeks to increase the teacher's understanding of classroom teaching and learning and to bring about improvements in classroom practices. . .” (p. 4). The factor which motivated me to do action research on scaffolding in my classroom is my recent research based on four domains of Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory: mediation, regulation, scaffolding, and the zone of proximal development (ZPD). In my research I focused on mediation, scaffolding, and ZPD for the purpose of understanding teachers' professionalism, and this was a basic factor which motivated me to do action research on scaffolding in my own classroom.

Research Problem

Teachers who were recruited two to three decades ago are still using the lecture method of teaching where students sit passively for 35 minutes. They have not provided an opportunity to engage in different tasks and activities. This means students do not have the chance to practice with scaffolding, mediation or any other strategy which is helpful in making them an independent learner. On the contrary, I am not used to a lecture method at the primary grade level, which is boring for me as well as for my students. At this stage, they need to be independent learners rather than reproducing facts on exams. So, making my class more motivating and interesting is a goal, and I am always in search of new techniques, methods and strategies which are more interesting and motivating for my students. In keeping with my search for new ways of teaching, I conducted this action research project to investigate the effectiveness of scaffolding in my own class at Grade 5.

Research Question

The purpose of my action research is to find out the effectiveness of scaffolding in learning punctuation marks for better writing. The research question is as follows: *How does scaffolding impact the learning of punctuation marks for better writing at Grade 5 in Pakistan?*

Literature Review

Punctuation Marks

Lauchman (2010, p. 17) defines punctuation marks as “a bunch of impossible-to-figure-out marks, invented by the devil to give writers a foretaste of hell, taught in a hundred confusing and contradictory ways,” which is maybe not the best way to explain the purpose of punctuation marks. Punctuation marks have great importance in conveying a clear message. These marks are multi purpose and necessary for learning foreign or second languages. As Quirk et al. (1985), acknowledge,

The punctuation mark specifies a grammatical, semantic, or pragmatic function, sometimes in addition to the marking of separation. [So] punctuation practice is governed primarily by grammatical considerations and is related to grammatical distinctions. Sometimes it is linked to intonation, stress, rhythm, pause, or any other of the prosodic features which convey distinctions in speech, but the link is neither simple nor systematic, and traditional attempts to relate punctuation directly to (in particular) pause is misguided” (p. 1610–1612).

According to the above definition, punctuation marks cover oral as well as written communication of language. Also, we know that knowledge of punctuation marks guides us to get meaning from the text and helps to avoid reader confusion.

Sociocultural Theory

Society, peers and teachers play an important role in language acquisition/learning. All domains of society are interlinked with learners directly or indirectly. According to Vogotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning, society is an important part of learning any aspect of language. He further divides the connection to society into two phases, which are intermental (society based) and intramental (individual based). According to Vogotsky's division of phases, both society and the individual have roles in the learning process. Vogtsky (1978) has four main domains of learning processes which are mediation, scaffolding, regulation, and ZPD. In my study I will focus on one of the domains, which is scaffolding.

Scaffolding

According to Vogotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, scaffolding is the process of support to learners in tasks which are above their level. Scaffolding can be provided by teachers and peers in the classroom to strengthen the learning process. Whenever a student feels any difficulty, scaffolding is provided and students may start to work autonomously (Lawson, 2002). Many researchers have investigated the effect of scaffolding in learning language skills. Bruch (2007) investigated the effectiveness of scaffolding in writing and reading skills through mini lessons, reading and writing assignments, and assessment tasks. The study revealed that scaffolding has a positive impact on students' ability to grasp the concepts. Riazi and Rezaii (2011) conducted a study which aimed to investigate and draw a comparison between teacher and peer scaffolding in writing abilities in EFL. The research revealed that teacher scaffolding is

more effective than peers. Scaffolding is a systematic process and carried out till the learners gain independence. Wood, Bruner and Ross (1976) provide six features of scaffolding which are as follows:

- a) Molding students' interest in the task
- b) Restricting the freedom of the student during the task to make it achievable
- c) Maintaining target direction
- d) Marking critical features
- e) Controlling frustration
- f) Modeling a solution for the goal

All these features are important in the process of scaffolding students during teaching. Inspired by studies on the scaffolding in different perspectives, I have conducted an action research project for understanding the effectiveness of scaffolding in learning punctuation marks for better writing in government schools at Grade 5.

Methodology

Participants

In order to conduct this action research project, I worked with 30 students in Grade 5, who were equally divided into two groups of 15. These were the control and experimental groups respectively, which were homogeneous in age. Their level of understanding was determined by a pre-test to be approximately equivalent. I taught both groups the core concept of punctuation in two periods with scaffolding and without scaffolding and conducted the pre-test and post-test. After marking both of the tests, the data was further analyzed.

Here, I would also like to share my brief background as a participant of this action research, as a teacher, trainer, and researcher. I am working as an SPST (Senior Primary School Teacher) at the primary grade in a GPS (Government Primary School) in Pakistan. Along with teaching, I had a great experience as a master trainer at the primary level, where I trained teachers in different teaching skills over the previous several years.

Intervention Procedure

This action research was devised to investigate the effectiveness of scaffolding in learning punctuation marks at the primary grade level. A lesson plan was devised to teach punctuation marks to both the control and experimental groups. The lesson plan was about 80 minutes long, and taught in two class periods. I gave equal time to each group. The control group was taught in the traditional way without providing any scaffolding during tasks and activities. The participants of this group were supposed to get assistance only from peers. In contrast, the experimental group was taught by a task-based method, and I provided them proper scaffolding during the tasks and activities.

In order to scaffold my students' work, I needed to begin with a pre-test to determine their knowledge of punctuation marks. As a pre-test, students were asked to punctuate a letter (see Appendix A). The same letter was assigned to both the control and experimental groups and taken as a pre-test. After getting feedback, I presented the concept of punctuation marks to the experimental group. In the next phase of the lesson plan, a Guided Practice/Interactive Modeling activity was conducted with students. I divided the experimental group into three groups of five students, handed out to them a non-punctuated paragraph and asked the students to punctuate it according to four punctuation marks: full stop, exclamation mark, comma, and apostrophe. I moved around the class and provided assistance if students were not conscious of any

punctuation marks. In the guided activity, each participant of the group provided additional assistance in the activity. In another activity, students got feedback from peers in case of mistakes. I wrote up a few sentences and asked each individual of the experimental group to insert appropriate punctuation in the blanks. Now students in the experimental group were confident in using punctuation marks and answering appropriately. The next activity was an independent working time, which was 20 minutes long; students were asked to write a letter to a friend with proper punctuation.

In the conclusion stage, a post-test (see Appendix A) with non-punctuated sentences was handed out to students, and I asked them to proofread and correct it using correct punctuation marks. I also asked the reason why the changes needed to be made. The control group completed each of the pre and post tests of the punctuation work as well, but no scaffolding was provided to this group during the classroom exercises. I used only a traditional teacher-fronted lecture style for the control group.

Data Collection Procedure

For the purpose of data collection in my action research, I began with both the pre-tests from each group. After teaching the punctuation marks to the control group without scaffolding and the experimental group with scaffolding, I administered and collected the post-test. The pre-tests and post-tests were the same for the both of the groups (see Appendix A for full samples of each).

Data Analysis

For the analysis of collected data, I used SPSS software. I scored the pre- and post-tests for each group and tabulated the number of punctuation errors. This data was entered into SPSS and I calculated a t-test, mean, median and P value.

Results

Findings

*Table 1:
Pre-test Statistics*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	Two-tailed P Value
Pre-test Controlled	15	3.80	1.15	0.8268	0.4153
Pre-test Experimental	15	4.13	1.06		

The above table shows that there is no significant difference between the mean and standard deviation of the pre-test of both the control and the experimental group. The mean and standard deviation of the control group on the pre-test is 3.80 and 1.15, while the mean and standard deviation of the experimental group on the pre-test are 4.13 and 1.06 respectively. The value of the P-test shows that the difference between the pre-test of the control and experimental groups is not statistically significant, showing that before teaching punctuation marks, both the groups were homogenous.

*Table 2:
Post-test statistics*

Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	P two-tailed value
Post-test Controlled	15	4.60	1.06	9.2816	Less than 0.0001
Post-test Experimental	15	8.40	1.18		

On the other hand, the above table shows that there is a significant difference between the mean and standard deviation of the post-tests of the control and the experimental groups. The P-value is much less than 0.05, showing that the difference between the post-test of the control and

the experimental groups is statistically significant. This means that after teaching punctuation marks, there is a clear difference between the control and experimental group.

Discussion

Scaffolding, which is one of the domains of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of learning, involves support from peers, teachers and society. It means support and encouragement to learners in achieving their tasks. Scaffolding plays an important role in the learning process. As the results show, learners provided with scaffolding produced better results. The experimental group strengthened their concepts of punctuation marks. The learners who were given support were free and enthusiastic for more activities/tasks.

During my teaching process to both of the groups, I discovered the effectiveness of scaffolding for my students. In my action research, before teaching them punctuation marks, both of the groups, control and experimental, were homogeneous with respect to age and understanding level. While teaching, I noticed that the students in the experimental group were more active, confident and enthusiastic in doing the assigned tasks. The likely reason was that whenever they felt any issue during the task, assistance was being provided to them, which helped them to move smoothly to the next task. They had equal opportunity to discuss the assigned task with peers, but considering the teacher as the authority, the experimental group was more confident. I provided some more examples of punctuation marks to boost their level of understanding. On the other hand, the control group was also engaged in different activities after my presentation, but they were able to get help from peers only. During this session, I noticed that students were doing tasks, but not as confidently as the experimental group. The reason was likely the absence of teacher's scaffolding. They were doing the task, but less actively as compared to others. Due to the absence of teacher help, which is best to make a student an

independent learner, the control group could not get the opportunity to learn more confidently with some extra examples. Furthermore, the control group scored lower marks on the post-test as compared to the experimental group.

Conclusion

In conclusion, action research in my classroom showed that students who received scaffolding from the teacher had better results on a post-test. The lecture method, the way of most of our teachers, is teacher-centered rather than student-centered, where students feel less interested. I recommend that task-based or communicative-based methods are best used where teachers can engage their learners in different activities and scaffold them if needed to make them an independent learner. In our schooling system, teachers admonish their students if they cannot memorize facts properly. This is a discouraging factor in supporting learning. In such a scenario, scaffolding is quite helpful for students in learning and being more interested and engaged in the lessons.

At the end, action research on scaffolding for better learning in punctuation marks has proven beneficial in my teaching process. It opened my eyes to a lot of new aspects of scaffolding, which are quite interesting and motivating for me in my professional career. Needless to say, these in turn opened new ways for me to help my learners improve and grow in the classroom.

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Appendix A

Pre-test

Instructions: Punctuate the following letter.

Dear friends

Hello How are you I am having a great time in Peshawar My dada's mango trees are near our homes Every day I go with my dada/grandfather and cousins to eat mangoes from trees Wow they are very sweet I miss you all here when I climb up the trees How is your summer vacation going I am coming back next week Bye

Post-test

Instructions: Punctuate the following paragraph.

did you see the rabbit go down that hole said the farmer no said sara look over there by that big tree said the farmer oh yes the rabbit has just jumped out again said sara well it might not be the same rabbit exclaimed the farmer there are lots of rabbit in that hole



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Using TED Talks as Authentic Videos to Enhance Students' Listening Comprehension and Motivation

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Abstract

This action research paper explores using authentic video material in our EFL classrooms and the advantages of using video materials in our teaching. Nowadays videos are considered an important educational tool for the classroom. The rationale for this action research is to examine the benefits of using authentic audio-visual material in teaching and learning the English language. Literature suggests that teachers can expand students' interests in the activities, and consequently their motivation, through the use of appropriate video materials. This action research paper was started due to a problem we were facing while teaching military personnel at the Air Force School in Lebanon. We decided to solve this problem through using TED Talks, and we gathered data through classroom observations, analysis of student work, surveys, and interviews. The results showed that our students felt they became better in retaining information and were able to focus more on the task given since the videos were appropriate for their age. It was also revealed that their English listening comprehension skills increased after learning with authentic videos and that they had a positive attitude toward using such videos.

Introduction

Teaching listening comprehension to EFL learners can be a daunting task for the instructor as well as the learner. One of the main problems that affects listening comprehension is the selection of listening materials. Likewise, this is the kind of problem we are facing with our cadet students at the Air Force School. These students had learned English listening comprehension through the use of inauthentic audio-visual material. Therefore, the reason for the study was established based on the participants' need to be motivated and to enhance their listening comprehension. Choosing appropriate listening materials is a crucial component in this action research. More specifically, we focus on selecting authentic, natural, and diverse materials (formal, non-formal, real life language). This paper examines how choosing authentic videos in teaching listening comprehension can improve listening in English.

Technology in our time is playing a significant role in developing listening skills. One technological tool is using videos to improve students' listening comprehension. More importantly, using authentic videos can have a better motivating outcome for the learners. Video materials, if used properly, are successful tools in teaching English as a foreign language. Technology allows teachers to incorporate online videos into their traditional classes, and thus let the teaching-learning process become meaningful and interesting. A fundamental reason for incorporating authentic video materials into classroom settings is that they offer original and authentic sources of real native language use such as TV shows, movies, short videos of people talking, and songs. Authentic video materials such as these can be used by the teacher in a variety of approaches.

Action Research Questions

The following two questions were developed to guide the action research process in this study:

- 1. What will be the impact on student motivation of showing short video clips of authentic materials?*
- 2. How will this motivation impact note-taking, comprehension, and participation in class?*

Literature Review

The importance of listening comprehension is accentuated in Krashen's (1989) Input Hypothesis. Listening comprehension is crucial for language learning for it provides the right conditions for language acquisition and development of the other language skills. Additionally, motivation is considered one of the factors that affects the acquisition of a target language (Gilakjani, 2011). Accordingly, for effective use of audio-visual aids and resources, it is important to be aware of students' views and approaches toward such teaching tools. Such understanding of students' views can lead to necessary modifications of audio-visual materials. Besides using authentic video materials to motivate learners, these video aids have the advantage of helping learners gain knowledge of the cultural backgrounds and emotional standpoints from the learning materials. In this way the learners can become more autonomous and allow themselves to understand the language used in the videos. This approach in teaching listening puts into practice student-centered teaching in comparison to traditional teaching of listening comprehension. Paulsen (2001) cites two reasons for learners' positive performance when learning through online materials, which are authenticity and motivation.

Authenticity and the Role of Authentic Materials

According to Nunan (1997), authentic materials are those materials not intended for teaching; they can be oral or written and made for native speakers of the language, and they are used to communicate between native speakers for a definite purpose (Alimemaj, 2010).

Woottipong (2014) explains that video presentation will be intrinsically interesting to language learners since they will want to watch even if comprehension is limited. The author also notes that the use of authentic videos enhances students' motivation and gives them an understanding of real life situations.

The Benefits of Using Authentic Video Materials in English Teaching

Authentic material can be a "rich and exciting source of videos in EFL classes" (Stempleski, 1987, pp.12-14). These authentic videos can be used in English listening instruction. English teachers must take care to use effective and appropriate video materials for the sake of helping learners get oriented in language use as well as cultural interactions of the native speakers in the videos. According to Stempleski (1987), the materials are effective when they are related to situations students might face in real life. So, authentic video materials have the effect of creating a language environment that is close to reality, and hence stimulates learners' interest in learning English and improves their comprehension. Rivers (1981) mentioned also that language learning can be improved via efficient utilization of videos. When teachers choose effective video materials, the materials can be interesting and enjoyable for the learners, and consequently promote comprehension. It's easier for the meaning to be clear using a video.

Using video materials has various advantages. One of the benefits of using these materials is that it stimulates students' autonomy (Christopher and Ho, 1996). They could put

themselves in the atmosphere created by the video materials and try to recognize the cultural concepts as well as the pragmatics of the language used.

Videos may also be more motivating than other kinds of authentic materials. Christopher and Ho (1996) note that the music and setting can make videos more entertaining and enjoyable for the learners. In addition to that, short video movies or clips offer topics and concepts for learners to focus on and discuss.

One major advantage of using videos is that they can offer samples of real-life situations. Lonergan (1984, cited in Lustigová, 2013) highlighted that since videos present a stimulating environment for the students, they will engage in the watching process even with limited language capability. In a study by Canning-Wilson (2000), the researcher examined students' attitudes toward the use of videos in the classroom. The results showed that students prefer learning language through videos. Thanajaro's (2000) study on the use of authentic materials to improve listening comprehension in ESL classrooms showed that the use of authentic materials had a positive effect on students' motivation to learn and acquire the language. Maneekul (2002) conducted a research study on employing authentic materials to develop listening skills for undergraduate students majoring in English. It was revealed that after students watched an authentic video program, their listening skill increased to a higher level. Mathew and Aldimat (2013) concluded that the use of audio-visual materials is inspirational and motivational for the students.

There is some evidence that authentic videos increase oral comprehension, stimulate student interaction and communication with each other, encourage cross cultural awareness, and are adjustable for use with learners at any English language proficiency level.

The present study examines the use of videos as complementary material in an EFL setting. It is hypothesized that authentic video material can be employed to enhance students' motivation. Learners consider the use of video materials in class to be interesting, significant, useful, and somewhat motivating. In order to enhance learning outcomes, teachers can integrate authentic video materials in a variety of activities and tasks.

Methodology

The following description of the methodology of this study has been organized into four sections: research context and description of participants, intervention procedure, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure. The study was carried out over a period of four weeks with four sessions for each group. The methodology of this study is quantitative and qualitative since the data is explained in numerical results and the application of semi-structured interviews; these interviews were also analyzed using qualitative procedures. The study is action research with a mixed-methods design. The research makes use of both experimental and control groups. Two classes of the same level were selected; the control group using the inauthentic videos, and the experimental group using authentic videos (TED Talks).

Research Context and Description of Participants

The action research took place at the Air Force School, Rayak, Lebanon. The students are cadets and their native language is Arabic.

Participant students.

The participants consist of all male students who finished high school and are cadet students at the Air Force School in the Lebanese Army. Their age range is between 19 and 24. Each class was composed of 15 students, totaling 30 participants. Their level was upper-

intermediate based on a placement test. Students were randomly assigned into two sections. One section was assigned as the control group (Group A) and the second one as the experimental group (Group B).

Participant researchers.

In this action research, there were two teachers participating in the study. Sandy El Haj Hassan has been teaching at the Air Force School for more than seven years. The second researcher is Zeinab Haj Hassan, who has been teaching at the Air Force School for two years now. Furthermore, she is an instructor at the Lebanese University-English Department. For this action research, Sandy taught the experimental group, and Zeinab taught the control group.

Intervention Procedure

After identifying the problem, the following procedure was used during the research process:

1. We obtained permission from the Air Force School to carry out the action research.
2. The English proficiency levels of the students were evaluated using a placement test.
3. The students were randomly divided into two 15-student groups.
4. Four inauthentic videos and four TED Talks videos were chosen having the same theme.
5. For each of the sessions, the students were given two worksheets; one for note-taking and another for comprehension questions.
6. After each session, we filled out a checklist for each student.
7. In the last session, the students were asked to complete a questionnaire.
8. We interviewed two randomly selected students from each group, following up on the questionnaire.
9. The results from the questionnaire and the checklist were analyzed using a software program.

Data Collection Procedure

To measure the effectiveness of this experiment, the researchers used the following instruments:

Teacher's checklist.

The teacher's checklist aims to measure the students' comprehension of the videos. While viewing the inauthentic videos and Ted Talks, the students took key notes from the video based on predetermined worksheets that divided the videos into different parts. The students also answered comprehension questions based on their understanding of the videos. This checklist (see Appendix A) was designed by the researchers and it was applied to both the experimental and control groups to evaluate the effectiveness of using authentic videos. It consists of three main questions that were measured on a scale of zero to three (zero for having no participation and answering and three for maximum participation). The checklist was filled out by correcting the students' worksheets (note-taking and comprehension worksheets) as well as evaluating the students' participation in classroom discussions. Two instructors filled out the checklists to ensure validity.

Survey questionnaire.

After students watched the videos, a questionnaire was given to both groups (see Appendix B). This survey aims to measure the students' motivation and the videos' usefulness in increasing listening comprehension and participation.

The interview.

After conducting the surveys, two students from each group were chosen randomly for a semi-structured interview. The follow-up questions are from the questionnaire where the students are asked to elaborate more on the open-ended questions (see Appendix B and C).

Videos.

There are two kinds of videos used in this study. The first one used with the control group will be called inauthentic videos. These videos contain formal, inauthentic language which is not related to real life. Moreover, the videos date back to the 1990s and are very monotonous which makes the students unenthusiastic. For the experimental group, the researchers in this study used authentic videos from TED Talks, which are known for their authenticity and inspirational aspects. The researchers looked for similar themes for both kinds of videos in order to make the study more reliable.

Instrument validity.

The teacher's checklist and survey questionnaire were designed by the researchers and validated by colleagues who are also instructors at the same center at the Air Force School in Lebanon. Further, to guarantee the data collection tools' validity, a pilot test was done on each item and the comments of the colleagues and their recommendations were taken into account. For instance, originally, the checklist had four questions and it was reduced to three questions. All items in the instruments were agreed upon as valid.

Data Analysis Procedure

Since the study compares two groups, an independent t-test was conducted. Using SPSS, the researchers compared the mean scores of the two groups in order to see if there was any statistical significant difference among them. Quantitative calculations used in the current study were means, standard deviation, and the independent t-test.

For the teacher's checklist (see Appendix A), we entered the data in an Excel worksheet and combined the number of students who took notes, answered questions, and participated in

the classroom discussion on a scale from zero to three. Then the data for each group was used to do a t-test in order to see if there was a significant difference between the two groups.

Concerning the questionnaires (see Appendix B), the data was also numerical since it was done on a Likert scale. So, for each group a bar graph was made to represent the score for each statement and then a t-test to compare between the control and experimental group. Finally, the interviews were analyzed qualitatively by coding the answers to see if students had similar answers.

Results

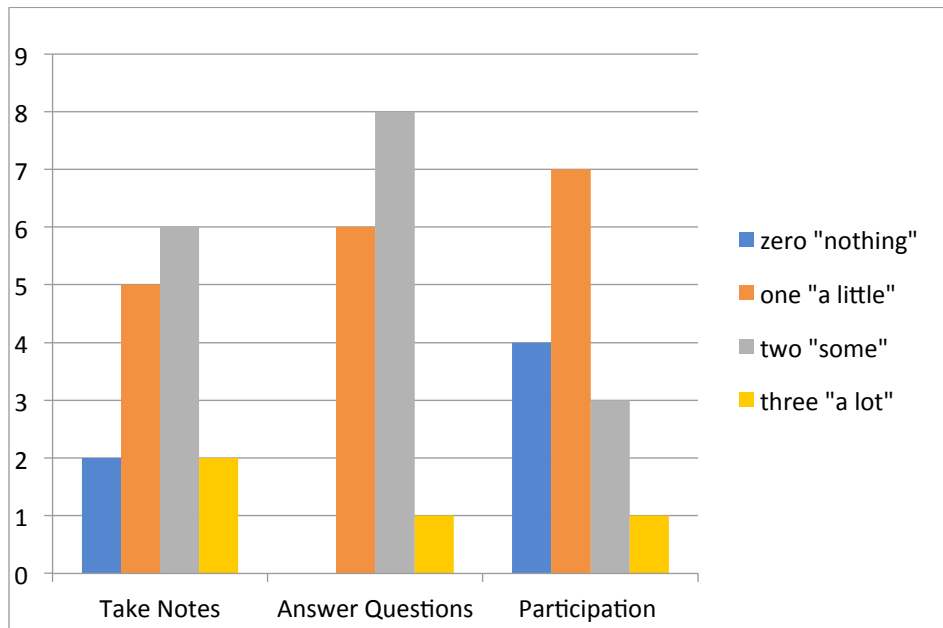
Findings

This section presents the results of this action research in greater detail, and the next section integrates and discusses the findings and connects findings from this research to the original research questions.

Analysis of the teacher checklist.

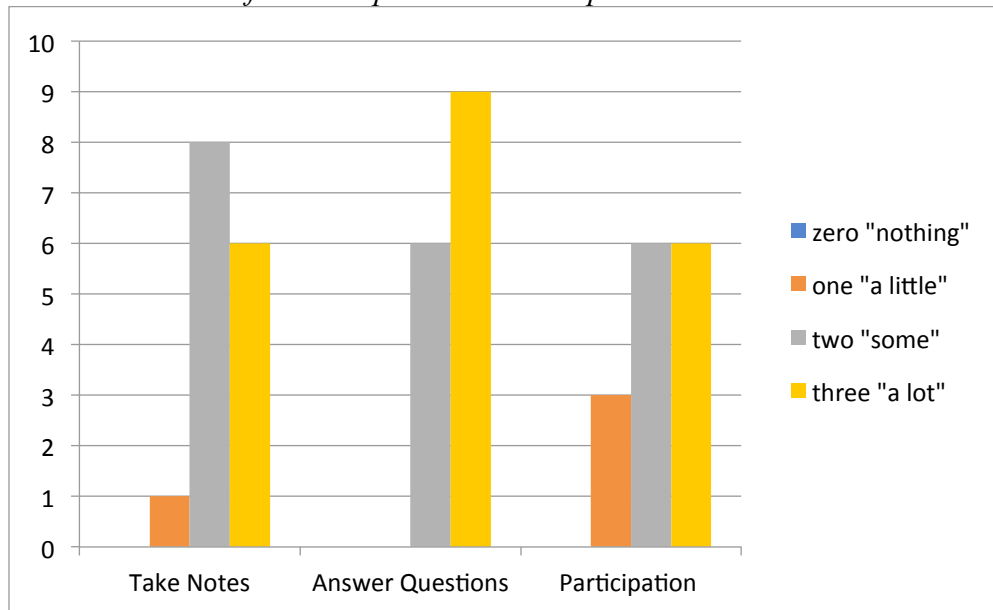
The following bar graphs show the teachers' checklists for the control group and experimental group.

*Figure 1:
Teacher Checklist for the Control Group*



In the control group, the majority of the students took only some notes. Additionally, the majority of the students answered some of the questions. Also, only a small number of students participated in discussion after the video.

Figure 2:
Teacher Checklist for the Experimental Group



The teacher's checklist for the experimental group shows that most of the students took some notes and very few took no notes. Moreover, many answered the comprehension questions. On the other hand, six students participated "some" in classroom discussion as well another 6 students who participated "a lot."

The following table shows statistical analysis of the two groups using the teacher checklist:

*Table 1:
Teacher Checklist statistics*

Group	Number	Mean	Variance	t.value	p.value	df
Experimental group	15	2.37	0.649	1.66	*0.05	84
Control group	15	1.37	0.422			

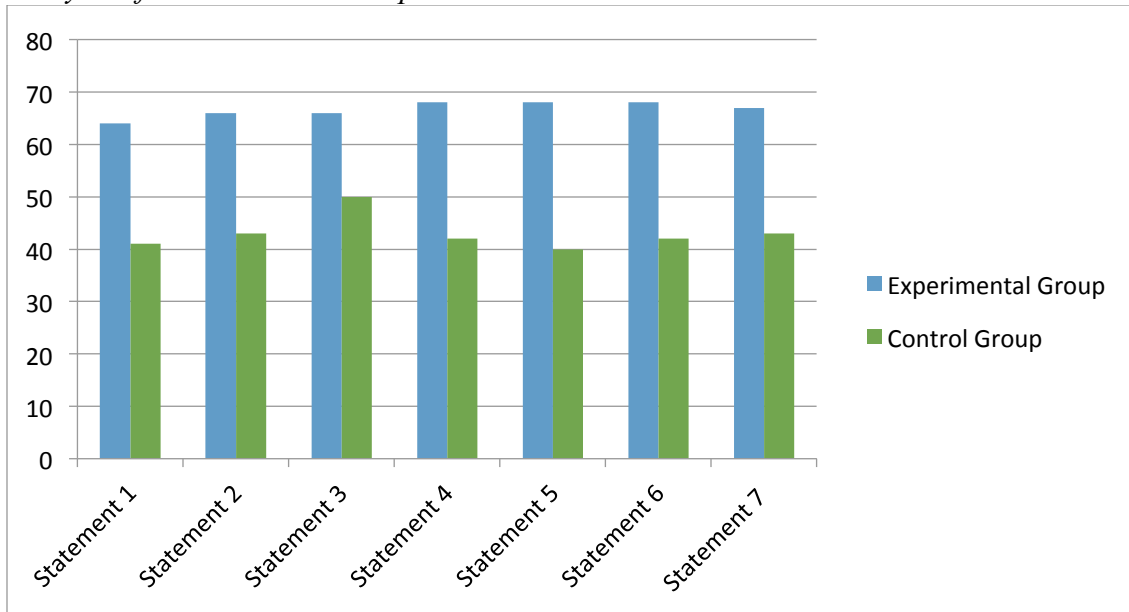
*significant $\alpha \leq (0.01/0.05)$

Table 1 shows that there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group, as the value of p is (0.05). The average mean of the students in the teacher checklist in the experimental group is 2.37 and 1.37 for the control group students (where 3 is the highest score possible). The mean scores between the two groups were statistically significant ($t=1.66 > p=.007$).

Analysis of the student questionnaire.

Figure 3 shows the score of each of the statements for both groups. For each group, 15 students answered Likert scale questions with a scale of 1-5. For each question, the sum of the 15 responses is presented, with a minimum possible score of 15 and a maximum possible score of 75.

Figure 3:
Analysis of the Likert scale responses



The experimental group had higher scores in each of the statements than the control group. For Example, statement 4, “I found the videos useful,” had a score of 68 with the experimental group, whereas, the control group had a score of 42.

Table 2 shows the statistical analysis for the Likert scale for the two groups. The average mean of the experimental group is 66.7, whereas for the control group is 43. Using a T-test 2 sample of unequal variances shows there is a significant difference between the two groups.

Table 2:
Likert Scale statistics

Group	Number	Mean	Variance	t.value	p.value	df
Experimental group	15	66.7	2.23	1.85	*0.05	8
Control group	15	43	10.3			

*significant $\alpha \leq (0.01/0.05)$

Interviews with students.

After completing the videos for both classrooms, we interviewed two students from each group. While interviewing the students who watched the inauthentic videos, we asked if they found the videos to be interesting and how; so, one student said that “the videos pictures are as old as our parents.” Another one said, “They aren’t difficult to understand.” Both students agreed that they were boring and old and didn’t motivate them to listen or participate. On the other hand, the students who watched TED Talks thought that they were very provoking and interesting. When one was asked if using these videos motivated him to study English and how, he answered, “Yes, very much. When I go home on the weekend, I open the TED app and watch videos because they are good.”

Discussion

Research question 1 asked, “What impact will showing short video clips of authentic material have on our students’ motivation to learn?” The bar graph in Figure 3 shows the scores of each statement on the survey questionnaire, and we notice that statements 1, 5 and 7 which concern students’ motivation (see Appendix B) have higher scores for group B than group A. This shows that more than 70 percent of the students agreed that TED Talks were very useful and helped them engage in the classroom more often. The results from the questionnaires confirmed that students enjoyed these videos and they stimulated them to get involved in classroom discussions, just as Mathew and Aldimat (2013) concluded that audio-visuals are inspirational and motivational. Furthermore, the teacher’s checklist for the students’ participation had six students who participated “some” and six who participated “a lot” compared to group A (control group) who had 7 students who participated “a little” (see figure 1 and 2). Thanajaro (2000) stated that authentic listening materials have a great impact on the students’ motivation as

well as their language learning acquisition. Therefore, the use of authentic audio-visual materials has greatly improved our students' motivation to learn.

The secondary research question asked, "How will this motivation lead to better note-taking, comprehension and participation in class?" The teacher checklist results showed how effectively the students participated in the classroom. By looking at Figures 2 and 3, we notice that note-taking for the control group had two students who took "a lot" of notes, six took "some" notes, and seven took "a little to nothing," whereas the experimental group had six students who took "a lot" of notes, eight took "some" notes, and one took a little. Similar results were also observed in answering comprehension questions where nine students answered "a lot" for the experimental group compared with eight who answered "some" for the control group. As a result, the students who viewed authentic videos were showing more communication in the classroom even if they had limited language capability. This is exactly what Lonergan (1984, cited in Lustigová, 2013) mentioned about the effectiveness of using videos in classrooms. While conducting this action research, we saw how the use of these videos has greatly improved the students' learning and communication skills and the data above shows that participation, note-taking, and answering comprehension questions, developed better than the control group with inauthentic videos. Thus, our students' motivation led to better participation and performance in the class, suggesting that the use of authentic videos was much more helpful than the inauthentic videos. Furthermore, the students who took part in the interviews confirmed that TED Talks were extremely beneficial since they felt more engaged and eager to participate and learn.

As for us, the teachers, we have seen a change in the students' behaviour and autonomy as well as students' participation and dependence on themselves. We also noticed that the environment of the class was very motivating.

Conclusion

This action research examined the effect of authentic videos (TED Talks) on the improvement of the listening comprehension and motivation of cadet EFL students. The findings of the paper show that there were statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group on listening comprehension tasks following the use of TED Talk videos in the experimental group. Additionally, after interviewing several students from both groups, the experimental group students considered the authentic videos to be more motivating and inspirational to them. They answered the questions more easily and participated in the discussions. Therefore, their listening comprehension improved better than the control group. However, in the long run, the students have to increase their placement level score in order to qualify for further courses. We don't know if these authentic TED Talks have a positive effect on their scores. Moreover, we need further study on the effects of authentic videos on the language acquisition of the students.

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Appendix A

Teacher’s checklist for students’ note taking and Comprehension skills worksheet

Student’s name: _____

Key for showing student’s progress for the worksheets of the video

3= a lot

2= some

1= a little

0= nothing

Attributes	Sessions			
	While using old videos			
Takes important key notes while watching the video				
Answers comprehension questions				
Participates in classroom discussion for the comprehension questions actively				

Appendix B:

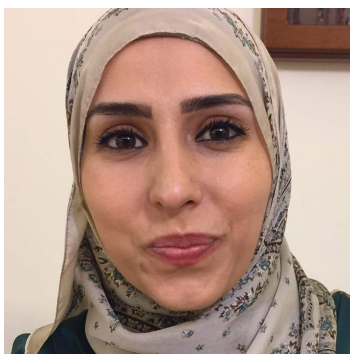
Survey Questionnaire				
Instructions: Answer statements as they relate to you. For most answers, check the box most applicable to you or fill in the blanks.				
Statement 1: The videos were interesting				
5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither Or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Statement 2: The videos helped me understand the topic				
5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither Or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Statement 3: The videos were easy to understand				
5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither Or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Statement 4: I found the videos useful				
5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither Or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Statement 5: I would like to see more of these videos				
5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither Or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Statement 6: Watching videos have had a beneficial effect on my experience of learning English.				
5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither Or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree
Statement 7: Using videos in class motivated me to study English.				
5 Strongly Agree	4 Agree	3 Neither Or N/A	2 Disagree	1 Strongly Disagree

Appendix C

1. Did you find the videos you watched in class interesting? Why or why not?
2. Were the videos difficult to understand? Please explain
3. Were the videos useful? Why or why not?
4. Do you think using videos in class motivated you to study English? How?



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The Effects of Listening Journals in the Development of University Students' Listening Skills

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Abstract

This paper presents the implications of the use of listening journals in an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course, exploring the results and difficulties faced by students after the implementation of this activity. Considering that the use of different listening materials can facilitate the students' development of listening skills and reduce their resistance and anxiety, the purpose of this action research was to check whether listening journals could reduce students' resistance when doing listening exercises. A questionnaire was used in order to analyze how this activity affected learners, and then the data collected were described and analyzed. It can be concluded that the activity affected students in a positive way and made them feel more capable of attending a lecture in English. The results show that they showed less resistance to the listening skills as they felt more comfortable, confident, and prepared to attend lectures and classes in English.

Introduction

Teaching listening in a foreign language has always been a challenging experience for both teachers and students. The fact that people assume it to be a skill that is naturally acquired leads to activities that assess listening without teaching it properly, and consequently it receives less attention in the classroom (Schmidt, 2016 & Thron, 2006).

When it comes to the university context, listening plays an important role. Many subjects in international universities are taught in English and they require students to understand and interact in specific genres, such as lectures and seminars. However, many students in Brazil arrive at universities with an unsatisfactory level of proficiency in English, which can prevent them from reaching a high level of academic performance.

One thing that I have noticed as an English teacher is that students consider listening the most difficult skill, and they often show some resistance during listening activities. It is common to hear them complaining about the listening part of an exam, or affirm that they do not understand what the speaker says, and even that some accents are extremely difficult to understand. These difficulties certainly frustrate and discourage learners from studying and improving their listening skills.

In order to reduce students' resistance when doing listening exercises, I developed and implemented listening journals (LJ) during an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course. Then, the following question was developed: *Can the use of listening journals in English classes reduce university students' resistance to listening exercises?*

I start from a hypothesis that the use of different listening materials can support the development of student listening skills and reduce their resistance and anxiety. This action research aimed to verify whether listening journals could reduce students' resistance to listening

comprehension, making them feel more comfortable when listening to audio or watching videos in English. Therefore, this paper aims to present the implications of the use of listening journals in three groups of students, including the results of a questionnaire administered to students.

Literature Review

Some aspects of current practices for teaching listening are unsatisfactory and do not attend to learners' needs. As reported by Thorn (2006), listening texts are scripted and performed by actors in a recording studio and therefore do not resemble the spoken English students will encounter outside the classroom. In recent years there have been moves to incorporate more authentic-sounding listening texts in course books, but these are still a shadow of the real thing (p. 66).

In the same way, Wolvin (1977) mentioned the lack of listening training in higher education.

Evidently, there is also a lack of research on listening comprehension and a need for systematic investigation, which makes it the least understood aspect of language teaching (Al-Nouh & Abdul-Kareem, 2017).

Academic Listening

According to Wilson (2008), when compared to general English, ESP classes—which include English for Academic Purposes (EAP)—require a different approach. ESP classes often do not follow a generalized grammatical syllabus, they are goal-oriented in order to meet student's needs, tend to be for adults who have at least an intermediate level in English, and the learner and the teacher work in a collaborative way. Regarding the listening skill, it is important to use authentic materials and tailor them for student's needs. ESP teachers who want to improve their student's listening skills need to find appropriate passages and prepare a pedagogical

sequence for them. As much as possible, teachers need to collaborate, sharing and storing texts, worksheets, and recordings so they have a bank of materials.

Academic listening is mainly concerned with the transmission and acquisition of knowledge, and it also includes the transmission and comprehension of attitudes, beliefs, values, culture and body language (Flowerdew & Miller, 2014).

Flowerdew & Miller (2014) pointed out the main issues that students deal with in an academic context include adapting to the speed of extensive monologue; dealing with different lecturer accents and a heavy vocabulary load; recognizing the overall structure of the lecture, its main ideas and supporting details; taking effective notes; and dealing with examples used by the international lecturers to illustrate their main points.

Al-Nouh & Abdul-Kareem (2017) explored EFL college female undergraduate students' perceptions of the difficulties of comprehending academic English lectures, and they found that students experienced difficulties with unknown vocabulary and speed while listening to academic English lectures, even those who rated their listening proficiency as "very good" and "excellent." In addition, the authors concluded that non-linguistic factors have greater impact on students' listening comprehension than linguistic problems, yet non-linguistic factors are usually ignored by teachers.

Listening Journals

A listening journal is "a book in which students record their extensive and intensive listening practices, as well as reflections on their listening experiences" (Schmidt, 2016, p. 3), and some researchers used listening journals as a tool to develop students' listening skills and raise students' awareness (Fauzanna, 2017; Galloway & Rose, 2014).

Fauzanna (2017) aimed to evaluate the usefulness of a listening journal to improve students' extensive listening practices at an Indonesian university. The findings show that the habit of reflecting on their learning helped students to improve their listening comprehension, especially with vocabulary and pronunciation. In addition, the use of authentic materials was engaging and provided a variety of topics.

Galloway & Rose (2014) utilized listening journals as an autonomous learning tool to introduce Japanese students to the diversity of English. In this activity, students listened to speakers from English-speaking backgrounds for around ten minutes each week. They reflected on what they heard, noting the speakers' nationality and the reasons for their choice, and made extended reflective comments. The results suggest that listening journals can be a useful tool to show that mutual intelligibility is more important than native-like proficiency. The authors also concluded that increased exposure to the diversity of English can encourage students to see themselves as competent multilingual English speakers, not as inferior non-native language speakers.

Lastly, according to Goh (2014), listening proficiency depends on the speed and accuracy of the processing of spoken input, so "an important aim of listening instruction is to help learners enhance the interconnected networks of their cognitive processes through better linguistic knowledge and effective use of skills and strategies" (p. 86). Although teachers cannot directly manage these processes, they can provide the necessary conditions for students to learn about these processes and practice them, which can help the improvement of their performance.

Methods

Research Context and Description of Participants

This action research was carried out at a public higher education institution located in Minas Gerais state, Brazil. It took place in the program Language Without Borders (Idiomas sem Fronteiras, in Portuguese), which aims at encouraging professors, scholars, staff and students to learn foreign languages (the program includes English, Spanish, French, Portuguese for Foreigners, Japanese, German, and Italian) as well as providing a comprehensive change in the teaching of foreign languages in Brazilian universities. This program was developed by the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), and it plays an important role as a teaching development program in Language Teaching undergraduate courses in many universities in Brazil. Language Without Borders is also part of the internationalization project of Brazilian universities.

Considering the aims of the program, the English team offers free ESP courses for the university community, focusing mainly on academic English. One of the courses offered by them is “Listening Comprehension: Lectures,” which was the course chosen for this action research.

This course was 32 hours long, with classes twice a week (2 hours per class), and it was offered in the second semester of 2017. The objective was to improve students’ listening comprehension skills in order to be able to attend lectures in English. Three groups who took this course participated in the research: two groups with an English proficiency level of A2 (elementary) and one at a level B1 (pre-intermediate), according to the Common European Framework (CEFR). The program uses TOEFL ITP scores and a placement test from an online platform called My English Online to level students.

One A2 group had 10 students attending the course until the end. The other group had four students, and the B1 group had five students, all formed by Brazilians learners. The same activity and instructions were given to these three groups, but with different themes.

Students from these three groups were from different fields of study, with ages varying from 18–40, and they were enrolled in undergraduate/graduate programs or were currently working at the university. Most of them had previous learning experience with English in high school or in other language courses. This variety and plurality in the groups is a common feature of English classes in the Language Without Borders program, and it enriches the discussions and experiences for both teachers and students.

Intervention Procedure

Being aware that learners are often resistant to listening, I was expecting to find students struggling to participate in a course mainly focused on listening strategies. In order to make students commit and engage in this activity, I decided to use listening journals as an assessment tool.

According to Schmidt (2016, p.02), listening is “a demanding cognitive task that requires a breadth and depth of exposure.” Considering this, the objective of the activity was to encourage exposure to authentic materials in English that could help students to develop skills required for their academic life, as they are exposed to English only in the classroom. It can also be considered a student-centered activity as it explores topics that interest them.

The strategy was to combine listening activities about lectures in the classroom with extra listening that was to be done at home. In fact, the listening journal complemented the work done in the classroom. It is extremely important to teach academic listening providing exposure to language structures and academic vocabulary in relation to students’ discipline. However,

teachers can improve these skills by encouraging students to search for extra materials that interest them and that are related to topics that were previously discussed in class.

Considering that all students had access to the Internet, I suggested the website Padlet as an online repository, and they all agreed to post their listening journals there. Padlet was chosen because it is an online and free platform that is simple and easy to use. It allows users to create a board where teachers and students can share texts, images, videos or audios.

The activity consisted of choosing an audio or video about the topic that had been discussed in the last class, creating a post on Padlet and answering questions from the listening journal template (Appendix A). The questions could help students reflect on their listening experiences. A list of suggestions with websites and apps that could help students was sent to them by email, and it included TED Talks, YouTube channels, and BBC Podcasts.

At the beginning of each class, I also asked each student to report what they have listened to and share their thoughts and experience with their classmates. By doing this, students could also develop their speaking and writing skills. Besides the listening journal, the oral report and the writing task (online post) were also part of the activity. Although the focus was on listening skills, ESP courses should integrate the four skills. According to Flowerdew & Miller (2014), university students may face interactional situations (asking questions during a lecture, discussing issues, debating, etc.), and that is why interactional skills can also be considered academic listening skills.

Students were supposed to post at least six listening journals (out of 10) to be approved in the course and receive a certificate. To assess the activity, I considered posts on Padlet that answered at least three questions from the template.

In the beginning of the class, students discussed what they had watched and I asked questions about the video and their experience with the activity. Topics such as technology, globalization, education and health were covered in classes and in the listening journal.

Data Collection Procedure

In order to analyze how this activity affected students, I created a Google Forms with questions related to the use of listening journals in our course. The questionnaire was written in Portuguese so students could fully understand the questions and answer them without worrying about grammar mistakes (you can find the English version in Appendix B).

The form is comprised of 26 questions: two about personal information (name, email), 11 about the use of listening journals, seven about the implications, four about the use of Padlet, and two asking for authorization. It included open and closed questions, and statements with which students could agree or disagree (Likert scale).

This questionnaire was piloted with one of the groups during a course evaluation in the previous semester. In this evaluation, students answered some questions about the listening journals, and I identified the need to add more specific questions related to the execution of listening journals in order to check how students were carrying out the activity. It was important to verify, for example, whether students were doing the activity during the course instead of at the end, and that is why I added questions related to the number of listening journals they have done, and the amount of time they spent on each one.

I designed the questionnaire on Google Forms for students to respond to in approximately 10 minutes. I sent the link by email after the end of the classes and they had one month to answer it. They were not obliged to respond to it, and their participation was voluntary.

Data Analysis Procedure

After students answered the questionnaire, the data collected was analyzed and the most important information was presented in graphs to give a visual representation of information. Pie charts and bar charts were used for the closed questions (quantitative data), and tables were used to present the answers from open questions (qualitative data).

Results (Findings and Discussion)

According to the file on Google Forms, 13 (out of 19) students answered the questionnaire and authorized their answers to be part of this research: eight were from the A2 group, and five from B1. The data for the three parts of the questionnaire can be found in this section.

Responses to Questions About Listening Journal Participation

It was expected for students to deliver the activities on time due to the purpose of the activity, and to do at least six listening journals in order to have a good performance throughout the course. As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, most students (54%) posted the listening journals on time, although some of them were late, and most of them (84%) did the expected number of listening journals. This is essential for their learning process to have a frequent activity that is part of their routines.

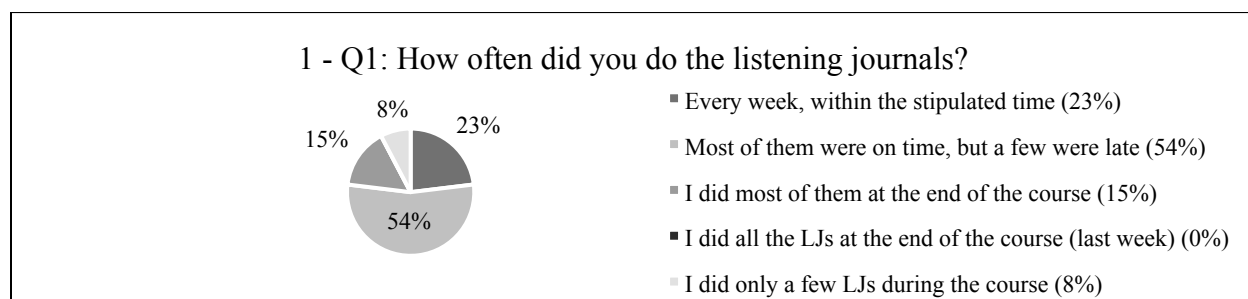


Figure 1. Student responses to question 1. The majority of students did most listening journals on time.

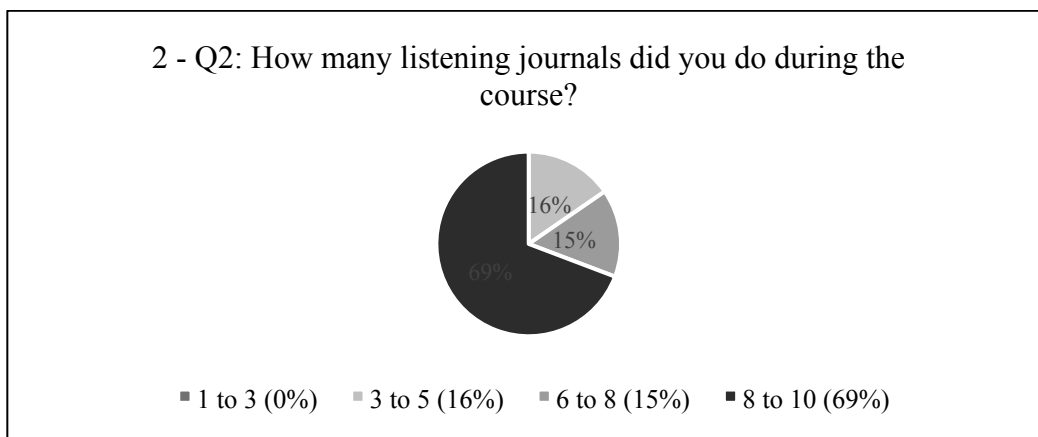


Figure 2. Student responses to question 2. Over two thirds of students completed the required number of listening journals.

The possibility of keeping in touch with English outside the classroom was what motivated students (see Figure 3). However, according to class observations, most of them showed concern about the final grades and certificates, so there is a possibility that the fact that this activity was the assessment tool was what mainly motivated them.

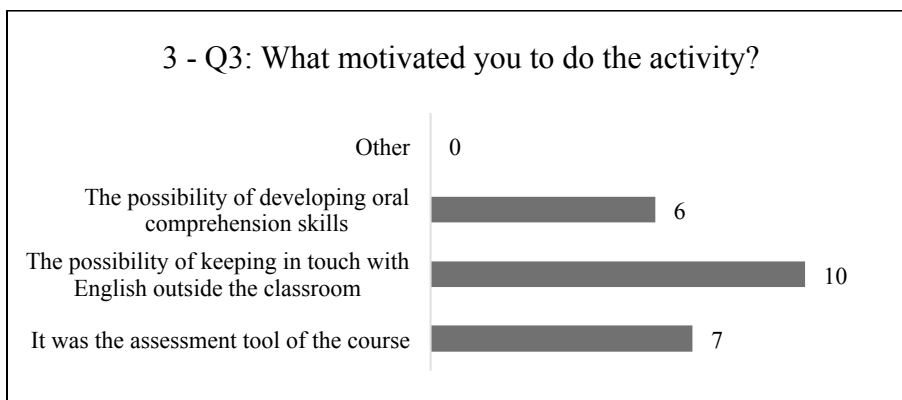


Figure 3. Student responses to question 3. Respondents were motivated to do the activity by three factors.

Figure 4 shows that one of the biggest difficulties for students was to have time to do the activity. As they are university students and usually are involved in many extra activities, this fact may have influenced their commitment to the English course, so this answer was expected.

Class observations show that it was common for them to arrive late and even miss classes because of other appointments at university.

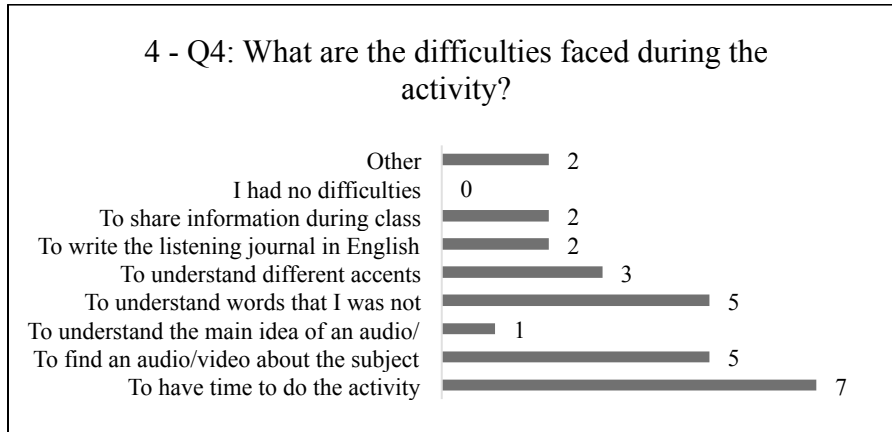


Figure 4. Student responses to question 4, showing a variety of difficulties faced during the activity.

Note: two answers for “other”: “Find a video that I really liked,” and “Depending on the video, the speech was very fast, which made the activity difficult, since it took me longer to understand”

In question 5 (“What is the most difficult part of listening to a lecture or class in English?”), only “speed” and “vocabulary” were chosen, and for students the most difficult thing when listening to a lecture or class in English was speed (85%) (see Figure 5). It might be difficult because they are not used to the naturalness of second-language speech from academic contexts in general English classes. According to class observations, I thought that the major difficulty could be accents, as students used to complain that some accents were difficult to understand—so having speed as the main difficulty was an unexpected response.

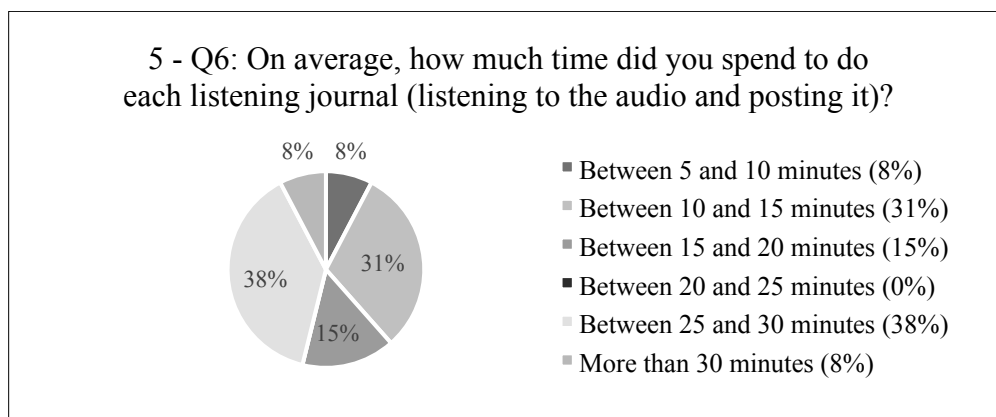


Figure 5. Student responses to question 5. Students varied in their time investment.

Although it is difficult to determine how much time a student will spend to do the activity, considering that this will depend on many aspects (their difficulties, time management, etc.), around 38% of students spent around 25–30 minutes to do the listening journal, which shows it was time consuming for them. Nevertheless, we can see that the results vary: one student spent between five and 10 minutes, and another spent more than 30 minutes.

During classes, I suggested that students listen to audios first without subtitles in order to check what they could understand and use English subtitles or transcription as a final resource to comprehend what they had difficulty with and find new words. I also suggested that they avoid subtitles in Portuguese. In this case, there is no way to check if they really did the activity following my instructions because it was supposed to be done at home and away from the teacher's control. However, it can be seen in Figure 6 that most students (38%) said that they listened to audios first without subtitles, then with them—following my suggestion. Then, Figure 7 demonstrates that 50% of those who listened to the audios with subtitles did it in English.

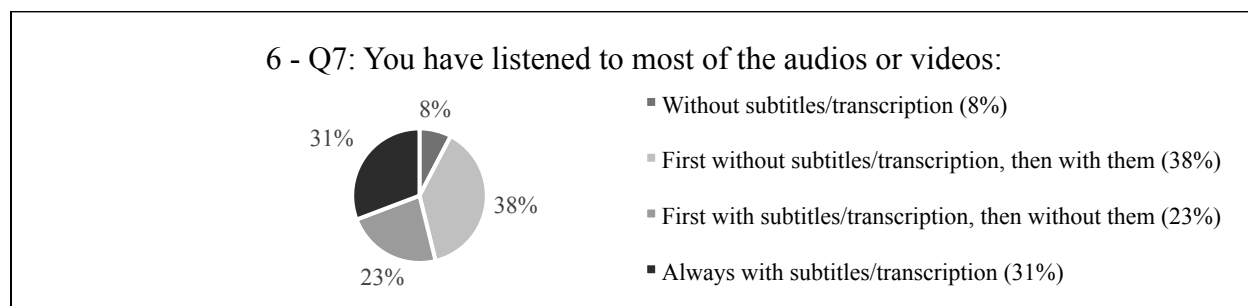


Figure 6. Student responses to question 6. Students tended to approach subtitles according to instructions.

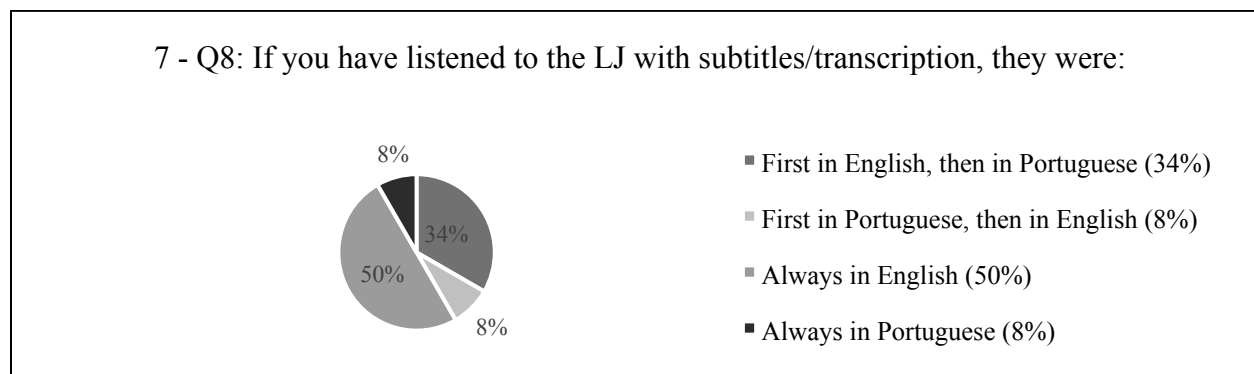


Figure 7. Student responses to question 7. Students tended to approach subtitles according to instructions.

Students were expected to search for audios based on the topic, instead of the duration. However, answers from question 9 (“What criteria did you use to choose the audios/videos to do the activity?”) show that the most chosen criteria were duration (10) and title (9), followed by availability of subtitles (3), channel or website (3), and views (1)—and these results support the findings from graph 4.

Although students were not asked to read the posts of their classmates, I wanted to know if they were curious and interested in exploring extra materials. In question 10 (“How often did you read your classmates’ posts?”), none of them read all the posts; 15% read most posts’ 23% did not read any posts, and 62% read some posts. In question 11 (“How often did you watch the videos/audios posted by your classmates?”), none watched all of the videos posted; 8% watched

most of the videos; 46% watched some videos; and 46% did not watch any videos. This shows that students are more likely to read classmates' posts than watch the videos posted by them.

Responses to Questions About Students' Feelings After Listening Journals

In the second part of the questionnaire, students marked if they strongly disagree, disagree, are neutral, agree, or strongly agree with the following statements, after doing the listening journals activity.

Questions	SD	D	N	A	SA
12. I feel more comfortable listening to audios or watching videos in English.	0	1	7	4	1
13. I feel more prepared to listen to lectures or classes in English.	0	2	6	3	2
14. I am more confident when listening to people with different accents speaking English.	0	3	6	4	0
15. I feel I am able to understand both general and specific information in lectures and classes in English.	0	2	5	4	2

Figure 8. Student responses to questions 12-15, asking if students strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), are neutral (N), agree (A), or strongly agree (SA) with the statements.

Although most answers were neutral in the four statements above, more students agreed than disagreed in all cases, and no one strongly disagreed. This indicates that students are demonstrating less resistance to listening activities as they feel more comfortable, confident and prepared to attend lectures and classes in English. In addition, at the end of the course, I noticed that students were paying more attention to the listening activities and could comprehend more audio recordings without reading the whole transcription.

In question 16, students were asked to propose a suggestion to improve the activity. From these answers, there were seven suggestions (from students A, G, I, J, K, L, M, respectively). All of the answers are available in Appendix C. Student A suggests including a moment in the activity where they have to read or watch what their classmates had posted, and later post a

comment about it. This suggestion could improve the activity indeed. Student G proposes to start with simpler audios and progress through the course. In fact, it happened with the activities in class. It could not be done with the listening journal as it goes against the particularity of the activity: the freedom to choose the audio. Student I would like a more accurate correction in the oral sharing moment of the activity, especially with grammar and vocabulary. Although it was not the focus of the course, this suggestion shows that he/she felt insecure with the speaking part, and it demonstrates that more attention should be given to this aspect. Student J suggests having more dynamic classes, which is not directly related to the listening journal activity. This student does not explain what a dynamic class is in his/her opinion. Student K proposes to offer a list of sites to find materials, but it was done in the beginning of the course by email. Students L and M would like fun videos and to be encouraged to listen to creative and comic videos. As stated before, students could choose the type of video they were interested in. Considering these two suggestions, it seems that the purpose and the instructions of the activity were not clear for all the students.

In question 17, when asked whether they would do this activity again, 92% answered “yes,” and 8% that they would do it only in courses focused on listening comprehension. The fact that all students responded that they would do the listening journals again demonstrates that they enjoyed the activity and found it meaningful; otherwise, they would not want to experience this activity again.

Responses to Open-Ended Questions About Padlet

This part of the questionnaire was related to the use of Padlet, and all the answers to open questions are available in Appendix C.

When asked whether they faced any problems when using Padlet to post the activity, only two students mentioned a problem. Student J says that he/she did not know that the platform saves the posts automatically when using it for the first time; and student K thinks the website is confusing. Considering that only a few students mentioned a problem, it shows that the experience with this website was not problematic.

With regard to the positive aspects of Padlet, students said that it is easy to post and share content (A, B, C, E, I, M, L), and mentioned organization (D, G), accessibility (F, H), speed (J) and objectivity (K) as the strong points.

In relation to the negative points, seven students mentioned negative aspects which were difficulty in editing and viewing your own post (D, G, J, K), the lack of a modification history (A), and the lack of a tool that encourages students to view previous posts (I). Student L says that lack of time was a negative point, but it seems that this student misunderstood the question, and probably he/she was referring to the activity, instead of Padlet. While some students found it easy to edit and post, others found it difficult. If there was a modification history it would be easy to see new posts, which could solve the problem pointed out by student I. During classes, I noticed that students only had difficulty in the first week, and during the course they were able to use the tool normally.

In question 22, students were supposed to answer whether they would use another platform or website to post the listening journals. There were only two answers. Student C suggests email, only because it is the only one he/she knows. However, considering the amount of activities in a week, it would not be the most appropriate platform because of the number of messages students would receive. Then Student K answered “yes,” but did not give details and

did not suggest a platform. Probably, if the question required the respondent to suggest a website, he/she would have responded, rather than answer “yes” or “no.”

Conclusion

This action research paper aimed to apply and analyze the use of listening journals in order to develop listening skills of university students from a Brazilian federal institution.

The results collected from an online questionnaire on Google Forms show that most students posted the listening journals on time and did the expected number of listening journals (6 to 10), and one of the biggest difficulties was to have time to do the activity. Furthermore, most of them spent around 25-30 minutes to do the activity, which probably was considered time consuming for them. For university students, it is not effective to give time-consuming activities as it can demotivate them, and a possible alternative is to give more activities for them to do during class.

For these students, the most difficult thing when listening to a lecture or class in English is the speed, so they indicate that it is extremely necessary to adopt new strategies in order to practice this aspect during classes and enrich students’ comprehension of fast speech.

Moreover, students are more likely to read posts than watch the videos, so it is necessary to encourage them to read and watch what their classmates’ post in order to provide a more communicative activity, as was suggested by one of the students. Another student also mentioned that he/she would like a more accurate correction in the oral sharing moment of the activity, and it demonstrates that more attention should be given to this part.

I conclude that Padlet is an appropriate tool to post listening journals and most students had a satisfactory experience with it. They mentioned that it is easy to post and share content,

despite the fact that there isn't a modification history feature that would let users see new changes.

In order to enrich students' experience with listening journals with future groups, I could also require a minimum number of words for each post on Padlet, because this can facilitate the assessment and encourage them to write more in English.

After the implementation of this activity during an ESP course, I wanted to find out whether the use of listening journals in English classes could reduce university students' resistance to listening exercises. Finally, it can be inferred that the activity affected students in a positive way and made them feel more capable of attending a lecture in English. It also shows that they presented less resistance to listening activities as they feel more comfortable, confident and prepared to attend lectures and classes in English.

The students who participated in the research responded that they would do the activity again, so this shows us that they enjoyed the activity and found it meaningful. However, it is possible that the least motivated students did not respond to the questionnaire, and the data may not represent all the students who took the course. It is also important to acknowledge that answers were not anonymous and students knew that the teacher was going to read the responses and use them in further research. This means that there were power relations involved (between student and teacher) and they may have slightly influenced some responses—for example, students could feel uncomfortable or constrained to expose their opinion. This was taken into consideration in the analysis procedure and all data collected are still considered valuable for the analysis.

To conclude, it is worthwhile to repeat this activity with other groups of university students and include the improvements suggested in this section, as the listening journal has been proven to be productive and effective to enrich student's listening comprehension.

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Appendix A

Listening Journal Template

Date: __/__/__
What did you listen to? (podcast, lecture, song, vlog, etc.)
Where did you listen to it? (website)
How many times did you listen to it?
Was it easy/difficult? Why?
List of main ideas
New words/phrases

Appendix B**Questionnaire about the use of listening journals**

Dear student, this form was created for you to express your perceptions related to the use of listening journals (LJ) in the course “Listening comprehension: lectures” from Language without Borders - UFU.

First part - Personal information

1. Name: _____
2. Email: _____

Second part - Questions about the listening journals

1. How often did you do the listening journals?
- a) Every week, within the stipulated time
 - b) Most of them were on time, but a few were late
 - c) I did most of them at the end of the course
 - d) I did all the LJs at the end of the course (last week)
 - e) I did only a few LJs during the course
2. How many listening journals did you do during the course?
- a) 1 to 3
 - b) 3 to 5
 - c) 6 to 8
 - d) 8 to 10
3. What motivated you to do the activity?
- It was the assessment tool of the course
 - The possibility of keeping in touch with English outside the classroom
 - The possibility of developing oral comprehension skills
 - Other: _____
4. What are the difficulties faced during the activity?
- To have time to do the activity
 - To find an audio/video about the subject
 - To understand the main idea of an audio/video
 - To understand words that I was not familiar with
 - To understand different accents
 - To write the listening journal in English
 - To share information during class
 - I had no difficulties

Other: _____

5. In your opinion, what is the most difficult part of listening to a lecture or class in English?

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| a) Accent | d) Noise or external sound |
| b) Speed | e) Subject of the lecture or class |
| c) Vocabulary | f) Other: _____ |

6. On average, how much time did you spend to do each listening journals (listening to the audio and posting it)?

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| a) Less than 5 minutes | e) Between 20 and 25 minutes |
| b) Between 5 and 10 minutes | f) Between 25 and 30 minutes |
| c) Between 10 and 15 minutes | g) More than 30 minutes |
| d) Between 15 and 20 minutes | |

7. You have listened to most of the audios or videos:

- a) Without subtitles/transcription
- b) First without subtitles/transcription, then with them
- c) First with subtitles/transcription, then without them
- d) Always with subtitles/transcription

8. If you have listened to the LJ with subtitles/transcription, they were:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------|
| a) First in English, then in Portuguese | c) Always in English |
| b) First in Portuguese, then in English | d) Always in Portuguese |

9. What criteria did you use to choose the audios/videos to do the activity?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Duration | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Channel or website |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Title | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Country |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of subtitles | <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Views | |

10. How often did you read your classmates' posts?

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| a) I read all the posts | c) I read some posts |
| b) I read most posts | d) I did not read any post |

11. How often did you watch the videos/audios posted by your classmates?

- a) I watched/listened to all the videos/audios posted
- b) I watched/listened to most of the videos/audios posted
- c) I watched/listened to some videos / audios posted
- d) I did not watch/listen to any video/audio posted

Third part – After the listening journals...

12. ... I feel more comfortable listening to audios or watching videos in English.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

13. ... I feel more prepared to listen to lectures or classes in English.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

14. ... I feel more confident when listening to people with different accents speaking English.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

15. ... I feel I am able to understand both general and specific information in lectures and classes in English.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

16. Do you have any suggestion to improve this activity?

17. Would you do this activity again?

- a) Yes, I would do this activity in another English course
- b) Yes, but only in courses focused on listening comprehension
- c) No
- d) Other: _____

18. If you answered "no" to the previous answer, justify why you would not do the activity again.

D – About Padlet

19. Did you face any problem when using Padlet to post the listening journal? If so, which one?

20. Mention a positive aspect of Padlet

21. Mention a negative aspect from Padlet

22. Would you use another platform/website to post the LJs?

Authorization

23. Do you authorize the use of your answers in this questionnaire for future research? (you will not be identified)

a) Yes

b) No

24. Do you authorize the use of your Padlet posts for future research? (you will not be identified)

a) Yes

b) No

Appendix C

Responses to open questions 16, 19, 20, 21, 22

Table C1

16. Do you have any suggestion to improve this activity?

Student	Responses
A	Maybe compel us to listen/read at least one post/video from a colleague and then comment in the classroom. Maybe also ask the person to write a reflection that he/she had with the video that was posted, and in the classroom ask the classmates who watched it comment, saying whether they agree or not.
B	.
C	I think it is good this way.
D	I have no suggestion, actually I really liked the proposal, it is very innovative. The contact with the videos gave me more confidence to understand everyday English.
E	No suggestions
F	I have no suggestions; I think it is a very positive activity
G	Listen to simpler videos at the beginning and evolve through the course. Indication from the teacher.
H	I do not have an idea at the moment.
I	Correct our speaking during the exposition of the LJ to the colleagues (vocabulary, grammar).
J	Have more dynamic classes
K	Offer a list of sites to find material
L	Encourage the choice of light, creative, comic audios ...
M	More fun videos

Note: The answers were written in Portuguese and translated in English.

Table C2

19. Did you face any problem when using Padlet to post the listening journal? If so, which one?

Student	Responses
A	No
B	No
C	No
D	No
E	No
F	No

G	No
H	No
I	No
J	Only in the first time, because I did not know it saves automatically
K	The website is a bit confusing, especially the settings
L	I had no difficulties.
M	No. Quite easy to use.

Note: The answers were written in Portuguese and translated in English.

Table C3

20. Mention a positive aspect of Padlet

Student	Responses
A	It's easy to use and we can get in touch with the work of other colleagues
B	The sharing
C	It's easy to view the posts.
D	Organization.
E	It's easy to use
F	Accessibility / practicality
G	Organization of posts
H	Easy access
I	It's easy to handle
J	Speed
K	objectivity
L	There are opportunities to search and free posts
M	Very easy and practical to use

Note: The answers were written in Portuguese and translated in English

Table C4

21. Mention a negative aspect from Padlet

Student	Responses
A	I do not know if it does it... But it would be nice if it saved the history of modifications of the users, so that it can have a control of what is happening
B	.
C	I don't think it has one.
D	Sometimes I would post my text and I could not see if it was posted.
E	none

F	I don't know
G	It is difficult to edit
H	There isn't
I	There isn't a tool that encourages you to view previous posts.
J	There is a small space for posting.
K	You have to create a file in Word to facilitate the posting
L	just the lack of time
M	I didn't notice

Note: The answers were written in Portuguese and translated in English

Table C5

22. Would you use another platform/website to post the LJs?

Student	Responses
A	No
B	No
C	Email, because I don't know other
D	I do not know others that have this format/purpose
E	No
F	I don't know
G	I don't know other
H	I don't know a better one
I	I don't know other
J	I don't know other
K	Yes
L	I don't know
M	No

Note: The answers were written in Portuguese and translated in English



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