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IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON MEANINGFUL LEARNING OF ENGLISH IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION

“To learn a language is like having another window through which to observe the world.” Chinese proverb. which motivates us to learn a foreign language with the aim of being part of a modern globalized world that opens the doors to greater opportunities for progress both at work and in school.

Human beings are born with a great capacity to live, survive, adapt and learn. The importance of teachers in the meaningful learning process is to create the conditions so that human beings can develop their abilities to the maximum for the benefit of the present and future generations.

Nowadays in Ecuador the task of teaching requires that the teacher has the appropriate training and corresponding pedagogical training, so that their work and interaction with students is beneficial on both sides.

Unfortunately, many times teachers do not have an adequate teaching method and even worse, they do not have or apply adequate motivating situations, which greatly influences the learning of their students.

In higher education, motivation is essential in every act of teaching and learning, but it is known that most of the problems in student learning are the result of the lack of and inadequate motivation on the part of the teacher. Thus, in higher education, students become demotivated in English classes, either because of the teacher's personality, his authoritarian behavior, the absence of teaching materials, an inadequate teaching method, and even, many times, the lack of motivation comes from the student's family sphere.

Among the institution's strengths and opportunities are classrooms that are fully adequate for the development of each of its students. But the most transcendental problem within the institution is the inadequate motivation that students show in the English

subject, which causes mechanical and non-significant learning. Motivation is the stimulus that is of great importance in learning, since the lack of it is what causes adolescents not to join the educational activities they carry out in the classroom.

In Ecuador, higher education requires the passing of a foreign language for the graduation process of the different careers, the most popular being English, which for university students becomes the extension of a torment that has been dragging on since basic and secondary education. Starting from this premise, we must point out the role of emotional intelligence in this process. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability that people have to identify, manage, control and express their emotions, in order to relate appropriately with other people.

It has been detected that emotions in university students are one of the shortcomings to achieve meaningful learning, considering the displeasure of learning the English language with a lack of interest which causes mechanical and non-significant learning. The shame of making mistakes by not achieving an adequate pronunciation of words, limited vocabulary, not knowing the grammatical structure of the language together with the lack of motivation of the English teacher are the factors that influence university students to drop out of classes and consequently to delay their process of fulfilling the requirements for the graduation process of their respective careers. Situation that forces university students to prolong their stay in English classrooms even after legally graduating from their degrees.

For this reason, our research objective is to investigate active motivation techniques and their influence on the meaningful learning of the English language of higher education students. As well as to identify the motivation techniques applied by teachers to teach the

English language. And to determine how meaningful learning of the English language is generated in students.

CREATING A MOTIVATING ENVIRONMENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Motivation to learn academic subjects is not necessarily something that the student brings with him or her, it can be something that the teacher informs the student about. "The educational context definitely does not influence the student's desire to learn and perform in the classroom" (Osterman, 2009). Students learn more effectively and display more productive behaviors in the classroom when they are intrinsically motivated to learn and perform; traditionally, parents, teachers, and society at large have emphasized the extrinsic advantages of academic success. Harter, 1992.

Nowadays, parents give children money and privileges for good grades. Teachers and counselors insist that students will be admitted to college, have better jobs, and earn higher salaries if they have good grades. In contrast, intrinsically motivated students often show more initiative, independence, ambition, meaningful learning, and enjoy academic activities more than their extrinsically motivated peers, and consequently, they perform better in the classroom.

Unfortunately, adolescents' intrinsic need to learn and perform in school often diminishes as they advance through the grades and may be very low as they make the difficult transition from primary to secondary school. (Fleming and Gottfried 2001) And adolescents' very idea of achievement changes as they grow older; as they progress through primary school, they increasingly define success as outperforming their peers rather than mastering knowledge and skills.

Intrinsic motivation also tends to appear when certain cognitive factors are present, for example when students believe they are capable of successfully completing tasks, and when they feel in control of their lives.

According to Cameron, 2001 Extrinsic motivation can also promote learning. - Although intrinsic motivation is ideal, extrinsic motivation is not necessarily bad and is certainly better than having no motivation to learn. Students are often motivated by both an intrinsic desire to master the subject and the external rewards that such mastery will provide them - good grades, public recognition, access to educational opportunities and desired careers, etc.

Extrinsic motivation is problematic only when students prioritize external rewards over the intrinsic benefits of learning.

It is also important to note that students' intrinsic motivation to learn the subject matter does not usually appear suddenly, but rather emerges slowly, especially if students have previously been accustomed to receiving extrinsic reinforcement for their effort.

Teachers can take advantage of the role of emotion in learning. -There is no reason for academic subjects to be dull and emotionless. On the contrary, students will probably remember better if they have emotions about what they study. For example, a scientific discovery can be interesting. Realizing social injustices can make a student angry. A poem can bring peace and serenity. A very simple way to encourage positive emotion is for the teacher to model enthusiasm and interest in his or her subject matter - perhaps by bringing newspaper articles and other non-academic materials to class to discuss, presenting the material in a lively, or even passionate, way, and sharing questions and concerns that they themselves have about the subject matter.

Assessment of student performance must be described as a means of improving future performance rather than as a judgment of ability and worth. -Under optimal conditions, tests and other forms of classroom assessment can serve as effective motivators for student learning.

Thus, a classroom assessment instrument can be motivating for learning when students view it as a valid measure of course objectives, when they believe that success on the task is possible, and when they are confident that good performance will be rewarded rather than punished. Instructors and students must keep tests and other forms of assessment in an appropriate context, as a way of promoting learning and performance, especially over the long term, rather than as a means of making judgments about student ability or worth. Assessment procedures must provide frequent and informative feedback to the student about what he or she has mastered and how he or she can improve. Such procedures must also allow for errors as an inevitable part of the learning process. When students know they will have the opportunity to correct their mistakes, they are more likely to undertake challenging and risky tasks.

Students typically display high achievement motivation and thus benefit most from classroom instruction when they know they are capable of achieving educational objectives, when they believe the subject matter is valuable and interesting, and when they care more about learning than about looking good to their teacher and peers.

MEANINGFUL LEARNING

Ausubel (1968) states that meaningful learning is that in which the student converts the learning content into meanings for himself. This means that the student can relate, in a substantial and non-arbitrary way, the content and the task of learning with

what he already knows. In addition, Ausubel states that it is necessary for the student to be willing to reason and understand the content this way. Relating a new learning content, in a substantial and non-arbitrary way, with the cognitive structure present in the student, is to establish connections between the two types of content as something essential.

Ausubel states that the speed and thoroughness with which a person learns depend on two things: 1.- the degree of relationship existing between previous knowledge and new material. 2.- the nature of the relationship established between new and old information.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MEANINGFUL LEARNING

The characteristics of Meaningful Learning are:

New knowledge is incorporated in a substantive way into the student's cognitive structure.

This is achieved thanks to a deliberate effort by the student to relate the new knowledge with his/her previous knowledge.

All of the above is the product of an affective involvement of the student, that is, the student wants to learn what is presented to him/her because he/she considers it valuable.

In contrast, Rote Learning is characterized by:

New knowledge is incorporated arbitrarily into the student's cognitive structure.

The student does not make an effort to integrate the new knowledge with his/her previous knowledge.

The student does not want to learn, because he/she does not attach value to the content presented by the teacher.

ADVANTAGES OF MEANINGFUL LEARNING

Meaningful learning has clear advantages over rote learning:

It produces a longer retention of information, modifying the student's cognitive structure by rearranging it to integrate the new information.

It facilitates the acquisition of new knowledge related to what has already been learned in a meaningful way, since being clearly present in the cognitive structure facilitates its relationship with the new content.

The new information, when related to the previous information, is stored in the so-called long-term memory, where it is preserved beyond the forgetting of specific secondary details.

It is active, since it depends on the deliberate assimilation of learning activities by the student.

It is personal, since the significance of learning depends on the student's cognitive resources (previous knowledge and the way in which these are organized in the cognitive structure).

Despite these advantages, many students prefer to learn by rote, convinced by sad experience that teachers frequently evaluate learning through instruments that do not compromise any other competence than the recall of information, without verifying its understanding.

REQUIREMENTS FOR ACHIEVING MEANINGFUL LEARNING

According to Ausubel's theory (1968), in order to achieve meaningful learning, three conditions must be met:

1. Logical significance of the material. That is, the material presented must have an organized internal structure that is capable of giving rise to the construction of meanings. The concepts that the

teacher presents follow a logical and ordered sequence. That is, not only the content is important, but also the way in which it is presented.

2. Psychological significance of the material. This refers to the possibility that the student connects the knowledge presented with previous knowledge, already included in his cognitive structure. The contents are then understandable for the student. The student must contain inclusive ideas in his cognitive structure; if this is not the case, the student will store the information in short-term memory to answer a memorized test, and will later forget that content forever.

3. Favorable attitude of the student. We have already pointed out that the fact that the student wants to learn is not enough for meaningful learning to occur, since it is also necessary that the student be able to learn (logical and psychological significance of the material). However, learning cannot occur if the student does not want to learn. This is a component of emotional and attitudinal dispositions, which the teacher can only influence through motivation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This research will have a qualitative approach because it analyzes the reality of social coexistence using qualitative techniques to analyze and explain the problem to be investigated.

This research is based on the following research modalities:

Field research

Because for the execution of the research, information will be collected at the scene of the events and the researcher will interact with the environment of the problem.

Bibliographic research

Because sources of information such as

books and the Internet are used that will benefit the researcher.

Exploratory research. - Since it is intended to find the causes and consequences of the problem and diagnose the needs of the same.

Descriptive research. - Because it describes and explains the problem and its incidence, the steps that will be followed in the investigative process.

The type of research was exploratory, since it finds the causes and consequences of the problem and diagnoses as well as the needs of the same, instruments validated by experts were applied such as:

a survey directed to students of public higher education, from the province of Tungurahua, city of Ambato, and an interview directed to teachers of public higher education.

It must be noted at this point that the subject of English in higher education institutions in the city of Ambato is not considered within the curriculum of any degree, which is why students must go to the language center to be able to pass the required levels according to their curriculum.

If a student, regardless of the degree to which he belongs, is enrolled in the old curriculum, he must pass 4 levels of English, that is, up to level B1 plus, and then take a proficiency exam in which the score must be at least 8 points, in order to obtain the certificate and present it in his degree and thus continue with his degree process.

If the student belongs to the new curriculum, he will only have to pass 3 levels of a foreign language, that is, up to level B1, without the need for a proficiency exam, only with an average score of 7 points to obtain the certificate to present in his respective degree and continue with the degree process.

The English teachers interviewed belong to the language center of the Technical University of Ambato and teach at levels A1-A2-B1 and B1 plus.

It must be noted that universities in Ecuador are free to include the subject of English in their redesign of academic curriculum or to accept certificates of approval of the foreign language from a qualified language center, which is normally found as an academic support center within the same higher education institution.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

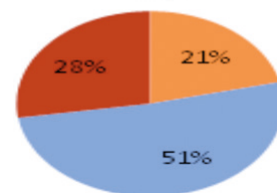
The LIKERT scale model was used to design the survey for students in order to evaluate the opinions and emotional attitudes of university students.

1.- Does the English teacher use motivational techniques in his/her classes?

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ALWAYS	24	21%
SOMETIMES	58	51%
NEVER	31	28%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table number 1

The teacher uses motivation techniques



Graph 1: A total of 21% of students say that the teacher ALWAYS uses motivational techniques in the classroom, 51% SOMETIMES and 28% NEVER of the students surveyed say that the teacher uses active motivational techniques.

INTERPRETATION

This means that the teacher is traditionalist in terms of teaching the English language and that his main objective is to cover the content of the subject without giving opportunity to motivation for better learning of the subject.

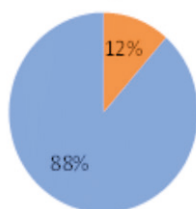
2.- Do you know any motivational techniques?

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
YES	13	12%
NO	100	88%
TOTAL	113	100%

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ALWAYS	38	37%
SOMETIMES	15	13%
NEVER	60	50%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table number 2

The person knows some motivation technique



Graph 2: A total of 12% of students say they know some motivation technique, 88% say they do not know any motivation technique.

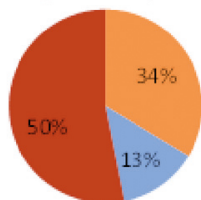
INTERPRETATION

This means that the teacher does not specify the name of the technique being applied, so the students do not remember it and it is difficult to apply it again on another occasion.

3.- How often does your teacher carry out dynamic activities for teaching the English language?

Table number 3

Your teacher performs dynamic activities



Graph 3: A total of 37% of students say that their teacher ALWAYS carries out some kind of dynamic activity in teaching English, 13% say SOMETIMES, 50% say NEVER

INTERPRETATION

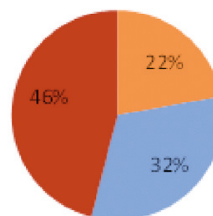
This means that classes are routine and monotonous without the opportunity for healthy recreation and group integration.

4.- Do you feel motivated in English classes?

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ALWAYS	25	22%
SOMETIMES	36	32%
NEVER	52	46%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table number 4

The person feels motivated



Graph 4: A total of 22% of students say they ALWAYS feel motivated during English classes, 32% say they SOMETIMES feel motivated, 46% say they NEVER feel motivated in English classes.

INTERPRETATION

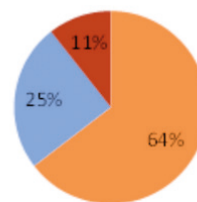
This means that students have little interest in learning and feel unmotivated most of the time during class time.

5.- Do you consider motivation important in English classes?

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ALWAYS	73	64%
SOMETIMES	28	25%
NEVER	12	11%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table number 5

Motivation is something important



Graph 5: A total of 64% of students consider that motivation is ALWAYS important in English classes, 25% say SOMETIMES, 11% say NEVER.

INTERPRETATION

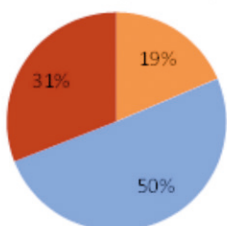
This means that students know that motivation significantly affects the teaching-learning process and therefore facilitates lasting learning of the English subject.

6.- Is your learning of the English subject lasting?

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ALWAYS	21	19%
SOMETIMES	57	50%
NEVER	35	31%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table number 6

Your learning is lasting



Graph 6: A total of 19% of students consider that their learning is ALWAYS lasting, 50% say SOMETIMES, 31% say NEVER.

INTERPRETATION

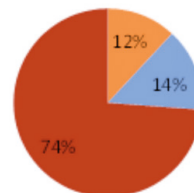
This means that knowledge of the subject is forgotten over time and most of the knowledge they acquire in English classes is mechanical and short-lived.

7.- When you learn a topic in English class, do you reinforce it at home?

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ALWAYS	8	7%
SOMETIMES	43	38%
NEVER	62	55%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table number 7

When a person learns a topic, he reinforces it.



Graph 7: A total of 7% of students say they ALWAYS reinforce their knowledge at home, 38% say SOMETIMES and 55% say NEVER.

INTERPRETATION

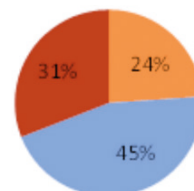
This means that the knowledge acquired during English class hours is not reinforced by practicing it at home, causing students to forget what they learned in class.

8.- Does your teacher reinforce your previous knowledge with practical exercises in English classes?

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ALWAYS	27	24%
SOMETIMES	51	45%
NEVER	35	31%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table number 8

The teacher reinforces his knowledge



Graph 8: A total of 24% of students say that their English teacher ALWAYS reinforces their previous knowledge with practical exercises, 45% say that SOMETIMES, and 31% say that their teacher NEVER carries out any type of activity to reinforce the knowledge acquired.

INTERPRETATION

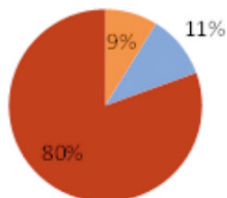
This means that there is no type of feedback to the students from the teacher, which generates forced learning of the subject.

9.- When you do not understand a topic in class, do you ask questions to the teacher of the subject?

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
ALWAYS	10	9%
SOMETIMES	12	11%
NEVER	91	80%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table number 9

The person asks questions when he or she does not understand a topic.



Graph 9: When they do not understand a topic, 9% say that they ALWAYS ask questions when they do not understand a topic, 11% say that they SOMETIMES, 80% say that they NEVER ask questions when they do not understand the subject in class.

INTERPRETATION

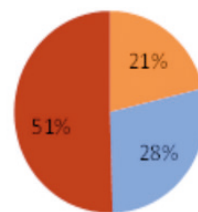
This means that there is no favorable environment for the development of meaningful learning since the student creates gaps in his mind regarding what he learned in class.

10.- What is the best way to learn English?

ALTERNATIVE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
READING	24	21%
WRITING	32	28%
PLAYING	57	51%
TOTAL	113	100%

Table number 10

The best way to learn English



Graph 10: A total of 21% of students say that reading is the best way to learn English, 28% say that writing is better for learning English, while 51% say that playing is better for learning English.

INTERPRETATION

This means that for students, playing games in the classroom is the best method to learn English and integrate as a study team.

TABULATION OF DATA COLLECTED WITH THE INTERVIEW DIRECTED TO TEACHERS

INFORMATIVE DATA:

Names and Surnames: Position held:

Years of work in the place: Date:

Number	Questions	Teachers' responses	Conclusions
1	Do you consider motivation to be essential for teaching English?	1. Yes 2. Sometimes 3. No	Motivation is not considered essential.
2	What active motivational techniques do you use in your classes?	1. Conversations 2. Group work 3. Readings 4. Games	Teachers are unaware of active motivation techniques

Table number 11

CONCLUSIONS OF THE INTERVIEW APPLIED TO TEACHERS

- 1.- Motivation is not considered essential in teaching
- 2.- Teachers are unaware of active motivation techniques

STATISTICAL CALCULATION

Observed frequencies

Alternatives questions	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
Do you consider motivation to be essential for teaching English?	38	15	60	113
Do you feel motivated in English classes?	25	36	52	113
Is your learning of English lasting?	21	57	35	113
When you learn a topic in English class, do you reinforce it at home?	8	43	62	113
Total	92	151	209	452

Table number 12. Expected Frequencies

Alternative questions	Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
How often does your English teacher do dynamic activities in class?	23	37.8	52.2	113
Do you feel motivated in English classes?	23	37.8	52.2	113
Is your learning of English lasting?	23	37.8	52.2	113
When you learn a topic in English class, do you reinforce it at home?	23	37.8	52.2	113
Total	92	151	209	452

Table number 13. CHI SQUARE CALCULATION

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
38	23	15	225	9.8
25	23	2	4	0.2
21	23	-2	4	0.2
8	23	-15	225	9.78
15	37.8	-22.8	519.84	13.8
36	37.8	-1.8	3.24	0.1
57	37.8	19.2	368.64	9.8
43	37.8	5.2	27.04	0.1
60	52.2	7.8	60.84	1.2
52	52.2	-0.2	0.04	0.0
35	52.2	-17.2	295.84	5.7
62	52.2	9.8	96.04	1.8
TOTAL				52.5

Table number 14

For a bilateral contrast of the Chi square with 6 degrees of freedom and 5% significance the value is 12.5916 and the calculated value is 52.5, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted:

Active motivation techniques do influence the meaningful learning of university students.

CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained clearly show us the need to take into account the application of the learning styles that each student has, in order to make the teaching process more meaningful and the permanence of knowledge long-term and this way generate a productive student suitable for the demands of globalized modernity in the use of a foreign language both for communication and for professional performance.

From there we have the four skills of learning the English language:

Knowing how to write - knowing how to listen - Knowing how to read - knowing how to speak.

These are the pillars of the language teaching-learning process that is framed in the COMMON EUROPEAN FRAMEWORK OF REFERENCE FOR LANGUAGES, which is the international standard that defines linguistic competence.

In order for the teaching-learning process of the English language in university students, it is very important to take into account the different learning styles that each student has in order to achieve that emotional intelligence becomes positive and produces in them the intrinsic motivation necessary for the English language to be internalized, learned and put into practice in the best way, also influenced by the external motivation of the activities that the teacher has planned in accordance with the subject of the class and the linguistic skill to be practiced.

The activities that are planned for the English class can be of the following types:

Visual – auditory – kinesthetic – reading and writing. In order to strengthen the extrinsic motivation that students need in their daily process of handling a foreign language in their daily lives and also apply it effectively in their academic performance.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Isabel Ruiz: A positive emotional intelligence will generate an effective intrinsic motivation for meaningful learning of English as a foreign language.

Diego Granja and **Dr. Astrid Vargas:** Support in knowledge in the area of teaching English as a foreign language in higher education.

Eduardo Vaca: Support in knowledge in the area of educational psychology in higher education institutions.

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