

ORIOI VILLANUEVA CABANAS
CURS 2015-2016

4rt Magisteri Educació Primària
Àngel Raluy
Facultat d'Educació, Traducció i Ciències Humanes
Universitat de Vic

May 2016

Contenido

- INTRODUCTION** 2
 - PRESENTATION..... 2
 - THE TOPIC & THE QUESTION..... 2
- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK** 3
 - COOPERATIVE LEARNING 4
 - Activity structures*..... 4
 - Key elements*..... 6
 - Previous decisions*..... 8
 - MOTIVATION 13
 - Expectancy-value theories*..... 13
 - Goal theory*..... 14
 - Self-determination theory* 15
- STUDY** 15
 - DATA COLLECTION 16
 - Participants*..... 16
 - Application* 16
 - Methods and justification*..... 17
 - Accessing, collecting and leaving the field*..... 18
 - DATA ANALYSIS 19
 - Matrix*..... 21
 - Triangulation*..... 24
- DISCUSSION** 27
 - CASE 27
 - Perception of English as a subject*..... 27
 - Group structure vs. individual structure*..... 28
 - Implementing CL*..... 29
- CONCLUSIONS 30
- REFERENCES** 34

INTRODUCTION

PRESENTATION

This is a research project focused on the motivation among EFL students in the primary education stage. The main aim of the study is an attempt of shedding some light to the relationship between cooperative learning (henceforth CL) and motivation. Likewise, the process of introducing this approach in a Catalan school will be explained. There are three main reasons to choose this area of study:

- The genuine concern of a society that sometimes seems to become more individualistic and, therefore, the need of using alternative methodologies or approaches to foster the sense of community
- The difficulty of keeping our pupils motivated in a subject that, occasionally, could be perceived as difficult or unnecessary by students who sometimes question the reasons to learn a foreign language
- The personal interest in CL that considers team work a basic element, which allows both teachers and students to work in interdisciplinary projects

THE TOPIC & THE QUESTION

Communication has been always a basic aspect of human relations; it is the tool to express thoughts, feelings or ideas. Nowadays, the knowledge of a foreign language is considered one of the most important skills in an increasingly globalized society. According to statistics published by the EU (2013), two thirds of the European citizens with the right to work claim to know a foreign language. It is in that context that English has become almost essential and primary education pupils learning English reached 80% in 2014 (Eurostat 2016) being by far the most frequently studied foreign language. In Spain this number increases to 100% which is one of the highest numbers in the EU. It is interesting to contrast the data of the two documents to notice that, even though Spain is above the European average in pupils studying English it is, nevertheless, at the bottom in people claiming to know a foreign language (51%) (EU 2013) 15 points below the European average. Consequently, one of the questions arising is; how in a country with high figures of studying a foreign language can, at the same time, have only half of its population being able to speak one?

Many reasons could be given in that sense, but this report focuses on the motivation as one of the key factors in language acquisition. It is widely accepted that there is a direct relation between motivation and students' achievements in any learning process (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993). Motivation has been, is and will be one of the basic aspects in the learning process and, probably, the main challenge for a teacher on the daily basis. But, how can teachers have an impact on students' interest for a subject? It is in that genuine concern that this research has its roots, in an –humble- attempt to understand and propose alternative ideas to influence students' motivation in EFL classes. There is a large literature on that topic and it would be too pretentious to try to answer this old question in this study. However, we want to analyse a specific methodology to comprehend whether it can be a real alternative for teachers in Catalonia.

It is at this point where the other basic concept of this research takes its relevance; CL. This concept takes its fundamentals from the need of building a society that considers its individuals as a part of a bigger concept. CL enhances peer instruction by establishing relations between students based on projects where all members of a group are important and essential. Catalan schools have increasingly started implementing a method that actually entails a substantial change in the very basics of traditional education. Most of these projects have eventually succeeded in improving school aspects related to inclusion or students' performance. However, there is a lack of literature about this topic in primary education school from Catalonia. This research seeks to describe the impact of CL in children's motivations and the possible difficulties of its implementation in an EFL class of a Catalan primary school. For this reason, this study proposes the following question:

- Is CL a real alternative to foster motivation in a Primary Education School when learning a foreign language? What is the process of implementation like?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Krashen (1982) suggested that languages can be learned in two ways; acquiring the language in a natural process or regularly attending lectures of the target language. The former entails learning implicitly through communication in a natural context, which would be the case of people's mother tongue. In this case, language is learnt regardless time exposure in instructional environments, although this might provide a higher proficiency. On the other hand, the latter has explicit learning context in which subjects (adults or children) are taught the target language –normally a second language- in learning environments. Needless to say that in this case the exposure to the language is smaller making the learning process last longer. In that sense, there could be two types of context when a second language is learnt; natural or instructional (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). Natural context is that where the language is learnt based on the social interaction with native speakers. There is a direct relation with the language but in a non-academic set, but rather informal. Instructional context is understood as the explicit teaching process of the subject in which the focus is on the language rather than the need-for-communicating itself. One of the characteristics of this context is that the exposure time is little compared with the natural context. This is overall the case of Catalonia, where there is not a natural context and learners begin the process in the compulsory education stages.

This research aims to investigate about second language acquisition in a cooperative learning environment and, in turn, its relation with motivation in a primary education school from Catalonia. In this section, the theories of the mentioned subjects will be developed. We will first discuss the ideas that CL stands for along with the essential elements and previous decisions. In the second part, we will discuss theories related with motivation.

COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Activity structures

Deutsch (cited in Slavin, 1999) makes a distinction between three basic learning structures that instruction can be organized in; individualistic, competitive and cooperative. The learning structure is the set of elements that influence pupils' performance inside the classroom in the teaching-learning process. Pujolàs (2002) defines three sub-structures:

- Sub-structure of the activity: defines what students do inside the classroom

- Sub-structure of the purpose: defines the aims of the students in the tasks and their approach to their accomplishment
- Sub-structure of the authority: this is related to the decisions-taking process and the leader, the management of the group and the relationship between students and teacher.

These sub-structures are actually key to understand the dynamics created in the group, and stemming from that, the learning structure.

In individualistic and competitive structures, activities are based on the conception that students are responsible only for their own learning process and accomplishments. Pupils are mere receptors of concepts to be memorized which only teachers know and are capable of delivering (Slavin, 1999). Almost every decision is taken by the mentor, who decides about the syllabus, but also how chairs are arranged in the classroom and where each pupil seats. In a competitive structure, besides, students are competing with the rest of the students to be the best (Pujolàs, 2008). That is to say that students are supposed to learn more and faster than the rest of the group. So, to get the highest mark in an exam or to be the first to finish one activity is to succeed, even if it means that the rest of the group does not learn.

Cooperative structures, on the other hand, are founded in the belief that knowledge needs to be built from the interaction among individuals. Small and heterogeneous work groups are set in order to improve individual learning through collaboration. It is intended to foster interaction which, eventually, will lead to learn specific concepts and social skills (Johnson et al. 1999). Each student is expected to learn but also to help classmates to achieve the same goals. Furthermore, aims are only achieved if all members of the group reach them too. Concepts might be initially provided by the teacher but driven by all members. Ideas are discussed and shared, challenges are overcome as a team and knowledge is built by all members rather than memorized individually. The process becomes, somehow, more democratic in the decisions making sense. For many authors, CL cannot be defined as a method or approach itself, it is rather a way to organize learnings. "CL is not simply a resource that could be used, or not, depending on what it is being taught or we aim to achieve, without changing the basic learning structure. CL is part of a fundamental structure, and implementing it means substantial changes on it" (Pujolàs, 2008). Thus, the structure, rules and relations need to be in compliance with the ideas that CL is based on.

Key elements

Although there has not been a universal definition of cooperative learning up until now, there are a few key elements that are common features shared for the different accepted methods. These characteristics have been mainly described by Johnson et al (1998) and Kagan (1997).

Johnson et al. (1998) proposed five key elements that need to be considered when setting a class based on CL.

Positive interdependence

The first aspect to be considered according to the mentioned authors is the positive interdependence between individuals. This concept emerges from the idea that the success of each member of the team relies on the outcomes of the other members and vice versa. This is to say that each member needs to be aware of the importance of everybody's learning achievements. Pujolàs (2002) develops further the idea of positive interdependence and describes the following five types:

- Positive Goal Interdependence: when members of a team have the same final aim(s) and the responsibility to achieve it along with the rest of members. Students realize that they need to cooperate in order to reach these goals.
- Positive Resources Interdependence: in this case, each member of the team has a relevant piece of the puzzle to achieve the aims. It could be material or knowledge, but it becomes essential for students to share these resources in order to succeed.
- Positive Role Interdependence: each member of the team has a different role that is important in the development of the tasks proposed by the teacher. These roles are interconnected, so it is essential that roles are accomplished effectively to reach goals.
- Positive Tasks Interdependence: when working cooperatively there are different tasks that need to be accomplished by the team. These tasks are split up so each member is responsible of one part. There is a need for coordination between members and a sense of commitment to carry out the tasks as best as possible.
- Positive Reward/Celebration Interdependence: after achieving the proposed aims and learning new concepts there is a sense of satisfaction among the team.

Kagan (1999) also shares the idea of interdependence as a key factor. According to him, this interdependence is created from the idea that each member must accomplish and that

none other can do it for him/her. If on the contrary the structure of the class is competitive, the interdependence will be negative. In other words, one person's success may mean everybody else's failure.

Interaction

Another key aspect described by this author is related to interaction. It is known as Face-to-Face Interaction because it is referred to the opportunities that members are given to communicate to each other. Students promote each other's learning by helping, sharing, and encouraging efforts to learn. Students explain, discuss, and teach what they know to classmates. Teachers structure the groups so that students sit knee-to-knee and talk through each aspect of the assignment.

Kagan (1999) had also a say in this sense. He gave major importance to the simultaneously interaction understood as the percentage of students sharing ideas in a precise moment. According to him, there is a big difference between a group with an odd number and another with an even number. In an odd number it is likely that in a precise moment one member does not have the chance to interact. So in even number team probabilities to interact are higher, which in a L2 class could be crucial.

Individual accountability

The third aspect to consider is the so-called Individual Accountability. This concept refers to the idea of each member being responsible for the own tasks and development of the assignments. Students' performance is assessed by members or by teachers, this information is then given to the team and the individual.

Interpersonal and Small Group Skills

Students need to be proficient in a wide range of social skills that will allow them to work effectively within the team. These skills include; decision-making, leadership, communication, trust-building, and conflict-management skills

Group processing

Last but not least, Johnson et al. (1998) point out the idea of Group Processing. Teams need discuss about the aims to be attained, the process to follow and to evaluate themselves after this process. Teachers can also monitor teams by giving feedback of members and teams' performance. This evaluation will allow students to make necessary changes and improve the outcomes in all senses.

Equal opportunities to succeed

Kagan (2009) brings up another element, from his point of view, is important to succeed in a school context when basing learning on CL. In short, this scholar argues that normally in this context pupils' participation is not structured and organized by nature which will lead to unequal intervention. For teachers to avoid that, he proposes different approaches to balance participation among teams' members.

Previous decisions

According to researches, some aspects must be considered before setting cooperative structures in an instructional environment. We will focus on three main features; classroom arrangement, groups formation and roles within a team.

Classroom arrangement

The way a classroom is set affects the behavior of the members attending that class (Johnson et al., 1998), this can ease or complicate the learning process. There are several reasons to explain why the arrangement is so important.

- The physical aspect of a class indicates the student's' behavior expected from the teacher. It is not the same tables separated and distributed rows that tables gathered.
- The influence on pupils' efficiency and the time spent in the tasks since it affects the visual and aural focus in individuals.
- Another reason is the way that learners communicate with each other and, in turn, with the teacher. It affects the way that tasks are performed as well.
- It also needs to be considered that it has an impact on the opportunities to establish contact and create relationships.
- It could help students to boost self-confident and create an atmosphere of comfort, satisfaction and improve state of mind among all members of the community.

Having described the reasons to understand why desk arrangement in a class is important, the question arising is; what should be the guidelines to follow? Johnson et al. (1998) gives an account of that matter explaining the following main ideas:

- Members of the team have to seat together being close enough to allow material sharing, idea discussion without disturbing the rest of the group and being able to establish face-to-face contact.

- All pupils have to be sat in a comfortable position allowing them to see the teacher without having to turn their heads.
- There have to be a distance between teams so they do not bother each other and there is space for the teacher to walk around
- Teachers have to carefully consider the movement of individuals when going in and out of the class and walking around the room. This fact defines the interaction between individuals, so it must be organized in a way that allows students to interact with each other, with the teacher and have an easy access to materials.
- The arrangement of the room needs to be flexible, this way students can change the grouping quickly and easily. Therefore, teachers can use different group setting depending on the tasks.

Disciplinary problems are partly conditioned by the classroom arrangement, so it is important that teachers consider this if they want to reduce conflicts. Normally, conflicts occur in areas where teachers have more difficult access or are further away from their sight. To avoid these situations, teachers need to have a good access to each area of the room, so none of the students feel that they are free to behave as they please.

Groups formation

Another important aspect to consider before starting CL is the teams' structure. As mentioned previously, although is not mandatory it is actually capital in CL to set heterogeneous teams. Teams normally have four members although this size can vary according to resources needed to complete the assignment (the larger the group, the more resources available); the cooperative skills of the group members (the less skillful the members, the smaller the group should be); the amount of time available (the shorter the time, the smaller the group should be); and the nature of the task. However, in this part we will see the three basic types of learning teams described by Johnson et al. (1998).

The first of them is the base team grouping. The final objective of these kind of teams is to improve pupils' academic outcomes promoting social skills. They are defined as long-term association, not less than one year, and always in a heterogeneous composition. Regarding heterogeneity, the criteria could be; gender, skills, interest, ethnic group, motivation or academic outcomes. Somehow, teams should reproduce the whole group characteristics. If following the last criteria, teachers should consider having one high-performance students, one low-performance and two average ones. The number of members is variable, but it should never be more than 6 per team.

Secondly, there is the formal team grouping. In this case, teams are mid and long-term length going from hours to several weeks. Students work together to achieve common aims making sure that all of them accomplish the assigned tasks. This kind of teams ensures the active members participation in all aspects of the process. Any subject or task can be adapted so it becomes a formal cooperative association. Nonetheless, teachers must consider some aspects beforehand; make the group aims clear; make content decisions previously to the task; explain the task and the positive interdependence to the students; supervise the learning process giving support, if necessary, to the task development and the individual/team performance; and finally assess their learning achievements and help them to assess themselves as a team.

Last but not least, the informal cooperative teams are the shortest in length within these three sorts of teams. They can last minutes or up until one session as a maximum. It can be used for different purposes such as fostering an adequate atmosphere to learn, to ensure students understand and learn concepts or to focus attention on a specific material. They are useful for teachers to make sure students organize themselves properly and do all the cognitive activities.

We have already developed the main types of teams in CL, but the question that now arises is how to set these groups. The formation of the groups is important because there are several aspects that can be influenced by the process, including learner's perception. It has already been said that it is preferable to use heterogeneous teams, the reason being is that it allows to have different perspectives and problems' resolution methods during the learning process. Besides, the cognitive imbalance, essential to stimulate learning, is higher in this kind of teams. Nevertheless, homogeneous teams can be occasionally useful for specific social or concept purposes. Apart from that fact, there are three aspects to consider that will be described below.

The ideal number of members in a team is indeed four, but this should be flexible and adapted to the purposes of tasks. To decide this question, teachers have to consider different ideas:

- The number of interactions is determined by the number of members. The higher the number of people, the higher the frequency of interpersonal and group practices.
- When the time is short it is better to consider small teams.

- In a small team it becomes more difficult for a member to skip duties and assignments.
- It is easier for teachers to detect possible difficulties of team' members to work together and function correctly.

The amount of time that teams have to be working together will depend on the purpose of tasks, it has already been explained that each type of association has a different length. Nevertheless, it is advisable for teams to stay together for a reasonable period of time so students achieve the expected aims.

When setting teams Johnson et al (1998) explains different methods to proceed; they can be arranged by the teacher or students, they can be formed randomly or in a stratified manner. Another aspect to consider is whether teams will be heterogeneous or homogenous or even the type of tasks to be developed. The capacity of students to work properly and accomplish aims varies depending on their capability to work as a team. It might be preferable at the beginning to prioritise learning of social skills to then, when students are ready, let them work with other members with whom they have less affinity.

The easiest and effective way is the randomly process. It consists on dividing up the number of students in the group by the number of members each team will have. Once having the result, the teacher gives a number to each student and individuals with the same number gather in the same group. This method has other variations that can be used depending on teachers' preferences. Thereby, teams can be arranged using concepts such as mathematical problems, geography or historical figures to mention a few.

The second method that can be used is the stratified way (Pujolàs, 2002). This method is similar to the mentioned above, but teams are built considering specific characteristics, for example academic outcomes. The idea is to draw up a list of students from the best outcome to the worst. Then, the teacher takes the top student, the bottom student and two from the middle to put them in the same group unless there are incompatibilities related to relationships, gender or ethnic background. The rest of teams are created following the same pattern.

Thirdly, there are the teams created by teachers. This method allows teachers to set groups based on aspects that are considered to be important. Examples of this can be personalities, work ethics or social relationships. This way will ensure that teams are balanced. Johnson et al. (1998) refers to one specific criterion about isolated students.

Teams are formed by one no-popular student and two popular and hard-working member of the group. In this way, teachers make sure that the least popular learners have the chance to create bonds with other students and increase their ability to work and improve the learning process.

Finally, teams can be created by students. This is probably the least recommended methods since can entail different problems, especially related to efficiency. Teams tend to be homogeneous. The consequence is that effectiveness is reduced and the learning process becomes minor. A possible alternative is to ask students whom would they like to work with and then create teams with half of members chosen by students and the other half by the teacher.

Roles

Assigning roles to students can be a useful method to improve pupils' performance, and it is advisable to improve social skills (Johnson et al., 1998). Roles can help students feel important within a team and being pro-active in building knowledge. Passivity can be prevented, it guarantees that group techniques are being used and it creates interdependence between members. It is fundamental to make explicit roles to the students, stressing the importance of each role's member within the team. Roles can be classified depending on their purpose:

- To help in team's creation.
- To improve in the team's performance and aims' achievement.
- To relate what pupils know with what they are learning.
- To promote thinking and reflecting skills.

Thus far, we have seen that there are three main learning structures in an instructional context which in turn are determined by three sub-structures. These sub-structures are actually the way that the learning process is organized in. Cooperative Learning is not only gathering students to carry out group activities, it entails some basic elements. These key elements have been described based on the ideas of different scholars who share most of them. Finally, the previous decisions that need to be taken before setting CL structures have been developed in order to have a better understanding of how to organize the group.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is one of the most important aspects in learning environments. It is one of the major problems that teachers face in a classroom because it determines several important aspects as students' effort or inattention. According to Houssaye (1987), motivation is determined by the triangle between learner, teacher and knowledge. Wang et al. (1993) found a correlation between learners' achievement and motivation. For this reason, it is essential for teachers to find strategies to increase students' motivation. In this section the main theories of motivation in relation with CL are developed. We will first see the expectancy-value theories and its different branches. After that, the goal theories and self-determination will be explained.

Expectancy-value theories

Many authors have developed the ideas behind this concept that stands on two factors (Wigfield, 1994); the idea of 'expectancy of success' and the 'value' associated with a successful outcome of a task. The first idea is related to three different aspects developed following.

Attribution theory

As Weiner pointed out (2000) this concept is defined as the causes that a subject can connect with a previous failure or success. These causes affect the motivation in future tasks and can be stable and constant or unstable and temporary in time. Stable causes such as personal ability or capability are less uncontrollable for learners. On the other hand, unstable reasons like effort or luck are perceived as more controllable. When a cause is seen as constant motivation it decreases since it cannot be controlled.

Self-efficacy theory

Bandura (1997) claimed that the way that skillfulness is perceived by a subject defines the interpretation of this person in relation to a learning outcome, which in turn affects motivation. Competence can be seen as acquired or inherent. People who think that competence is an acquired fact tend to assess skills and outcomes by comparing them with themselves. On the contrary, if it is perceived as inherent, subjects value their ability by comparing it with other people's success. In consequence, the former would assess own performances based on the process and the steps followed, facing future tasks as challenges and chances to learn further. On the other side, the latter would perceive innate skills as the reasons to have failed, which will in turn affect motivation. In the future, this subject would rather choose easier tasks or make less effort to protect self-confidence.

Self-worth theory

This theory stands on the idea that the ultimate human preference is to be accepted by others, which in a learning environment means proving their academic proficiency. As a consequence, students try to strengthen or protect academic outcomes. In order to achieve a sense of self-worth, they attribute failing to evade trying and success to effort and skills. "In essence, then, self-worth theory holds that school achievement is best understood in terms of attempts by students to maintain a positive self-image of competency, particularly when risking competitive failure." (Covington, 1992).

Task values model

This theory is related to values, so as Dörnyei (2001) suggests, whereas expectancy theories are related with the question 'Can I do the task?', values theory is related with "Do I want to do the task?'. The answer of the question is related to the outcomes in previous experiences, and based on four types of values:

- Attainment values: the importance of acquiring and perfect an ability to perform as good as possible on a task.
- Intrinsic values: the interest and subsequent enjoyment that a task itself can provide to the subject.
- Utility value: the relation perceived by the subject between the task and aims at that moment and for the future to be better.
- Costs: referred to the negative consequences that a subject might relate to a task.

These values interact with each other to define the overall achievement, which will define the behavior of the individual.

Goal theory

Another school of thought related to motivation was proposed by Locke and Latham (1990). These two authors alleged that aims or purposes control human behavior. Aims might not be permanently in the consciousness of a subject, but it certainly might remain in the background. This fact affects peoples' actions towards the achievement of those aims. Supported by this idea, difficult aims lead to better performance than easy aims, and specific aims lead to a better performance than unclear aims. Based on other researches', these scholars set a group of factors that could influence aims settling; role modeling, competition, group goals, encouragement and feedback.

Self-determination theory

According to Deci (1975), individuals' motivation can be divided in two main forces; extrinsic and intrinsic. The former is defined as external and tangible forces and is normally associated with rewards. It is also more powerful and quicker than intrinsic. The latter comes from personal satisfactions, and in this case it tends to last longer in time. Hundreds of research studies have been published over time regarding this issue, and external motivation has been typically considered to have negative consequences on intrinsic motivation (Kohn, 1991). However, this theory refuses to consider these concepts as antagonists and explains that certain behaviors can transform external motivation to intrinsic depending on the degree of regulation of an individual (Deci & Ryan, 1985). These proposed behaviors increase self-regulation continuously and are the following:

- Externally regulated behaviors: this type of regulation comes completely from outside reasons as rewards and punishments.
- Behaviors regulated through interjection: this one refers to rules set externally but accepted by the student who think that it is the right thing to do.
- Behaviors regulated through identifications: when a student perceives that specific concepts or activities as useful and important for him/her and so decides to become totally involved.
- Integrated regulated behaviors: is the highest external motivation and it is associated to the assimilation of identity, values and needs by the student.

We have seen in this section some of the most relevant theories on motivation, focusing especially on those that have common elements with CL. They are certainly different between each other, but share some common features related to succeeding and self-perception.

STUDY

Thus far, we have seen the theory that the research is underpinned on. In this section the aim is to develop the aspects related to data collection. This is a qualitative research based on interpretative techniques. The aim of the investigation it is not to set a theory, but instead to test whether CL can be useful in EFL session to boost students' motivation. Likewise, we aim to describe the process in order to understand it better and learn from it.

Although quantitative data is used, it is meant to be analysed in terms of interpretation, so to understand the process better.

It is a small sample that is being analysed, therefore, the study and its conclusions cannot be understood as a generalisation of the case. It is important to stress that the researcher is an active part of the process, so his intervention is key to develop both the investigation and the teaching unit (TU).

This section is divided into two different parts; data collection and its analysis. We will first describe the context where the research took place. After that, the fundamentals which the TU was based on will be briefly developed. Finally, we will see the methods used to collect the data and the process of collecting it. In the second section, the categories chosen will be developed along with the segmentation.

DATA COLLECTION

Participants

The study was carried out in 'CEIP Bertí' of 'Ametlla del Vallès'. Around 400 students of the early and primary stages attend this school. Within the 25 hours a week that students are in the school, 3 are dedicated to English as a foreign language. The subjects of the study are 50 students of 6th grade divided into two different groups of 25 students each.

Application

The LU was composed of 18 sessions of 1 hour each of them during 6 weeks. There were 6 groups of 4 members each in the classes. The groups were created using a combination of stratified and random methods. We first classified students in three groups; high, average and low achievers. Next, we took 4 bags; two bags with the names of average students inside, one bag for high-level students and another one with low-level ones. Students were not told about the criteria followed. We then asked them to randomly take a piece of paper each. The first student would pick up one paper from bag A, the next one from B, then C and finally D to create one team, and then start over. In this way, we created heterogeneous teams but without giving the feeling that teams were imposed by teachers. We did not consider other criteria such as gender or race.

The room was re-arranged following the ideas developed above. Teams were placed together facing each other to foster interaction. There was space enough to allow teachers going around, but also to facilitate interaction between teams if necessary.

Roles were given to teams' members. Each member had a specific role during two weeks, which was then changed so all of them performed all roles at least once. There was also a self-assessment sheet at the end of each session, and a group-assessment at the end of each week.

From the very beginning students were told the aims of the TU, both academic and social concepts were explained. We emphasized the idea of interdependence, especially at the beginning when we illustrated that idea by using sports team examples. Nevertheless, we kept reminding them these ideas from time to time so students would focus on cooperation.

The ultimate aim of the TU in terms of concepts was to create a movie based on short-movies by each team. However, in order to train students in cooperative skills, we spent 3-4 weeks doing other activities based on CL approaches.

Methods and justification

The purposes of this study is to investigate whether CL can increase students' motivation in an EFL class and to learn from the implementation process. Based on this, the study is basically qualitative although quantitative aspects are also important, especially to measure motivation. The data collection is based on three methods; questionnaires, observation and focus groups. In this section these methods are briefly explained and justified.

Questionnaires

Students were asked to complete a questionnaire with 8 questions each; 6 of them multi-option and two open questions. In the multi-option questions subjects confronted five possible answers in a rating scale. The aim was to know their views on three main concepts: opinion towards the subject, preference on grouping structures and self-perception of subject involvement. The questionnaire was done twice, before the TU and at the end in order to compare results. The questionnaires were anonymous and students were reminded about that. This method was chosen so as to give us a direct opinion of participants regarding their feelings and opinions.

Observation

This method was divided into three main topics; motivation, teams' functioning and relations/participation of students. Within these topics there were between 5 or 6 items based on behaviours with a rating scale to measure how often they took place. The

objective was to observe learners in their daily basis during the LU development. We wanted to see what problems could arise and whether students showed motivation towards the tasks. It was a participating observation since the observer was an active part of the process. Besides, the observation was structured, so there was an observation guide during the process. Students were not aware that any kind of observation was taking place.

Focus group

This tool was meant to give a different perspective and further information regarding the topic. To set the group we considered two main criteria: academic outcomes and teams' representation. Thus, we wanted to have two students from each academic level so all points of view were represented. On the other hand, we wanted to listen to students of all teams to see what different problems could have arisen. Gender was actually considered, but the priority was given to the other two criteria. Therefore, the focus group was composed of 2 boys and 4 girls, representing each of the teams from one class and the different academic levels. The conversation was carried out on the last day of the LU when all activities were over and lasted for around 40 minutes. The approach used was semi-structured interview so the conversation could lead to areas of interest that might arise during the conversation.

Interviews

We used this tool to collect data about the implementation of CL. The interview was from the teacher because we thought she was the only person that can answer these questions. We first set the objectives of the interview, the answers that we wanted to get. After that, we wrote the appropriate questions for this answers which were 8 in total. Unfortunately, it was impossible to arrange a day to do the interview face-to-face, so an e-mail with the questions was sent to the interviewee. For this reason, we decided that the standardized open-ended interview was the most indicated. This means that questions were set and there was no room for improvisation or flexibility to go deeper to some topics or change the order of the questions.

Accessing, collecting and leaving the field

Thanks to a university contact, I was told that one school was carrying out an eTwinning project. They had planned to make a video to show the school to the students of the other two schools. We thought this could fit very well with our CL project, and after having the approval of the principal we started designing the tasks for the project.

The first step was to complete the pre-lesson questionnaire before starting the teaching unit. After that, the project was explained to the students along with the fundamentals and aims of it. During the teaching unit, the observation took place in each of the sessions. Finally, the focus group was done the last day of the TU.

After the TU the communication channels were not closed. We arranged a date to watch both films together with students. Besides, the idea was to assess all the process together and see future possible collaboration either in CL or other school activities

DATA ANALYSIS

In order to analyse the collected data, the study will be divided into four categories, which in turn will have different segments based on the study purposes. In this section the categories are explained and detailed.

Perception of English as a subject

It is important to understand how the subject is perceived by students, this will give us more information regarding the motivation towards the language. This category will be analysed based on the questionnaires, the focus group and the interview. To do it, it will be segmented in three concepts; difficulty level of the subject/language and opinion towards the subject and the use of extra English material outside the school. The idea is to see whether students find the language difficult to learn and how this could affect motivation. Furthermore, we want to know if students like or not the subject because we think that this fact is directly linked to motivation.

Group activities vs individual activities

This category will be useful to see the impact of CL on students. It is intended to know whether learners prefer to work individually or in groups comparing the pre and post questionnaires and the focus group. This category is segmented in three concepts: opinion on individual activities; opinion on group activities and participation of students during subject sessions. By analysing this category, we want to see the perception towards the activity structure and understand the possible relation with motivation. Likewise, the degree of participation can give us an idea of student's involvement in the subject. In this case we will use the questionnaires, the focus group interview and the observation results.

Implementing CL

The last category is intended to give us an idea of the process in starting using CL. This category will give us an overall idea about the process of implementing CL in a school. It will be considered teacher and student's opinions and the researcher point of view. The category will be segmented in three concepts; positive aspects; negative aspects and challenges. These segments are underpinned on the data from observation, the interview and the focus group. The main aim is to understand the advantages and disadvantages of CL in the EFL class.

Matrix

PERCEPTION OF ENGLISH AS A SUBJECT			
	English is...	I like the English subject...	I feel like to use extra material at home like movies or music...
QUESTIONNAIRE PRE CL PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2,08% of pupils think English is very difficult - 8,33% think that it is quite difficult - 43,75% think that it is difficult - 39,58% think it is a bit difficult - 6,25% think it is not difficult at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18,75% of pupils like the subject very much - 52,08 like the subject quite a lot - 25% like the subject sometimes - 0% like the subject a little - 4,16 do not like the subject at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 27,08% of students very much - 29,16% quite a lot - 25% sometimes - 10,41% a little bit - 8,33 never
QUESTIONNAIRE POST CL PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2,17% of pupils think English is very difficult - 13,04% think it is quite difficult - 43,47% think it is difficult - 39,13% think it is a bit difficult - 2,17% think it is not difficult at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 28,26% of pupils like the subject very much - 43,47% like the subject quite a lot - 28,26% like the subject sometimes - 0% like the subject a little - 0% do not like the subject at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -28,26% of students very much - 26,08% quite a lot - 32,60% sometimes - 6,52% a little bit - 6,52% never
FOCUS GROUP	<p>Most of the subjects argued that English was not difficult compared to Catalan. Only one thought it was difficult. They think the language itself is easy, but the problem is that we do not use it often so it become more complicated. English does not have accents and it is easier to write.</p> <p>The most difficult part is pronunciation.</p>	<p>One students didn't answer the question, the rest of them acknowledged they were more motivated.</p> <p>They gave reasons such as; working in groups is funnier; when we worked individually it was more monotonous and we didn't have the opportunity to ask about doubts; the activities are more enjoyable.</p>	<p>Some students claimed to watch content in English, but normally occasionally or forced. However, all of them attend English in after-school contexts.</p>
INTERVIEW	<p>Regarding the academic results, nor negative or positive changes have taken place. However, what students have learned along and thanks to their peers seems to be stronger</p>	<p>Motivation has increased because of the movie project, but not caused by CL. In the rest of the tasks all the students behaved as usual.</p>	

GROUP ACTIVITIES VS INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES			
	GROUP ACTIVITIES I like working in groups...	INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES I like working individually...	PARTICIPATION I participate of the English class...
QUESTIONNAIRE PRE CL PLAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 58,33% of students like it very much - 22,91% like it quite a lot - 16,66% like it sometimes - 2,08% like it a little bit - 0% didn't like it at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12,5% of students like it very much - 22,91% like it quite a lot - 35,41% like it sometimes - 25% like it a little bit - 4,16% didn't like it at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 18,75% of students feel they participate a very much - 43,75% participate quite a lot - 27,08 participate sometimes - 10,41% participate a little bit - 0% didn't participate at all
QUESTIONNAIRE POST CL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 73,91% of students like it very much - 15,21% like it quite a lot - 8,69% like it sometimes - 4,34% like it a little bit - 0% didn't like it at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 13,04% of students like it very much - 21,73% like it quite a lot - 41,3 like it sometimes - 21,73% like it a little bit - 2,17% didn't like it at all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 26,08%% of students feel they participate a very much - 50% participate quite a lot - 19,56% participate sometimes - 4,34% participate a little bit - 0% didn't participate at all
FOCUS GROUP	Most of the students stated that they like working in groups	Some students mentioned either that it was good to occasionally work individually or that both structures should be used alternatively	
OBSERVATION	<p>We observed 4 different items in relation to motivation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Students tended to be often or always engaged with tasks. -Students tended to be often or always focused on the task -Students tended to listen to teacher's explanation often or always -Students tended to starts tasks later than expected often or sometimes 		<p>One of the items to observe was the student involvement in the whole group activities and teams' functioning. Both items are strongly influenced by the proposed activities. However, there was a steady progression in this sense. Students took part in activities more often at the end of the DU than at the beginning.</p>

IMPLEMENTING CL			
	POSITIVE ASPECTS	NEGATIVES ASPECTS	CHALLENGES
OBSERVATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students' engagement seems to increase over time. - In general, they share ideas and doubts and learn together. - Students participate more often of the class and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It takes a while for students to respect and follow some CL basics. - The voice volume used is normally higher than it should be. - Not all students work properly and consistently. 	The main challenges are those related with teams functioning, that is to say learning to work together, discuss ideas politely, accomplish roles...
FOCUS GROUP	<p>Students mentioned the possibility of sharing doubts and asking questions more easily when working in groups. Many students don't ask if they have doubts because they feel shy. Most students think that working in group is easier, especially when it comes to clearing up doubts.</p> <p>On the other hand, the fact of working in groups was valued because it was funnier and less monotonous.</p> <p>Groups allowed discussing ideas and sharing knowledge.</p>	<p>The main negative aspect pointed out by the students was the implication of all team members. Students argued that some peers didn't do their tasks properly and that was a problem because some worked harder.</p> <p>Besides, students found hard to come to an agreement and handle all the opinions.</p>	
INTERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students learn from each other, so learning is more meaningful and better. - They tend to be more responsible for their tasks. - It is easier for the teacher to correct and control tasks and exercises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Students do not use English to talk to each other, so there is less exposure. - It requires a consistent training for teachers. - Students are not use to some key concepts of CL. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A proper training process for teachers. - It is essential that all the school is based on these ideas, and students start at least in middle cycle. - Train students to work that way, so teachers don't need to keep reminding them of essential concepts.

Triangulation

In order to compare data from the different tools we will triangulate information based on the matrix of the previous section. Each of the categories are explained below.

Perception of English as subject

This category was segmented based on three concepts; the students' perception of the subject difficulty, their opinion of the subject and their motivation to use extra-material. We aimed to know whether they liked the subject or not and if it was perceived as difficult, these two concepts could help us to see the motivation of students when comparing the pre and post questionnaires and the focus group.

In relation to their perception of difficulty there are not substantial changes between the pre and the post questionnaire. We saw two slightly changes though, both among the students believing that English was quite difficult and that it was not difficult at all. In the first case, the percentage increased in 5 points after the project. On the other hand, the percentage of pupils not finding it difficult at all diminished 4 points. In the focus group students did not think that English was difficult per se. Instead, they thought that the problem was that English is seldom used in their daily basis and that it is difficult to pronounce. In the interview the teacher did not notice changes in the academic outcomes, although she believes it is a matter of time.

As for the question on liking or disliking the subject, we could observe some important changes. The most relevant ones were the amount of pupils claiming to dislike the subject or to like it very much. In the pre-questionnaire, 6% of pupils did not like the subject at all, whereas in the post-questionnaire no student chose any option below 'I like it sometimes'. We saw a major change among students claiming to like the subject very much, after the CL intervention 10% more of students chose this option. If we look at the focus group, most students acknowledged feeling more motivated by the subject. They gave reasons related to sharing doubts, being less monotonous or funnier to learn using CL approaches. In the interview the teacher claimed to have seen changes in motivation, but probably because of the project rather than CL.

Last but not least, we could not see major changes in relation to the inputs received outside the school. Nevertheless, the percentage of students that claim to have little or none interest in other material decreased afterwards. In the focus groups, not many

students said to have received other inputs often and voluntarily. In any case, all of them attend English lessons outside the school.

Group activities vs individual activities

This category had three different concepts that we aimed to pay attention to; perception of group activities, perception of individual activities and participation in the EFL sessions. By analysing these concepts, we aimed to see the effects of learning cooperatively for a while and see what pupils preferred before and after.

As for group activities, we found some remarkable changes. The most important one was that of students claiming to like working in groups increased in 15 points. Besides, the percentage of students choosing to like it sometimes, quite a lot or very much increased in two points. On the contrary, 2% fewer learners claimed to like only a little bit or nothing this kind of activity structure. In general, there seems to be a tendency of being more disposed towards working in teams. Comparing this data to the focus group results, we can see the same preference among students. They gave reasons for this that are discussed in the following category. Finally, based on the observation it could be acknowledged that students were motivated when team tasks were being carried out. Nonetheless, sometimes it took them a bit longer to undertake activities.

The second segment is about the individual activities and how they were perceived by learners. Results in this case were rather anecdotic, and there were small changes between the pre and post questionnaire. Having pointed that, the percentage of students claiming that they like to work individually sometimes increased in 5 points. Likewise, in the focus group there was not a unanimous opinion against working individually, and it was even suggested to be positive if used occasionally. There were no items related to this area in the observation.

Finally, we aimed to see whether students felt more involved in the EFL sessions when using CL. The data showed a rise in terms of the number of subjects seeing themselves more active. Thus, 7% more of the learners claimed to participate 'very much' after the project and another 7% more chose the 'quite a lot' option. In contrast, the option 'sometimes' diminished around 8 points and the low part of the rating decreased 6 points. On the whole, the tendency is for the perception of involvement to increase. The information that observation could give was limited, but we could see a steady rise of pupils participating more often and dealing with team tasks with better proceeding results.

Implementation of CL

The last category to be analysed is related to the process of implementing CL ideas in a school where the learning structure is mainly individual. There are three segments: positive aspects, negative aspects and challenges which could help us understand better the process and its complexity.

In relation to the positive aspects, from the observation data we detected three main ideas: students seem to be more engaged in the session over time, they learn to share ideas/doubts and learn together and they seem to be more active. These last two ideas are also mentioned in the focus group, where students also add that is funnier to work in a team. As for the interview, the idea of sharing is also mentioned, but in this case remarking how this positively contributes to meaningful learning. Besides, two new elements are brought up; more responsibility among students and more time for teachers to pay attention to other aspects.

In the negative aspects, three items are observed: students have clear problems to use an adequate volume when talking, it takes time for students to understand CL fundamentals and not all members work as a team and commit equally to the tasks. This last idea is also shared by students in the focus group, and it is one of the main problems according to them. Moreover, they think that coming to agreements and discussing ideas is also difficult. Finally, in the interview one idea is repeated again: students are not used to some of the fundamentals of CL. Two more new concepts are introduced: students use English less than in an individual structure and that it requires a consistent training for teachers, that is to say time.

To finish this category, the possible challenges of implementing CL in an EFL class were considered. We have data from the observation, and according to it training social and CL skills is probably the most important. According to the teacher, the challenges are three. One of them is also training pupils in the required skills, but teachers training becomes also an essential factor along with the idea of implementing CL in the school for all subjects and in earlier stages.

DISCUSSION

CASE

This research has aimed to analyse the possible relationship between motivation and CL in EFL context. The focus was on the primary stage of a school from Catalonia. We also wanted to understand better the process of implementing a different learning structure in this context. A CL project has been carried out during three months based on the ideas of the main authors of the field. In order to generate relevant data regarding the research goals., Four different methods have been used during the process: questionnaires, focus group, interview and observation.

Perception of English as a subject

It has been mentioned that the changes in that sense were almost irrelevant. However, it should be pointed out that students found the subject to be more difficult. This could be an area of concern in the sense that it could affect motivation among pupils. We might find a possible explanation in '9 ideas clave: El Aprendizaje Cooperativo' (Pujolàs, 2008), where the author stressed the capital relevance of implementing CL permanently and solidly to see positive results in all areas. According to the interview, it could be said that students did not find English to be easier after the CL intervention. Nevertheless, new concepts were more integrated because of the interaction. In this sense, it would not be too much adventurous to acknowledge that if students acquire concepts better somehow the subject becomes slightly less difficult.

Interestingly enough, in the focus groups students did not mention that English was difficult, they even said that it was easier than Catalan. Their reasons to believe that are related to metalinguistic factors. However, they also argued that English was more difficult to pronounce.

Probably, the most important data for this research was whether students liked the English as a subject or not. It was important because its relation to motivation is direct. As a general rule, it could be said that when somebody likes an activity or subject motivation is in line with it. We found an interesting revelation in this segment since, after the project, no student claims to dislike the subject, and the number of students stating that they like it very much increase significantly. This is an important fact because it means that CL can contribute to make the subject more enjoyable. In other words, motivation could be more easily built if students feel more appealed by the subject. These figures are coherent with

the focus group results, in which individuals specifically state that their motivation in EFL sessions has increased. They gave different reasons to believe that, but most of them were related to working cooperatively.

They also argued that activities played a major role in that sense. This is also what the teacher claimed in the interview; the importance of the task. According to her, motivation did not increase because of the approach that was being used, but because of the task. This idea would fit with one of the 4 principal concepts that Task-value model is sustained; the intrinsic values. This author defines this concept as “interest in or aesthetic appreciation of the subject/skills in question, and enjoyment coming from performing the activity” Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011). It is difficult to determine the reasons for this change. In any case, it appears to be clear that the traditional approach -individualistic and book-focused- it is rather unappealing.

Group structure vs. individual structure

This last statement is confirmed by the data referred to activity structure. Both before and after the project, students clearly preferred to work in groups rather than individually. As seen before, reason may differ but may be related to positive interdependence. This fact allows not only for students to collaborate and learn together, but also to have more immediate answers to doubts without being scared of asking publically. They feel to have a kind of protection within the team, which helps them to ask questions that, otherwise, would not be asked. This is a clear advantage of CL since students have more chances to learn more and better. In any case, the option ‘I like working in group very much’ had a clear growing being the option of three quarter parts of the sample. This indicates that CL might be a better option if trained and used properly to motivate students.

However, it seems to be a collateral effect on pupils’ willingness to work individually. Data showed a rise of the number of learners choosing options of the top scale, meaning they felt like to work alone more than before the project. This could be because of the adaptation process that is needed. During the focus group, students mentioned the difficulty of reaching agreements and managing opinions in the teams. Likewise, they realized that no all members put the same effort in the tasks. Thus, again time and social skills training appears to be crucial when working in groups. On the other hand, the level of social abilities acquirement probably played a major role since groups skills were not highly developed. Johnson et al (1998) pointed that “a team productivity is determined by members’ ability to work as a team”. These ideas lead us to reconsider the process

followed during the implementation of CL. It might have been better to practice activities aiming to train cohesion.

Students asserted to feel more involved in the EFL class after the project took place. Comparing both questionnaires -before and after the project- there are not big differences and that the percentage is rather modest. Therefore, it cannot be affirmed that CL actually changed the students' feeling of being simply passive elements in the learning process. However, it is worth stressing that this is an important aspect of CL because of its relationship to interaction. This concept, described by several authors as essential, cannot appear without being willing to participate. Both elements are interconnected, so one cannot happen without the other. The observation guidance confirmed that perception. Students seemed to be more involved at the end of the project than at the beginning. This is probably related to the improvement of social skills, which allows them to take part more actively by discussing ideas or asking questions. Nevertheless, depending on the tasks or activities to be done their participation and engagement would change. In any case CL is a tool to be considered to foster students' participation.

Implementing CL

This category was relevant for the research study in the sense that one of the purposes was to analyse and understand better the process of changing the paradigm. To do it, we proposed to compare positive and negative aspects along with the possible challenges for a teacher. On the positive side, we found that CL boosted learners' participation and involvement in the class, which is relevant to enhance motivation. Both in teams' activities and class activities the tendency was for students to be more active. It would have been interesting to see the long-term progression to verify that. Students also stressed reasons associated with participation. They expressed that it was easier for them to clear up doubts and understand concepts. Enjoyment was also mentioned, but this is probably related to the type of the tasks. T

The teacher, however, referred to other aspects which were also interesting. She believed that CL actually promotes responsibility among students. This is important because is one of the key elements in CL according to the authors; individual accountability. If we manage, from the teacher point of view, to make students more responsible it means that we were actually on the right track. It also proves that participation was increasing, which might mean they were more motivated towards the subject. Learning is more meaningful is

another reason given. This is interesting, because CL is framed in the constructivist theories.

As for the negative aspects, we found a correlation between the three collective tools. All of them seem to point out proceedings as a problem during the project. It is not an unexpected situation since we knew before starting the TU that these problems could arise. It needs to be highlighted that students had been using an individualistic structure for the last 6 years or so. Therefore, the contrasts between the learning ways, conducting activities or interacting in the class were completely different. One of the main issues was the productivity and/or personal implication in the tasks. During the tasks not all the students put the same enthusiasm or effort. It is a difficult matter to control because it takes time to address it, and also because it is difficult for the teacher to be aware of everything happening in the class. Another problem was the decision making process. Students found hard to reach agreements. In this sense, there are activities that could be used to promote cohesion which should have been used.

Two interesting ideas brought by the teacher were the language usage in interactions between learners and the teachers' training required. The former is arguably irrelevant since the language used in EFL between pupils is not normally the target language. It would be desirable that students normally speak the target language when interacting, but it is not common. If we compare interaction in CL settings with individualistic or competitive environments, we will probably find that interaction is only created in CL spaces. Thus, using these approaches does not necessarily mean less language exposure. As for the latter idea, it could be argued that teachers should train in new skills constantly. It indeed entails time, but then it is all about being aware of that, committing to the idea and planning the process carefully.

CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this study I aimed to understand CL further and learn about it during the research process. My objective was to answer two questions; one about the relationship between CL and motivation among EFL students, the other one connected to the process of its implementation in an individualistic structure.

We have seen that the individualistic and competitive structures are not very different, but that they are antagonistic to CL. In general, individualistic structures are still predominant

in Catalonia. However, most of the schools often combine it with group tasks, which in turn should not be confused with CL since it involves more than gathering students to undertake a specific task. For this reason, I also included some pre-requisites that different scholars believe to be essential in order to set a CL structure effectively. These ideas have driven the development of the practical part of this study.

We have also explained the key elements that need to be considered when implementing this structure. After the process, I think that three of them appear to be crucial; **interdependence, interaction** and **individual accountability**. Interdependence has a capital importance because it could be understood as the essence of CL; relying on each other to succeed. Finding balance and learning this concept becomes fundamental to understand this structure. It is the foundation from where the rest of ideas need to be built. Not being aware and understanding positive interdependence means to ignore what CL really is. The second aspect I would stress is interaction. Communication in all its forms happens to be fundamental, because none of the group tasks can be done if members of a team are not able to talk to each other and organize themselves properly. The third element is individual responsibility. Team members have to be ready to commit to the team and the tasks. Otherwise, interdependence is impossible and interaction becomes useless. Everybody needs to be proactive and contribute towards a common goal.

I think the aims of the research have been partly accomplished. I have now a better understanding of CL, and my experience in this field has grown. I have experienced myself the process of implementing CL in a school, the drawbacks and the advantages. In this regard, I think that this learning structure has more strength than flaws and the negative aspects can be easily amended. This structure allows teachers to use project-based activities or tasks that make EFL sessions less monotonous for students. It entails a wider spectrum of concepts to learn besides those related with the syllabus. Students learn social skills that are essential in an increasing interconnected society. The learning process becomes collective and not individual, so knowledge can be shared and the understanding of the ideas can become deeper.

On the other hand, changing the structure in a group is not a simple and easy process and actually entails a deep transformation. The whole structure of the school needs to be changed in order to modify the teachers and students' mindset. Students should be immersed in CL in the early years to be more proficient and effective in the later stages of their formal education. They need to understand and practice the key elements described

in the theory, but also to learn to behave in this environment without losing control as if they were in the playground. It is essential that the atmosphere in the classroom is quiet and adequate to promote good practices. Revision and tutorial moments are required to make the process more democratic and improve all the elements. Problems and challenges need to be discussed collectively to find solutions and become more efficient.

As for the teachers, they ought to undergo a training process but I think this is not a real impediment to change the structure of the school. Teachers need to be constantly adapting skills and methods, because societies change and evolve constantly. Challenges are faced on a daily basis, and this should also bring about regular training. Therefore, training periods for teachers should not impede CL to be used in a school. On the contrary, it ought to become a way to improve skills and be a better professional. The experience will come with time, as it happens when finishing the teaching degree and the consequent adaptation period. I do not believe that this is a reason not to use CL in the school, teacher must be always willing to learn and evolve.

The other part of the question was about motivation. As said before, this study did not set out to pontificate. Besides, the relationship between cooperation and motivation has already been described in other research studies. Nevertheless, after the project I believe that CL can be a real tool to improve motivation among students. Probably each student finds enjoyment in CL for different reasons; to have fun, to clear up doubts or to do projects. But what is actually relevant is that they feel more motivated to learn and be involved in their own learning process. The figures associated with motivation in this study have, in general, improved after the project. Students felt more appealed by the subject, claimed to prefer group activities and to participate more in the sessions. I think that although results are not conclusive, they actually gave us a brief idea of the potential that CL may have.

Focusing on the practical part of my research, I think that on the whole sessions worked quite well. However, some parts could have been implemented differently. We should have been more focused on the social skills training process. Although we kept reminding students the basics of cooperation this was not enough. Ideally, we should have interfered more in these problems and try to solve them properly. Sessions centred exclusively on discussing problems within teams would have become crucial. During these sessions we would have focused on individual problems, but also on general and common issues. I tried to plan every part of the TU and always with meaningful concepts, but I paid too

much attention to grammar and less to interaction, interdependence or organization. Another mistake was to prepare too many tasks related to the book. Even though students generally enjoyed those activities, I think that project-based activities would have engaged them more.

All in all, I am satisfied with this research study and all the process because of the knowledge I have gained. I have enjoyed carrying out many of the activities. I believed before my research that CL was a real and powerful tool to learn English and I conclude not that I am even more convinced of it. Indeed, Cooperative Learning works.

REFERENCES

- BANDURA, A. (1997) *Self-efficacy: the exercise of control*. New York: W. H. Freeman.
- COVINGTON, M. V. (1992). *Making the grade: A self-worth perspective on motivation and school reform*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- EU, European Commission (2013) *Stat/13/138*. Available at: 2011 http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STAT-13-138_en.htm (Accessed 8 November 2015)
- EUROSTAT, European Commission (2016) *Foreign language learning statistics*. Available at: 2016 http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Foreign_language_learning_statistics (Accessed 8 November 2015)
- DECI, E.L. (1975). *Intrinsic Motivation*. New York : Plenum Press, cop.
- DECI, E. L., & RYAN, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York: Plenum.
- DÖRNYEI, Z. (2001). *Teaching and Researching Motivation*. New York: Longman.
- DÖRNYEI, Z. & USHIODA, E., (2011). *Teaching and Researching Motivation (2nd edition)*. Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited.
- HOUSSAYE, Jean (1987). *École et vie active. Résister ou s'adapter?*. Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé.
- JOHNSON, D. W., JOHNSON, R. T. & HOLUBEC, E. J. (1998) *Cooperation in the Classroom*. Edina, Minnesota (US): Interaction Book Company
- KAGAN, S. (1999). *Cooperative learning*. San Clemente (CA): Kagan. Available at: www.KaganOnline.com (Accessed 10 April 2016)
- KAGAN, S. & KAGAN, M. (2009) *Kagan Cooperative Learning*. San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing.
- KOHN, A. (1991a). *Don't spoil the promise of cooperative learning*. Educational Leadership, 48, 93-94. Available at: http://www.ascd.org/ASCD/pdf/journals/ed_lead/el_199102_kohn2.pdf (Accessed 29 April 2016)

LIGHTBOWN, P. M. & SPADA, N. (2013) *how Languages are Learned* (4th edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

LOCKE, E. A., & LATHAM, G. P. (1990). *A theory of goal setting and task performance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

PUJOLÀS, P. (2002) *Aprendre Junts Alumnes diferents: Els Equips D'aprenentatge Cooperatiu a L'aula*. Vic: Eumo.

PUJOLÀS, P. (2008) *9 ideas clave: El Aprendizaje Cooperativo*. Barcelona: Editorial Graó.

SLAVIN, R (1999) *Aprendizaje Cooperativo: Teoría, Investigación y Práctica*. Buenos Aires: Aique.

WANG, M., HAERTEL, P.& WALBERG, H. (1993) *Toward a Knowledge Base for School Learning*. Available at: <http://www.beteronderwijsnederland.nl/files/active/0/Wang,%20Haertel%20&%20Walberg%20%281993%29.pdf> (Accessed 10 November 2015)

WEINER, B. (2000). *Intrapersonal and interpersonal theories of motivation from an attributional perspective*. Educational Psychology Review, 12, 1-14.

WIGFIELD, A. (1994). *Expectancy-value theory of achievement motivation: A developmental perspective*. Educational Psychology Review, 6, 49-78.