# Motivation analysis of 4th ESO students in the English classroom: A Case Study

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**Abstract**

Recent research on motivation emphasizes the importance of motivational strategies in the English classroom as a major contributing factor to students' motivation. Consequently, the present study reports the effectiveness that motivation strategies have on students using Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (2009) and motivational strategies proposal (2001) as the main theoretical framework. The purpose of this research is to find a relationship among the students' motivation types, their beliefs of the factors that motivate them the most, their future L2 self-vision (Dörnyei, 2009), and their response to the motivational strategies. Two rounds of interviews and a classroom observation are carried out to collect mostly qualitative data from 9 fourth-grade English students at a high school in Osona. The results of the study reveal a correlation among the variables studied and the motivation strategies implemented during the Practicum period of the trainee teacher and confirm that motivational strategies have a positive reception and effect among students.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Motivational Strategies, Types of Motivation, The L2 Motivational Self System, Future L2 Self Images

**Resum**

Els estudis més recents sobre motivació han destacat la importància de les estratègies de motivació a l'aula d'anglès qualificant-les com un dels factors que més contribueixen en la motivació de l'alumnat. Per consegüent, aquest estudi exposa l'efectivitat de les estratègies de motivació a l'aula tot utilitzant la teoria del Sistema Motivacional del Jo de Dörnyei (2009) i les seves estratègies de motivació (2001) com a marc teòric. L'objectiu d'aquest treball és conèixer la relació entre el tipus de motivació dels estudiants, les seves creences sobre la motivació, la seva «visió futura del Jo utilitzant l'L2» (Dörnyei, 2005, 2009), i la seva resposta a les estratègies de motivació. Els participants de l'estudi són 9 alumnes de 4t d'ESO d'un institut d'Osona, als quals s'ha administrat dues rondes d'entrevista i se'ls fa una observació a l'aula. Els resultats de l'estudi revelen una correlació entre les variables estudiades i les estratègies de motivació utilitzades durant el Pràcticum de la professora de pràctiques i confirmen que les estratègies de motivació tenen una recepció i efecte positius entre els estudiants.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Motivation is an essential factor in the language learning process. It is a complex concept that has been considered as one of the most influencing factors of the second language (L2) learning process by theorists and researchers in the field (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1999; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Saravia & Bernaus, 2008). Motivation furnishes the initial impetus to start learning a foreign language and grants the continuation of the later learning process (Dörnyei, 2001). But in fact, "it is highly unlikely that everybody can be motivated to learn everything, and even generally motivated students are not equally keen on every subject matter" (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 25). Therefore, unmotivated students, incapable of gathering enough involvement to their study, cannot develop proper L2 skills. As Dörnyei and Csizér (1998, p. 203) acknowledge, "without sufficient motivation, even individuals with the most remarkable abilities cannot accomplish long-term goals, and neither are appropriate curricula and good teaching enough to ensure student achievement".

Due to its importance in the language learning process, motivation has been a crucial object of research and theoretical work. For the last 50 years, many theoretical approaches have tried to determine the factors that influenced L2 learners in terms of motivation. Motivation research started with Gardner and Lambert's (1972) study, which presented the concepts of integrativeness and instrumentality. Later, in the 1990s, the cognitive period arrived, introducing new perspectives, such as the self-determination theory. The newest study on motivation is Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) Self System, which comprises the Ideal L2 Self, the Ought-to L2 Self, and the L2 Learning Experience. Since it includes other conceptualizations, is a good base to study motivation.

However, teachers and researchers started to feel the need of finding out how all the theoretical knowledge could be implemented in the classrooms. Therefore, some researchers proceeded to conceptualize specific motivational strategies that would help the teacher community motivate their students (Dörnyei, 2001; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013).

The present case study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Dörnyei's motivational strategies (2001) in terms of motivation within the specific context of fourth-grade English students in a high school in Osona.

In order to comprehend how research on motivation evolved until the conceptualization of motivational strategies, this dissertation first reviews the literature related to the study of motivation. It briefly presents the main motivational theories,

starting with the Socio-Psychological Period, the change of paradigm into the Cognitive Period, and the reasons why they evolved into the L2 Motivational Self System. It also addresses the importance of the study of motivation within the foreign language learning process. After having examined the theoretical background of the study of motivation and its importance, the objectives of the paper are fully detailed, and research questions and initial hypotheses are presented. In the following section, the methodology of the study is presented, where the participants, instruments, and data analysis are depicted. Following the methodology, the results are shown and commented. The discussion aims to find correlations between L2 learners' motivation and their motivation type, beliefs, and Self vision. This thesis finally tries to reveal how the findings can be useful for the language teacher community.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The term 'motivation' comes from the Latin verb "movere" meaning "to move or to answer a particular stimulus (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Medina, 2014). This term is frequently used when talking about success or failure in the language learning process (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008). It is thought that teacher's capacity to motivate students is a crucial factor, but what is motivation? Dörnyei (2001) claims that:

> Strictly speaking, *there is no such thing as 'motivation'*. […] 'motivation' is an abstract, hypothetical concept that we use to explain why people think and behave as they do. […] Thus, 'motivation' is best seen as a broad umbrella term that covers a variety of meanings (p. 1).

Therefore, the grandeur of this term has led to several different theories during the last years of research history. It is important to note that even though these theories have their particularities, all of them agree when considering that motivation involves the processes of activating, directing, and persisting people's conduct (Good & Brophy, 1983; Beltrán, 1993, as cited in González *et al.*, 1996).

Al-Hoorie (2017) distinguishes 3 phases of research in the language motivation field. In the first phase, we find the Social-Psychological Period, which focuses on the macro perspective of language level and motivation as a success factor in the learning process, and whose main researchers are Gardner, Lambert, and Clément. In the second phase, we find the Cognitive Period, which reduces its focus at the classroom context and the cognitive processes of language learning and whose main researchers are Ryce, Deci, and Dörnyei, and the third phase, corresponding to the Current Period, with takes into consideration dynamic aspects, such as affect, emotions, and the unconscious, and whose main researchers are the newest studies of Dörnyei, Ushioda, Al-Hoorie, the Horowitz, and Cope.

Research on language motivation has its origins with the Social-Psychological Period (1959-1990), characterized by the work of three social psychologists, Robert Gardner (and his associates in Canada), Wallace Lambert, and Richard Clément. In 1959, the two former ones conducted a study in Montreal to prove that the relations among different groups and their objectives, attitude, and specific language characteristics were of great importance within language learning (Medina, 2014, p. 72). They considered that

second languages allowed communication between two ethnolinguistic communities. Thus, motivation to learn about the language and culture of the other community was a key factor in the behavior of L2 learners, and that is the reason why, to them, attitude towards language learning motivation differed clearly from other types of learning motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Al-Hoorie, 2017). Therefore, Gardner believed that the degree of motivation of a student towards the learning contents is conditioned by what the student pretends to obtain from such activity (Saravia & Bernaus, 2008, p. 164).

The first concept they introduced is *integrativeness*, defined by them as 'reflecting a sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group in order to come closer to them' (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 132; Gardner, 2001, p. 5, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). To better explain this concept, Gardner and Lambert (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 12, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) use the parallelism of the process that infants undergo when acquiring their first language, where they attempt to imitate the verbalizations of their caregivers, with the only difference that this process would 'extend to the whole ethnolinguistic community'. The second concept they introduced is *instrumentality*, which depicts the potential pragmatic gains of L2 proficiency, such as obtaining a better job or a higher salary (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011). Gardner's social approach was so influential that most of the studies developed before 1990 all over the world adopted this model (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).
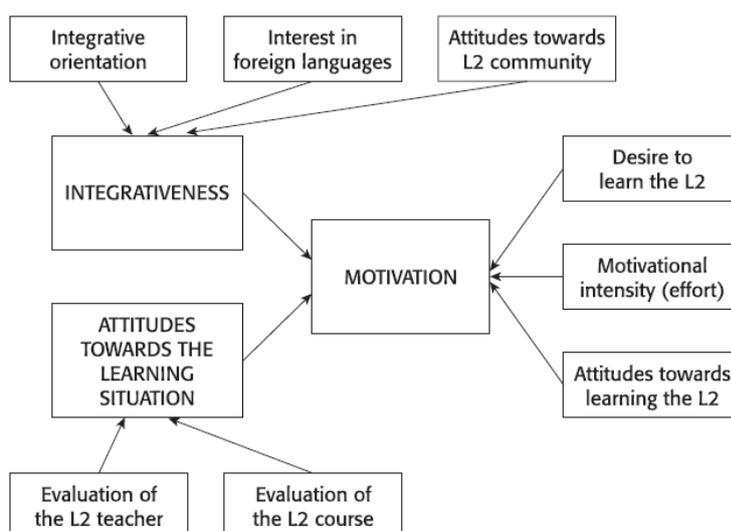


Figure 1. Gardner's conceptualization of the integrative motive (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

The *integrative motive*, defined by Gardner as the 'motivation to learn a second language because of positive feelings towards the community that speaks the language'

(Gardner, 1985, pp. 82-83, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011), is composed of three parts: *integrativeness*, which reflects the willingness and interest in social interaction with members of other groups, *attitudes towards the learning situation*, such as the language teacher and the L2 course, and *motivation*, which includes effort, desire and attitude towards learning (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 42).

Lastly, but not less important, during this period, Richard Clément had another framework in mind. He included the social context model (with the concept of 'self-confidence') to the motivational research paradigm proposed by Gardner and Lambert (Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013; Al-Hoorie, 2017).

But the 1990s arrived, and as Dörnyei and Ushioda (Dörnyei and Ushioda, 2009) point out:

> The world traversed by the L2 learner has changed dramatically – it is now increasingly characterized by linguistic and sociocultural diversity and fluidity, where language use, ethnicity, identity, and hybridity have become complex tropical issues and the subject of significant attention in sociolinguistic research (p. 1).

With Globalization, and English being a global language used not by one or two ethnicities, but by multiple communities all over the world, the concept of 'integrativeness' started to bring dissatisfaction. How could we speak of integrative orientation when there was not a specific target community of the L2 speakers, but so many of them? There clearly were some L2 motivational aspects that had not been taken into consideration. A reconceptualization of the Socio-Psychological Period which would better adjust to the society of the moment called the Cognitive Period would appear (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009) with new research on the subject (Brown, 1990, 1994; Clément *et al*., 1994; Crookes and Schmidt, 1991; Dörnyei, 1994a 1994b; Julkunen, 1989; Oxford and Shearin, 1994, and Skehan, 1989, 1991; as cited in Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998).

The new Cognitive Period was characterized by more classroom-oriented research (Dörnyei, 1996, as cited in Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998), and the researchers hypothesized that motives that were closely related to the situation and context were more influential to the L2 motivation than previously thought (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Dörnyei (1994, as cited in Dörnyei, 2001) distinguishes three levels of influence in the motivation of L2 learners: the *language level*, which includes components of the L2, like the culture or the

community (coinciding with Gardner's theory), the *learner level*, which encompasses individual characteristics, such as the self-confidence (coinciding with Clément's theory), and the *learning situation level*, which involves specific elements of the classroom setting, like course components (syllabus, teaching materials, etc.), teacher components (personality, teaching style, etc.), and group components (characteristics of the group).

In this second period, two key concepts arise: on the one hand, we find *extrinsic motivation*, which is the doing of an action because of an extrinsic factor that entails external rewards, such as a good grade or winning an award. On the other hand, we find the concept of *intrinsic motivation*, the doing of an action because of an intrinsic factor that entails an internal reward, like the own satisfaction and positive experience of having achieved something. This is how the Self-Determination theory was conceptualized (Deci & Ryan, 1985, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; 2000). The attitudes that are intrinsically motivated are those that individuals do due to the positive experience they entail in their performance, so individuals would keep doing them even if they were not compulsory. These attitudes do not follow Skinner's model (1953, as cited in Medina, 2014), because when carrying out an interesting activity, it is *per se* rewarding and it does not need any positive reinforcement. Intrinsic motivation presupposes that people have an active nature and when performing interesting activities, they learn in multiple ways (Medina, 2014). In that sense, intrinsic motivation follows the constructivist theory (Piaget, 1965, as cited in Medina, 2014).
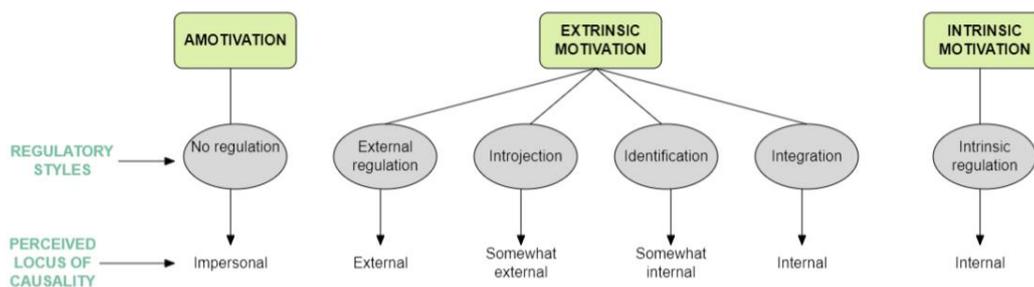


Figure 2. A representation of Ryan and Deci's taxonomy of human motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

As Figure 2 shows, Ryan and Deci believe there are three main types of motivation: *intrinsic motivation* (right), *external motivation* (middle), and *amotivation* (left). Intrinsic motivation has already been mentioned, but I believe it is important to discuss amotivation and extrinsic motivation to a greater extent, since the latter one encompasses

four subcategories: external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation.

Ryan and Deci define *amotivation* as lacking an intention to act (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61), and it appears when we do not value it or we do not feel we are competent enough to do it (Ryan, 1995; Deci, 1975, as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000). Some studies (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986) claim that anxiety is one of the factors that cause poor student motivation.

Just to the right of the last-mentioned category, but within external motivation, we find *external regulation,* which is the last self-determined form of extrinsic motivation (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 24). We act within external regulation motivation when we want to satisfy an external demand or obtain an externally imposed reward Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 61), such as teacher's praise or parental confrontation.

Then comes *introjected regulation*, which are actions done because students under pressure feel guilty unless they do them. In order to enhance or maintain self-esteem and feel worth it, students use this type of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

A third type of extrinsic motivation is *identified regulation*, which occurs when the person identifies the usefulness of an action and accepts the behavior, like memorizing the forms of English irregular verbs (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011).

And finally, the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation is *integrated regulation*, which happens when identified regulations have been totally assimilated to the self (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 62).

Giving a new insight into the traditional theories, some of the most innovative researchers reached the conclusion that research in motivation had to take into consideration other aspects, such as the social context, identity, and the self-vision of the learners. And that is why the theory of the L2 Motivational Self-System was created (Dörnyei 2005, 2009). Dörnyei had been inspired by the *possible selves* theory, introduced by Markus and Nurius (1986, as cited in Al-Hoorie, 2018), and the theory of the *ought selves*, introduced by Higgins (1987, as cited in Al-Hoorie, 2018; Medina, 2014; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009). On the one hand, the *possible selves* concept represents the three main types of the self: what we *might* become, *would like* to become, and are *afraid of* becoming (Markus & Nurius, 1986, p. 954, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, p. 11). This theory allowed to better identify and analyze the feelings and thoughts that people experienced in terms of motivation. On the other hand, Higgin's (1987) theory introduces the concepts of the *ideal self* (the person one would ideally be) and the *ought*

*self* (the person that one thinks one ought to possess), adding the idea that the ideal and ought self can derive from either the individual's own or someone else's views Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, p. 13).

As we have mentioned, from these theories Dörnyei (2005) introduces the L2 Motivational Self System, which encompasses the three different foreign language types of motivation: the *ideal L2 self*, the *ought-to L2 self*, and the *L2 learning experience*.

The *L2 self*, also known as the L2-specific facet of one's 'ideal self' (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009, p. 29), represents the ideal person one would like to become in the future, thus picturing one's own wishes and hopes. The *ought-to L2 self* designates the person that others would want one to reach or the attributes that one believes one ought to possess in order to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes from others. On the last term, the *L2 learning experience* refers to one's own experience of the immediate learning environment and experience, concerning aspects like the curriculum, teacher, and peers (Al-Hoorie, 2018; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Csizér & Illés, 2020; Dörnyei & Chan, 2013).

This new categorization, in a sense, picks up Gardner's (1985) idea of integrativeness, because the identification of the speaker is connected to the speakers of the L2. In fact, some years before developing the theory, Dörnyei already had in mind the importance of the self-vision when Csizér and he claimed that it is not necessarily what someone knows or can do which will determine their L2 use but rather what they think they know or can do (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998, p. 216). In the same line, Csizér and Illés sustain that the learner's selves have an impact on both the L2 motivation and the learning process (2020).

As we have observed, motivational psychologists had been more concerned about describing what motivation is and the factors that influence it than studying how to motivate learners (Csizér & Illés, 2020). However, some researchers started giving a new insight to motivational strategies organized in a systematic way that teachers could use to motivate their students (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Brophy, 2004; Dörnyei & Murphey, as cited in Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2009; Hadfield & Dörnyei, 2013). The present study tries to answer the following question: are the proposed motivational strategies effective in L2 classrooms?

Motivational strategies are (a) instructional interventions applied by the teacher to elicit and stimulate student motivation and (b) self-regulating strategies that are used purposefully by individual students to manage the level of their own motivation

(Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p. 57), and Dörnyei (2001, p. 28) adds that they are motivational influences that are consciously exerted to achieve some systematic and enduring positive effect.

Many researchers claim that motivational strategies are a key factor in the language learning process (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008; Dörnyei, 2001), although Dörnyei (2001) firmly believes that, in order to maximize their effectiveness, such strategies must be approached within *comprehensiveness* (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 28); in other terms, they need to be a continuous process in time. Therefore, Dörnyei (2001, p. 30) proposes a set of thirty strategies classified into a parsimonious system composed of four main dimensions:



**Creating the basic motivational conditions**
- Appropriate teacher behaviours
- A pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere
- A cohesive learner group with appropriate group norms

**Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation**
- Promoting motivational attributions
- Providing motivational feedback
- Increasing learner satisfaction
- Offering rewards and grades in a motivating manner

**Motivational teaching practice**

**Generating initial motivation**
- Enhancing the learners' L2-related values and attitudes
- Increasing the learners' expectancy of success
- Increasing the learners' goal-orientedness
- Making the teaching materials relevant for the learners
- Creating realistic learner beliefs

**Maintaining and protecting motivation**
- Making learning stimulating
- Presenting tasks in a motivating way
- Setting specific learner goals
- Protecting the learners' self-esteem and increasing their self-confidence
- Allowing learners to maintain a positive social image
- Promoting cooperation among the learners
- Creating learner autonomy
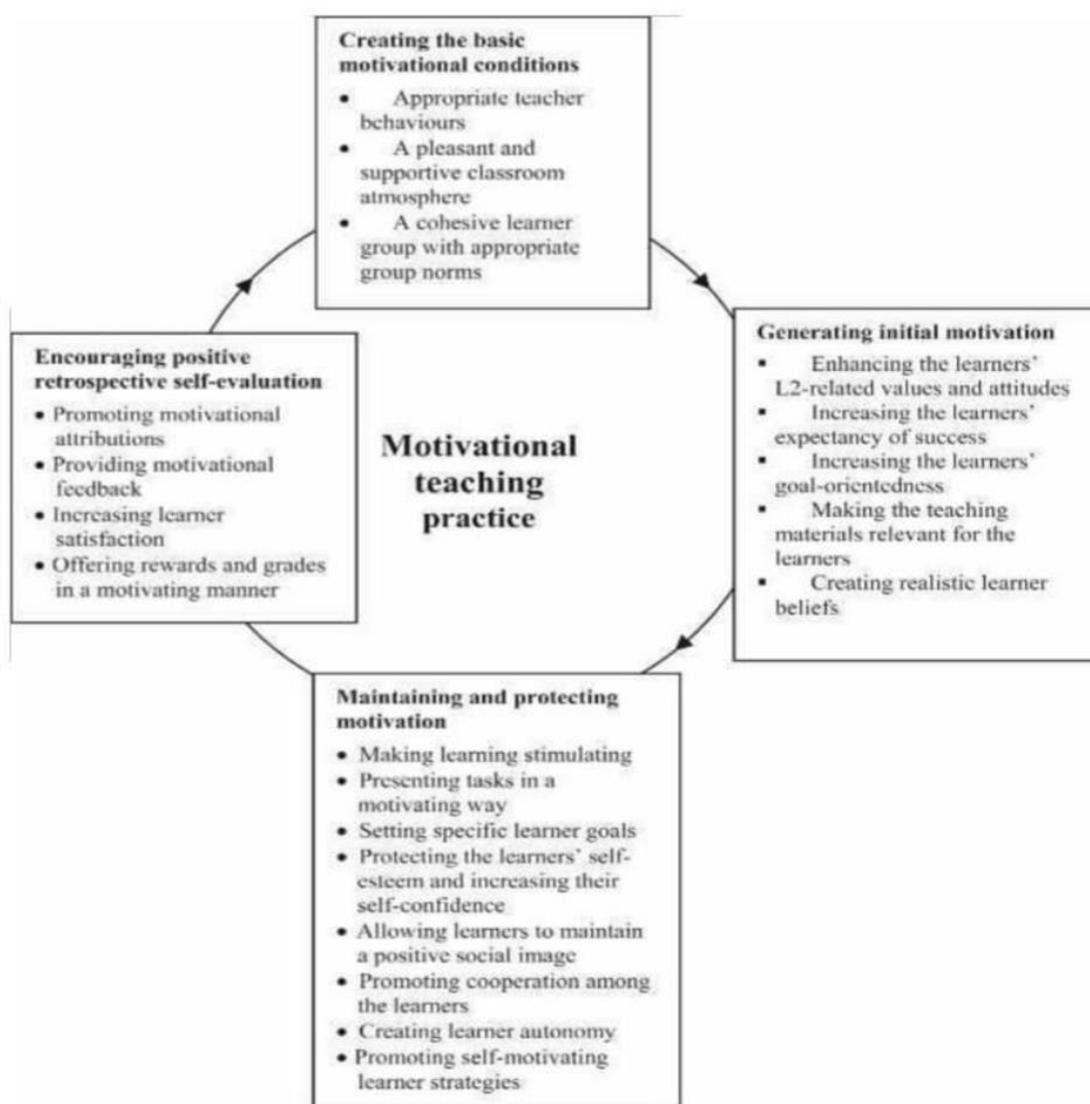- Promoting self-motivating learner strategies

Figure 3. The components of motivational teaching practice in the L2 classroom (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 29)

- Creating the basic motivational conditions: such as a good teacher-student rapport, a relaxed environment, and a cohesive group.

- Generating initial motivation: create positive attitudes towards the L2 and increase the students' expectancy of success.

- Maintaining and protecting motivation: proposing enjoyable and relevant tasks and promoting their autonomy.

- Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation: provide positive feedback, their own self-assessment, and grading in a motivational manner (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008).

All thirty strategies are based on the idea that both the attitude and the teachers' beliefs have a direct effect on students' motivation to learn the foreign language. However, since thirty strategies make a huge amount, Dörnyei and Csizér (1996) reduced the list to ten macro strategies, which they called 'Ten commandments for motivating language learners'. The ten commandments were the ten most used macro strategies by the two hundred teachers who participated in their study, in Hungary. The list is presented below (Dörnyei & Csizér. 1996, pp. 215-8):

1. Set a personal example with your own behavior.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
3. Present the tasks properly.
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners.
5. Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence.
6. Make the language classes interesting.
7. Promote learner autonomy.
8. Personalize the learning process.
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness.
10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate motivation, but due to the complexity of the subject, it only focuses on a very specific part of it, which are the motivation strategies proposed by Dörnyei (2001) and their effectiveness in the English classroom. It is also noteworthy to mention that motivation is unstable and inconstant.

Thus, the results shown in this research might not be the same in another context, or they might as well vary given this research was performed a second time with the very same participants.

This research addresses the question of the motivational strategies proposed by Dörnyei (2001) and their effectiveness in a real L2 learning context, the 4th grade in a high school in Osona. Given that Dörnyei is one of the most innovative researchers in the motivation field, and that he provides a parsimonious system for classifying motivational strategies (2001) based on the results of previous research studies, this paper aims to see whether the implementation of some carefully chosen Dörnyei's motivational strategies in an L2 didactic unit has a positive impact among students (in terms of their types of motivation, beliefs about their own L2 motivation, and vision of the L2 self) or not, and to which extent the language learner's motivation types influence this reception.

Having considered the purpose of the study and its three variables, the research questions of this study are the following:

1) Regarding motivation, do students receive Dörnyei's motivation strategies in a positive way?
2) Is the student's reception of the motivational strategies related to their language motivation type, their beliefs about their own L2 motivation or the vision of their future L2 self, and if so, to what extent?

The hypotheses of the study are that students receive positively the implementation of Dörnyei's motivational strategies and that there exists a correlation between the three variables and their reaction to the strategies. Regarding variable 1, the students' motivation type, it is not expected to change after the intervention. Regarding variable 2, the students' beliefs on the factors that influence their motivation, it is expected to change in some of the profiles, especially for the students who display an extrinsic motivation profile. Finally, regarding variable 3, the students' vision of the L2 self, it is expected to improve in all profiles.

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. General methodology and participants

The aim of the present study is to investigate the effectiveness that Dörnyei's motivational techniques have on students in the English classroom and understand whether these strategies have any impact on the students' type of motivation, personal beliefs, or future vision of the L2 Self.

This study mainly follows the qualitative approach, and it is based on two rounds of interviews and a classroom observation, although when analyzing the general tendencies of the group participants, the quantitative methodology is used. Nonetheless, since it is a case study based on a reduced sample of students, we do not attempt to extrapolate the results, although they might be analogous in a similar context.

The participants of the study are 9 students from class B of 4th of ESO (15-16 years old) in a high school located in a small town in Osona. Most students in this centre come from local families of middle and upper socioeconomic status. All participants in the study speak Catalan as first language (L1), and English as second language (L2). These specific students have been carefully selected by their tutor. I asked her to provide three apparently motivated students regarding the English class, three students with normal levels level of motivation regarding the English class, and three students without motivation.

I do not consider the gender of the students to be of any importance to the study. Thus, I will not differentiate between boys and girls. For the present study, I asked the teacher to help me and choose 9 of her students. Within the selected students, the teacher was instructed to provide 3 highly motivated students, 3 students with normal levels of motivation, and 3 students without motivation for the English subject. In order to preserve the anonymity of the students, I will address them by numbers. The three presumed highly motivated students will be called student 1, student 2, student 3, the three presumed students with normal levels of motivation will be student 4, student 5, and student 6, and the presumed students without motivation will be student 7, student 8, and student 9.

They all study English 3 hours per week as a compulsory subject. State schools in the province have a similar learning environment regarding curriculum, materials, and assessment methods: they follow the syllabus provided by the Ministry of Education of Catalonia. Therefore, their exposure to English is similar in other learning contexts.

The last grade students of the centre were chosen for the present study due to different reasons. Firstly, they were the only grade I could attend given the current

situation derived from COVID-19[1], and secondly, they were the most mature students of the centre in terms of age, so their ideal-self representation was more accurate.


**3.2. Data collection tools**

The design of instruments to obtain data was crucial for this study. Data is fully collected from the same nine students. Two instruments of research have been used: an interview, which will be performed twice (before and after my teaching intervention), and a classroom observation.

<u>Interviews</u> (to students): They contain questions to determine the three main variables of the study: the students' motivation type (intrinsic, extrinsic, integrative, instrumental, cultural, social, etc.), beliefs (about their own motivation), and ideal-self future representation of the L2. This interview is carried out twice, at the beginning of February (before the intervention), and at the end of March (after the intervention). The results from the first interview will be matched with the ones from the second, and conclusions will be drawn.

To approach variable 1, I ask a general question about their motivation when studying English (question 1 of the interview). I hope for an elaborate free speech of the student in which I later identify his or her type of motivation, although I also prepared some hints or back-up questions (1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1g, 1h, and 2i) to guide the student in case the student does not say much about it on his or her own. I must guarantee that I have as much evidence as possible to classify their type of motivation. These questions have been designed by me, but I have taken into consideration many previous research studies, such as Dörnyei, 2001; García & Doménech, 1997; González, Valle, Núñez, & González-Pineda, 1996, Ryan & Deci, 2000, and Taguchi *et al.*, 2009.

To approach variable 2, I make the students arrange a list of eight factors that contribute to their motivation towards English (topic, difficulty of the subject, activity type, teacher, self-mood, classmates' mood, prizes as rewards, relationship with an exam or mark) from most relevant to least relevant (according to their perspective) in order to know what their beliefs about their own motivation factors are (question 2 of the interview). I finally ask for specific examples (question 3) and a question related to the

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[1] The policy that this institute adopted with regard to the sanitary measures to deal with COVID-19 establishes that trainee teachers can only attend the classes of one grade. In my case, I can only attend the 4th grade.

motivation they experienced in the project called 'Discovering Professionals' —detailed in the next section—, which was introduced during the intervention of the trainee teacher (question 4, administered only in the second round of interviews). These questions have been designed by me.

To approach variable 3, I ask the students about their own current and future vision of the L2 self. They vary from general questions about the current L2 self (question 5, 5a, 5b, 5c, and 5d), to specific ones (question 6) to determine the future selves of the L2 students. Question 6 has been adapted from an activity proposed by Hadfield & Dörnyei (pp. 36-41, 2013) and Dörnyei & Chan 2013 (pp. 452-453). Finally, I have included two more questions about the future-selves (7 and 8). This section of the interview, which corresponds with variable 3, is based on Hadfield & Dörnyei (pp. 300-301, 2013) and Taguchi *et al*. (2009), but I have adapted all the questions according to the context of my research.

The questions of the interview were previously validated by a committee of experts led by Dr. Llorenç Comajoan, and before being administered to the students, it was piloted with two students of the same age. Such processes helped guarantee that all the questions were clear enough and students would not misunderstand any of them.

Classroom observations: I gathered data related to the students' particular reactions of Dörnyei's motivational techniques that have been introduced throughout the project *Discovering Professionals*, designed by the trainee teacher, and included in the practicum didactic unit (throughout the sessions corresponding to the month of March). In order to influence as little as possible on students' behaviour, it is imperative that the nine students are not aware that they are being analysed. The observation takes into consideration many aspects among the categories of attitude, participation, and volunteer work. The observation chart used to collect data was adapted from Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008) and Estaire (2004).

### 3.3. *Discovering Professionals* and Motivational strategies

The trainee teacher developed the didactic unit she was meant to teach through a project that she called 'Discovering Professionals'. Although the project was created by her, it included some of the competences and contents established by the foreign language curriculum that is provided by la Generalitat de Catalunya (2015). This project included the following contents: the job world (vocabulary), the reported speech (grammar), the formal letter to apply for a job (writing), and the job interview (listening and speaking).

The students were divided into cooperative groups and they were presented with a challenge: discovering the academic, linguistic, and professional career of a real unknown person. To find out everything about their subject, students were only given their job title. From there, they had to come up with questions to gather all the information they needed, and they had to record themselves and send the interview to the person, who also replied with an audiovisual answer. From that video, the students had to collect the most relevant information and write it using reported speech on a web page they created with the profile of the professional. In the end, all groups orally presented their findings to the rest of the group.

On the occasion of this study, the trainee teacher intentionally filled the project with motivational strategies. A total of 11 motivational strategies were chosen, and all of them were extracted from Dörnyei's proposals (2001), including at least one strategy from each of the four categories defined by the author —as Dörnyei recommends—: regarding the category *Creating the basic motivational conditions* (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 31), strategies 1, 2, and 6 were chosen. For the second category, *Generating initial motivation* (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 50), strategies 9, 10, 11, 12, and 15 were introduced. As for *Maintaining and protecting motivation* (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 71), strategies 18 and 21 were selected. And lastly, regarding *Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation* (Dörnyei, 2001, p. 117), strategy 35 was chosen.

Before detailing the motivational strategies, the didactic unit taught by the trainee teacher should be briefly explained. This didactic unit, corresponding to unit 4, was about the topic of working life, so students worked on vocabulary, listening tasks, reading tasks, etc. about jobs. The grammar topic in this unit was reported speech, and the writing and speaking tasks were related to the job interview. The trainee teacher was asked to create a project that included all contents of the unit, and it is precisely in this project, called 'Discovering Professionals', where all motivational strategies were mainly introduced.

Regarding the first category, **strategy 1** concerns the teacher's attitude, which must be enthusiastic and passionate about the subject and caring about the students. **Strategy 2**, which also concerns the teacher's attitude, recommends building a strong relationship with students. **Strategy 6** concerns the class group, and Dörnyei stresses the importance of group cohesion. Therefore, nearly all the activities of the didactic unit were done following the methodology of cooperative groups, where students work in groups of 4 or 5 participants. Cooperative learning, as Caballero-García *et al.* (2014) claim, is the pillar of the 21$^{st}$ century education, and it helps promote independent learning and

makes students assume responsibility for their own learning. This methodology inverts the traditional roles in education: the student becomes the protagonist of the teaching-learning process and the teacher acquires a second but fundamental role of guidance.

Regarding the second category, **strategy 9** recommends showing imitable models and inviting former students to class to explain the difficulties that they encountered while learning the L2. Dörnyei also underlines the importance of having a class booklet (or similar) to share personal experiences with the whole class. In the project *Discovering Professionals*, students interviewed young real professionals about their current jobs, academic studies, and relationship with English, and finally created a web page with different sections (one for each professional) where they explained everything they had learned using *reported speech*, thus practicing the grammar topic of the unit. **Strategy 10** highlights the need of presenting tasks that entail a challenge for students at the same time they are of the students' interest. The project *Discovering Professionals* entailed the challenge of getting to know a real person from scratch (students were only told their jobs), so they had to figure out the right questions to make to obtain the information they needed. At the same time, they had to record themselves and make use of digital tools to create the website, which they enjoyed. **Strategy 11** stresses the need of showing students positive opinions about the L2, encouraging them to investigate speakers of the L2, and foment the real contact between students and L2 speakers. The project *Discovering Professionals* guaranteed all three actions. **Strategy 12** claims the need to stress the instrumental value of speaking the L2, which is precisely what all professionals did in the interview when they were asked about the use of English in their professional careers. **Strategy 15** insists on the importance of the presence of a unifying thread throughout all tasks, which was obtained in this unit thanks to the creation of the project *Discovering Professionals*.

Regarding the third category, **strategy 18** suggested that many tasks should have tangible results. In this case, students obtained a final product, the web page, that included the most important information and pictures of the professionals that will last in time. **Strategy 21** recommends establishing short-term objectives to motivate students, which was done at the beginning of every lesson taught by the trainee teacher.

And finally, regarding the fourth category, **strategy 35** recommended an ongoing process of evaluation and a self-assessment. Both methods were applied to assess students.

## 3.4. Data collection

The first round of interviews was carried out the first week of February 2021, and the second round took place the last week of March 2021, all interviews lasted approximately 15 minutes, and students were informed that their voice would be recorded. Students were always interviewed individually. Before all interviews, the researcher told the students the purpose and directions of the interviews to avoid any possible misunderstandings, and they were assured that the answers would only be used for research purposes. The class observation was also divided into two parts, both of them corresponding to the English subject. The researcher observed three sessions in February, when students were still with their usual teacher, and three sessions in March, coinciding with the didactic unit taught by the practicum teacher (and the researcher of the present study).

The practicum mentor and school were informed of the nature and purpose of the study, and the coordination of the centre concluded that, because of the nature of the study, (any image or personal information of the students were needed apart from the voice recordings, which will not be published in any case), it was not necessary to sign any permission for this research. Students in the centre had already signed the general rights of personal information for academic purposes for the school, and consequently, they did not need to sign any of them again.

## 3.5. Data analysis

As it has already been mentioned above (section 3.1), in order to analyse the data, the present study follows the principles of the qualitative methodology, and this is the reason why individual data extracted from the interviews and class observation is mainly based on the perception of the researcher. Nevertheless, when analysing the global data from the interviews and the classroom observation to identify group tendencies, the quantitative approach is used.

Regarding the interviews, firstly, the students' answers were transferred to a grid where they were classified so as to identify the students' type of motivation, beliefs about their own motivation, and their future vision of the L2 self. This procedure was carried out twice (for the first and the second interview rounds). The classification was based on the perception of the researcher.

Secondly, all answers were pooled and compared to identify any group tendencies, relations among students with the same type of motivation, or similar changes between

the first and second interview rounds among students. This procedure was based on the quantitative approach.

Regarding the class observation carried out during three sessions in February and three sessions in March, firstly, and for each of the participants, the researcher assigned a number from 1 for 'not at all' to 4 for 'very much' for each of the observed categories. The decision was, again, based on the perspective of the researcher. Thus, it followed the qualitative approach.

Secondly, for all students and categories, data from the first and second observations was compared to analyse whether there existed general tendencies within the group participants regarding their behaviour, and see whether it had improved, worsened, or stayed the same. This procedure was based on the quantitative approach.

To present the results, this study presents the general perception along with evidence taken from the interviews and observation.

## 4. RESULTS

The results of both interviews and classroom observation are presented in this section.

<u>Interviews</u>: The students' types of motivation did not vary between the first and second rounds of interviews: 10% of the students showed intrinsic motivation and 11% of the students showed amotivation. The most common types of motivation were extrinsic types of motivation (63%): 37% of the participants had cultural or integrative motivation, 21% had instrumental motivation and the rest showed were motivated due to the obligatory nature of the English subject (16%) or due to the social pressure that family members exerted on them (5%). None of the students were motivated by the social pressure exerted by their peers or by material awards.
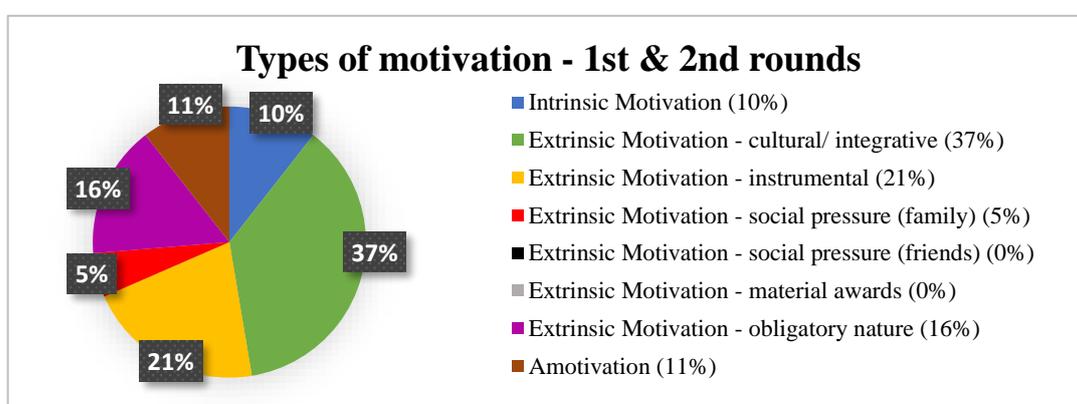


Figure 4. Types of motivation (1st & 2nd rounds of interviews)

Regarding the factors that students believed to be most and least motivating when the English subject was concerned, there was a change between the first and second interview rounds. While before the trainee teacher intervention students believed that the type of activity (7 points), the teacher (6 points), and the easiness or the difficultness of the contents (5 points) were the most relevant factors to motivate them, after the intervention students believed in a greater extent that the type of activity (8 points) and the teacher (8 points) were key motivating factors, as well as the topic (5 points) factor. The factors that were least relevant when motivating students did not vary before and after the intervention: in both cases, material awards (7 points) and the relationship of the contents with exams or marks (7 points) were considered as irrelevant motivating factors by students.
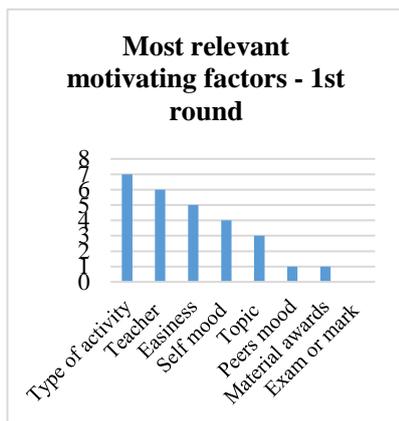
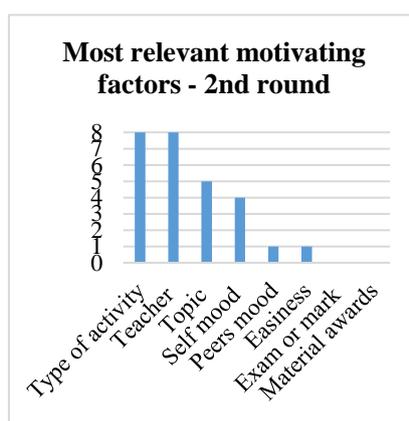**Figure 5.** Most relevant motivating factors (1st round)

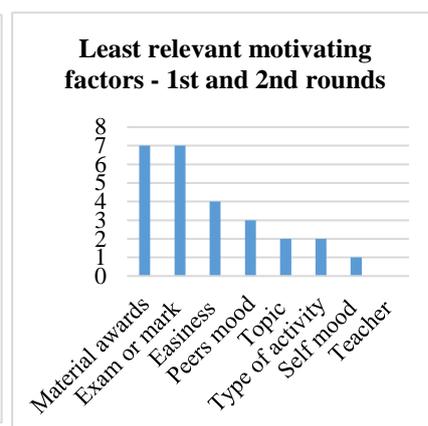**Figure 6.** Most relevant motivating factors (2nd round)

**Figure 7.** Most irrelevant motivating factors (1st and 2nd rounds)

Regarding the project *Discovering Professionals*, most of the students (78%) expressed having felt motivated by the project *Discovering Professionals*.
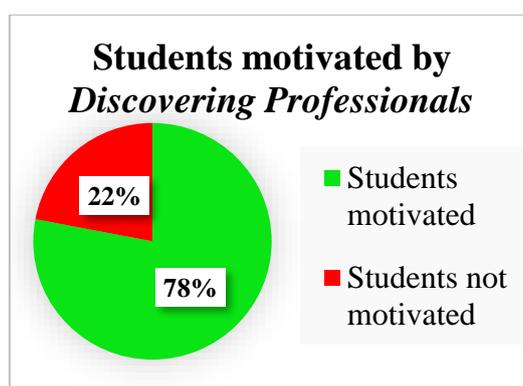


**Figure 8.** Students motivated by *Discovering Professionals*

The results also showed that students with positive and negative feelings regarding their concept of their current English competence maintained this feeling, and the same happened concerning their future vision of the L2 self. When analysing the *ought-to L2 self*, the results showed a directly proportional relation between students who expressed positive feelings in the above-mentioned categories and those who expressed negative feelings. On the one hand, the positive ones were afraid of not improving considerably in the future and assumed that their L2 would not get worse. On the other hand, the negative ones were afraid of losing their current level and automatically assumed that their L2 would not improve. However, a more detailed analysis of the interviews showed that almost all students (except for two) had improved their future vision of the L2 self. Those who had a positive vision of the L2 self in the first interview had an even more positive

vision of the L2 self in the second interview, and those who had a negative vision of the L2 self in the first interview, had a less negative vision in the second interview.

Classroom observations: The results from the classroom observations show that students responded positively to the project *Discovering Professionals* on some of the aspects studied and that it had no effect on some other aspects. On the one hand, students listened up to an average of a 39% more to their classmates, got involved up to an average of a 36% more in group work, interacted up to an average of a 33% more in class, paid up to an average of a 22% more of attention, and followed up to an average of a 17% more what was being explained or read in class. On the other hand, most students did not change their behaviour on some other aspects, such as displaying disruptive attitude, presenting social unrelated chat, following the teacher's instructions, performing the tasks that were required to do, getting involved in individual work, volunteering, helping others, or improving the quality of the tasks. The results showed no negative reactions of the students to any of the aspects studied.

## 5. DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Going back to the objectives and research questions of the current research, the results and correlations showed above lead us to believe that, overall, Dörnyei's proposal of motivational strategies (2001) had a positive effect among our group of students when introduced in the classroom through the project *Discovering Professionals*, answering research question 1. The results also help us answer research question 2, revealing that the effects that motivational strategies had on students were related to the three variables studied: their language motivation type, their beliefs about their own L2 motivation, and the vision of their future L2 self. Therefore, the results of the study parallel other studies in other contexts, such as Brophy (2004), Csizér & Illés (2020), Dörnyei (2001), Dörnyei & Csisér (1998), Dörnyei & Ushioda (2009), and Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008).

As we had foreseen, regarding variable 1, the students' motivation type, it did not change after the exposure to Dörnyei's motivational strategies (2001). This result is attributable to time reasons. Changes in motivation type occur over time, and this research was carried out in a short time period, which did not make room for any noticeable changes that would have been clearer if the research had lasted for a longer period of time. Nonetheless, the students' types of motivation have been found to be a contributing factor when applying motivational techniques: intrinsically motivated students and extrinsic motivated students (displaying an important internal component) were the ones that best responded to them. On the contrary, students showing amotivation or external motivation (displaying an important external component) did not respond as well as the others. However, it should be noticed that the later ones did not have a negative response either. Further details of this group will be provided below.

Regarding variable 2 —the students' beliefs of the factors that influence their motivation—, evidence differs from our initial hypothesis. Data from the first and second interviews varies, but it shows no relation to the students' motivation profiles. Figures 5 and 6 show that in the second interview students valued more positively the influence of the activity type, the teacher, and the topic when motivation was concerned, and they stopped considering the difficulty or easiness of the tasks as one of the most motivating factors. We attribute this change to the implementation of Dörnyei's motivational strategies through the project *Discovering Professionals* (which was the product of following strategies 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, and 18), introduced by the trainee teacher. Clearly, the new methodology that united all contents in a project, as opposed to the methodology students were used to (which did not include any project), was more appealing to them,

and that is probably the reason why they considered that the activity type and the topic were of more importance. In the second round, they also gave more importance to the teacher, and that could be due to the motivational techniques used by the trainee teacher. These results do not surprise, since Dörnyei (2001) claims that the use of such motivational strategies (especially strategies 1 and 2) boosts a more positive vision of the teacher from the perspective of the students.

Regarding variable 3, students' vision of the current and future L2 selves, our hypothesis was confirmed: the student's vision of the future L2-self improved in almost every participant. Although the results from the interviews show that almost all students maintained the same future vision of the L2 self in general terms, when analyzing data on the micro-scale, evidence shows that all participants presented a slightly (or important) improvement of their future L2 self-vision. These results are attributable to the project *Discovering Professionals*, in which motivational strategies 9, 10, and 11 (Dörnyei, 2001) were implemented through tasks that reinforced the students' future L2 self-vision. A reduced sample of students, coinciding with the profile of low-motivated students, did not present any modification to their future vision. These are the same two students that assumed their future L2 level would not improve, confirming Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope's study (1986): negative language experiences can increase L2 anxiety, whereas positive ones are related to lower anxiety levels. From our evidence, we can claim that the implementation of Dörnyei's motivational strategies (2001) did not have any positive (or negative) effect on those two students, and that, in terms of future vision, these motivational techniques have been more helpful to those learners who already had the capacity to visualize themselves as good future L2 speakers from the beginning. In fact, from the three variables, high levels of a good future vision of the L2-self have been found to be the most contributing factor to enhance students' motivation when applying motivational strategies.

Regarding the *in situ* reactions that students displayed towards the motivational techniques implemented in the classroom, we learn that, overall, the project *Discovering Professionals* including Dörnyei's motivational strategies helped the students improve their classroom attitude, but only in some of the aspects studied: students were more attentive, listened more to their classmates, paid more attention to what was being explained or read, interacted more at class, and got more involved in group work. Students maintained their initial attitude for the rest of the aspects. Nonetheless, we learn that in

any case, such techniques have a negative impact on students' attitude in terms of attention, participation, and volunteering.

Even though this study has obtained interesting results on motivation and the effects they have on students' attitudes, it has also encountered some limitations that should be solved in future investigations. Firstly, we came across time limitations since the data gathering process did only allow an interval of two months between the first and second interviews. This limitation prevented us from seeing any changes in variable 1, motivation types, which occur over time. Having more time would allow us to see the long-term consequences of Dörnyei's motivational strategies (2001). Secondly, we also found limitations in terms of the number of participants since the magnitude of the study could only comprise a reduced number of subjects to be interviewed. The shortage of participants leads to results that cannot be generalized, because the specific school context and the linguistic characteristics of the students and their families have conditioned our sample of participants, and therefore, the results. That is the reason why, in future research, this study should include a larger number of participants and, apart from qualitative data gathered through interviews, it would also be interesting to include larger amounts of quantitative data that could be collected through surveys. Another limiting factor was the teacher that taught the didactic unit to the students. This person was different from the teacher that taught the students for the rest of the course and to whom students were already familiar. Therefore, students already started the whole process in a different situation. The results might as well have been different if the motivational strategies had been introduced by the official teacher. In future research, it would be worthwhile to conduct the study through the official English teacher.

## 6.  CONCLUSIONS

This study has aimed to examine the efficacy of Dörnyei's motivational strategies (2001) in the English classroom and see whether the students' motivation type, their beliefs of their own L2 motivation, and their future L2 self-vision had any relation to the students' attitude and reaction towards motivational techniques.

In order to establish such relations, the researcher (and trainee teacher of the students) has selected and introduced some of the motivational strategies proposed by Dörnyei (2001) to the didactic unit taught during her practicum through a project that she has designed called 'Discovering Professionals'. To gather data, the researcher has used out two research tools: interviews, carried out twice (before and after the didactic intervention), and a classroom observation.

Overall, the results drawn from the interviews and the classroom observation show that the three variables —their motivation type, their beliefs of their own L2 motivation, and their future L2 self-vision— have an impact on the students' reactions to motivational techniques, although their effect appeared to be different.

Regarding the motivation type, we have learned that it directly correlates with future L2 self-vision in the sense that students with higher levels of intrinsic motivation (see Figure 2) tend to display a more positive future vision of themselves using the foreign language than the students with less (or without any) amount of intrinsic motivation. The motivation type has also a direct influence on the reactions of the students to motivational strategies. The reaction of those students with amotivation or extrinsic motivation with high levels of an external component (see Figure 2) tends not to be as positive as the reaction that students with intrinsic motivation or extrinsic motivation with high levels of internal components.

The results showed there is no relation between the different motivation type profiles and the second variable. However, participants changed their opinion in a generalized way on the factors that motivate them the most when learning English. In the second interview, carried out after applying the motivational strategies, students considered the aspects such as the activity type, the topic, or the teacher to be of greater importance than other aspects such as the difficultness or easiness of the tasks when their motivation was concerned, and we qualify this change as a success.

Finally, we learned that students that depart from a positive future vision are the most likely to react positively to Dörnyei's motivational strategies. Nevertheless, the results show that such strategies have had a positive impact on most of the students.

On a final note, from this study, we can conclude that motivation plays a major role in the language learning process. It seems clear now that by applying motivational techniques, learners will benefit from them and will enjoy the learning experience more.

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