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# Taking the YouTubers' phenomenon into the EFL class to motivate students

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## Abstract

Motivation is a widely studied topic in L2 learning — and rightly so, as it has been proven that a motivated learner achieves better learning results compared to an unmotivated counterpart. On the one hand, this study reviews the most recent literature on motivational strategies and attempts to single out the most effective from the perspective of the students. On the other hand, this study also attempts to evaluate the impact in students' motivation of incorporating L2 YouTuber content in class. In order to answer our research questions, a specific DU catered for 1<sup>st</sup> of Bacalaureate students —that incorporated L2 YouTuber content and relevant motivational strategies— was elaborated and implemented during the school placement, and initial and final questionnaires were administered to the students. The results indicate that the most effective motivational strategies have to do with the teacher being able to show a good example, create a pleasant and fun atmosphere, give positive reinforcement and resort to up-to-date Internet material. In terms of L2 YouTuber content, results indicate that incorporating it in class seems to raise students' intrinsic motivation to learn the L2.

Key words: motivation, motivational strategies, types of motivation, YouTubers, EFL learning

## Resum

La motivació és un tema prolíficament estudiat en el camp de l'aprenentatge de llengua estrangera. Això no ens hauria d'estranyar si tenim en compte que, tal com indica la recerca, un alumne motivat aconsegueix millors resultats d'aprenentatge que un de desmotivats. D'una banda, aquest estudi repassa la literatura més recent sobre estratègies motivadores i intenta determinar quines són les més eficaces des del punt de vista dels alumnes. De l'altra banda, l'estudi també intenta avaluar l'impacte, en la motivació dels alumnes, d'incorporar contingut de YouTubers en llengua anglesa a classe. Per respondre a les preguntes de recerca, hem elaborat una UD per a 1r de Batxillerat —incorporant contingut de YouTubers en llengua anglesa i estratègies motivadores rellevants— que hem implementat durant les pràctiques. Seguidament es van portar a terme qüestionaris inicials i finals. Els resultats indiquen que les estratègies motivadores més eficaces es relacionen amb la capacitat del professor de predicar amb l'exemple, crear una atmosfera distesa i divertida, encoratjar els alumnes amb feedback positiu i incorporar a classe contingut actual d'Internet. Pel que fa al

contingut de YouTubers en llengua anglesa, els resultats indiquen que incloure'l a classe pot augmentar la motivació intrínseca dels alumnes per aprendre anglès.

Paraules clau: motivació, estratègies motivadores, tipus de motivació, YouTubers, aprenentatge d'anglès com a llengua estrangera

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## 1 Introduction

In second language (L2) learning, the concept of *motivation* has been prolifically studied. As originally conceived, it refers to “the combination of effort and desire to achieve the goal of learning the language” (Gardner, 1985), and many studies point out that it has a huge role in determining success. “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” (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Again according to Dörnyei (2001), where unmotivated students are bound to fail, students with high motivation can achieve a significant amount of target language knowledge, regardless even of their language ability.

It seems thus apparent that, as teachers, if we want our students to successfully learn English, we *just* need to know how to motivate them and keep them motivated. Not surprisingly, then, there have been several attempts to identify the ultimate motivational strategies to motivate students, since, in effect, studies show a positive correlation between teachers’ implementation of those motivational strategies and actual student motivation (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008).

Two of the perhaps more challenging motivational strategies to raise and maintain students’ motivation, which will be discussed further in this study, are “making the language classes interesting” and “personalizing the learning process” (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). But how can teachers make sure those are observed, when they might have around 30 students in class, all of which with different language levels and particularly distinct interests? Looking for answers among the latest studies on the topic, Csizér & Illés (2020) prescribe boosting students’ own sense of autonomy and competence in L2 — in other words, raising their self-determined intrinsic motivation, which studies consistently show correlates with achievement-types measures. The idea is that, by achieving this sense of autonomy and competence, students will perceive L2 as a means to deeply explore areas of their own personal liking. According to the same authors, a motivated language learner in the 21<sup>st</sup> century looks like a self-confident language user with a positive disposition towards L2 that is willing to invest time and effort in language learning (p. 25). Such learners, they add, seek opportunities to use L2 beyond the classroom and also exploit the almost unlimited exposure the Internet offers these days. In short, it seems clear that the way to go is making students willing to engage in L2 interactions, which can potentially lead them to L2 learning.

In that respect, and also taking into account the motivational strategy “using authentic materials” (Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998), there is no denying that tapping into English-speaking YouTuber content, a priori, makes a lot of sense, especially among teenage students.

In this paper, firstly, we will be reviewing the literature on L2 learning motivation to try and determine what motivational strategies have thus far proved to be the most successful in motivating students to learn English. Secondly, we will try and find out why YouTubers are so appealing to teenagers and we will also look into different ways in which researchers have analysed their potential in the English as a Foreign language (EFL) classroom. Only then will we attempt to create our own specific didactic unit (DU), aimed at 1<sup>st</sup> of Baccalaureate students, drawing on L2 YouTuber content and incorporating the relevant motivational strategies retrieved from the literature. In terms of students’ production, the oral skills will be prioritised over the written, since, as Nunan (2005) puts it, “many people feel that speaking in a new language is harder than reading, writing or listening” (p. 48). And yet, there is a general consensus that speaking to this day is not sufficiently —or efficiently— tackled in class (Escobar, 2011; Vaca Torres & Gómez Rodríguez, 2017; Vilà, 2011).

The first research objective of this study is, thus, (1) to evaluate the impact of using L2 YouTuber content in students’ L2 learning motivation. The second research objective is (2) to analyse the effectiveness of motivational strategies from the perspective of the students themselves.

## 2 Theoretical framework

### L2 Motivation

Until the 1990s, during what is called *the social psychological period*, the research on L2 motivation was largely influenced by the studies of both Gardner & Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985), two researchers from Canada who framed L2 as a mediator tools between communities. In accordance with their time and space, they saw L2 learning motivation as a drive to whether (1) be able to interact with another community —the integrative orientation—, or (2) gain proficiency in order to achieve a goal such as getting a higher salary —the instrumental orientation—<sup>1</sup>. Concurrently, American psychologists Deci & Ryan (1985) put forward their *Self-Determination Theory*, distinguishing between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Roughly, intrinsic motivation was understood as the drive to do something for an internal reward, whereas with extrinsic motivation the individual does something because of its instrumental value.

From the 1990s on, there was a need to reframe L2 learning motivation toward a more situated approach, drawing on cognitive theories from educational psychology. Hence, this period is known as *the cognitive-situated period*. Researchers like Clément, Dörnyei and Noels added further motives for learning an L2, and started taking the classroom context into consideration. Dörnyei (1994) then proposed a general framework to define L2 motivation consisting of 3 levels: the language level, the learner level and the learning situation level, including course-specific, teacher-specific and group-specific motivational components. As a result, he put forward a systematic collection of L2 motivational strategies —nearly 100 concrete suggestions and recommendations— that will be further discussed below.

The situated approach from the 1990s, in turn, drew attention to another aspect of motivation: its dynamic character and temporal variation. This period is known as *the process-oriented period* and it started around the 2000s. Hence, Dörnyei (2000) proposed a new approach to understanding learner motivation across time — a learner has wishes that

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<sup>1</sup> The concept of *integrativeness* is still relevant today, although it has been long redefined by authors like Dörnyei & Csizér (2002) to include, in the case of English, the willingness to integrate the values attributed to a *global community* where English has become a *lingua franca*.

turn into goals, then intentions. Eventually, these intentions are potentially enacted and the goals are accomplished. The learners' selves impact on L2 motivation was also then studied through the L2 Motivational Self System (L2MSS) (Dörnyei, 2009) as an attempt to account for the individual differences in language learning motivation. Following this model, students' L2 motivation is shaped by three variables: the *ideal L2 self*, describing how students imagine themselves as language users in the future; the *ought-to L2 self*, depicting to what extent students are aware of outside pressures related to language learning, and the *language learning experience* — i.e., subsuming attitudes towards the classroom processes.

Regarding the speaking skill —one that is of vital importance when learning a foreign language—, the concept of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) has to be taken into account. WTC was initially conceived by McCroskey & Baer (1985) in reference to first language (L1)<sup>2</sup> communication, and it was defined as an individual's probability of engagement in communication when free to choose to do so. In this context it was seen as a personality trait, a stable predisposition to speak (or not). However, from the 1990s on, WTC was also applied to the L2 language learning context and given, here too, a more situation-specific turn. According to MacIntyre et al. (1998), L1 WTC could be affected by exterior factors such as the degree of acquaintance between communicators, the number of people present, the topic of discussion, etc. If WTC was to be tackled from an L2 perspective, it needed to include even more variables, as L2 competence can range from no competence to full competence. Therefore, MacIntyre et al. (1998) redefined L2 WTC as a “readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons using L2” (p. 546) and proposed a pyramid of potential influences affecting it: enduring influences at the bottom (defining stable and long-term aspects of learner personality) and situational influences at the top (the more transient ones, having to do with the desire to speak to a specific person or knowledge of a particular topic). Later on down the line, MacIntyre (2020) revisited their pyramid adding, again here too, a dynamic turn, studying the fluctuation of WTC from moment to moment in given situations depending on the decision-making system gauging the situation and deciding whether to take the leap and speak or not. Already back in the 1990s, MacIntyre et al. (1998) stated that the job of EFL teachers should be to entice students to speak —that is, to motivate them to do so: “the ultimate goal of the learning

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<sup>2</sup> In this study, L1 will refer to Catalan/Spanish. L2 refers to English.



process should be to engender in language students the willingness to seek out communication opportunities and the willingness actually to communicate in them. That is, a proper objective for L2 education is *to create WTC*. A program that fails to produce students who are willing to use the language is simply a failed program” (p. 547). This idea back then already seemed to imply that the role of EFL teachers is, to put it in other words, to *motivate* students to use the language.

In order to understand L2 learning motivation, Noels et al. (1999) added that the distinction between the constructs of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from Deci & Ryan’s (1985) original *Self-Determination Theory* should be considered. Noels et al. (1999) found that learning a language for material reward or for pressure (extrinsic motives) is not supportive of sustained effort or eventual competence. In contrast, the more students felt that they had personally chosen to learn the language (intrinsic motives), the more effort they made and the more competent they felt. Additionally, they also found that the role teachers play in facilitating these kinds of motivation is key. By fostering students’ autonomy and competence, teachers may be able to nudge students’ motivation from the most extrinsic end of the spectrum towards the more intrinsic, therefore contributing to more valued and sustained learning. These findings are still very much valid today, as Noels et al. (2020) still report that the internalization of motivation can be helped by teachers who support students’ *autonomy, competence and relatedness*, three concepts stemming from the same Self-Determination Theory. Similarly, authors in the field such as Csizér & Illés (2020) also stress the importance of promoting students’ autonomy to raise their motivation. Other concepts that are linked to intrinsic motivation, as revealed by Carreira (2011), are *curiosity and enjoyment*, in the sense that they are considered predictors of that type of motivation. In conclusion, it seems clear that if we want to motivate students to learn the L2 in a way that is sustainable we should steer them into finding their own intrinsic motivation to do so.

The amount of literature analysing L2 learning motivation is, as attempted to outline above, prolific. However, the amount of research devoted to actually motivating L2 learners is still to this day considered meagre in comparison. To the extent that this study is not concerned with analysing what motivates students to voluntarily learn L2, but to find out what works in motivating them to learn L2, the following section will deal with motivational strategies. We believe that a more education-centered, pragmatic approach should be more relevant to our study especially considering that we are concerned with students that are probably

not learning the language by personal choice but because it is a compulsory school subject. In that context, and generally speaking, the problem teachers face is creating and sustaining learners' motivation with learner-relevant content, tasks and activities on a daily basis (Csizér & Illés, 2020).

### L2 motivational strategies

Motivational strategies can be defined as teacher interventions that aim at stimulating student motivation. Motivational studies in L2 literature start in the 1990s, when, as discussed above, L2 motivation authors took an interest in the learning environment as an important constituent of L2 learning motivation. During this era, then, various scholars such as Dörnyei (1994) published practical guidelines for motivating L2 learners. Dörnyei's original collection of L2 motivational strategies —gathered into conceptual domains— is in fact considered the most systematic thus far. It is made up of 30 macro-strategies broken down into different techniques, resulting in about 100 specific recommendations that we will henceforth refer to as motivational strategies.

In an attempt to revise this original list and empirically prove the effectiveness of the strategies, Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) had 200 Hungarian EFL teachers rate how important they found —and how frequently they used— a set of 51 of those motivational strategies. From their answers came up a list of 10 strategies, which they called the *Ten Commandments for Motivating Language Learners*, ordered by relevance. Those are, as found on p. 205:

1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour
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. Personalise the learning process
9. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness
10. Familiarize learners with the target culture

Further down the line, Cheng & Dörnyei (2007) carried out another empirical survey in an attempt to replicate Dörnyei & Csizér's survey in Taiwan. 387 Taiwanese English teachers were asked to rate the importance —and again the frequency of use— of the same set of micro-strategies. The results revealed that there was some resemblance between the

Hungarian and Taiwanese ranking of motivational strategies, but also some differences indicating culture-dependence of some strategies. Their list was, as found on p. 161:

1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour
2. Recognise students' effort and celebrate their success
3. Promote learners' self-confidence
4. Create a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the classroom
5. Present tasks properly
6. Increase the learners' goal-orientedness
7. Make the learning tasks stimulating
8. Familiarise learners with L2-related values
9. Promote group cohesiveness and set group norms
10. Promote learner autonomy

Several studies have explored the correlation between teachers using motivational strategies and students' motivation level actually being enhanced. Guilloteaux & Dörnyei (2008) revealed that students' motivation is influenced highly by the teachers' use of motivational strategies, demonstrated by their degree of attention and participation in class. Bernaus & Gardner (2008) also found that teachers' use of motivational studies relates to students' degree of motivation and their attainment. However, they also point out that "teachers may use any strategy with which they feel comfortable and that is of value to the students, but for the strategies to be effective in influencing students' attitudes and motivation, they must be perceived as such by the students. We recommend, therefore, that teachers assess their students' perceptions of any strategies they employ" (p. 399). It seems particularly relevant, then, to shift our focus from teachers' perceptions on what works to what students say is actually working for them. In that vein, a few studies such as Mauludin's (2021) have examined the students' perception of the effectiveness of motivational strategies implemented by their teachers. In his case, Mauludin took 163 Indonesian university students from an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course and, drawing on the same original motivational micro-strategies by Dörnyei (1994), obtained a 5-item list of the most motivational teaching practises, as well as the 5 least motivational teaching practises, as perceived by the students. The 5 most motivational strategies were, as found on p. 147:

1. Creating a pleasant atmosphere
2. Giving clear instructions
3. Showing a good example by being committed and motivated

4. Bringing humour, laughter and smile
5. Developing a good relationship teacher-students

Mauludin (2021) argues that since ESP students have no personal interest in making English their career, it only seems natural that their most valued motivational strategies are related to the conceptual domain of *rapport* — that is, they feel more motivated if teachers promote a friendly relationship with them and there is a sense of enjoyment.

Finally, our theoretical framework must include the latest thoughts on motivating L2 learners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century — that is, roughly, trying to embrace the challenges and also opportunities brought by an era dominated by interconnectedness, where English is the global *lingua franca* and is widely spoken by both native and non-native speakers (Csizér & Illés, 2020). In that respect, the authors state that:

a motivated language learner can thus be seen as a self-confident language user whose positive disposition towards not only different varieties, uses and users of English but also languages other than English makes them willing to invest time and effort in language learning. Such learners seek opportunities to use L2 with both natives and non-native speakers and exploit the unlimited exposure the Internet offers these days. (p. 25)

Nowadays, therefore, the teacher is in charge of making sure the learners become autonomous, competent language users. In a similar vein, Cassany (2021) also speaks about the updated role of EFL teachers in a society overloaded with information. In this context, teachers become *curators* that need to find out what interests students and select real-life materials to hopefully raise their intrinsic motivation to seek real use of L2 beyond the classroom. To foster this autonomy, Csizér & Illés (2020) prescribe learner-centredness, which entails group and pair work, as “the more opportunities learners are given to speak, the more they use and consequently learn the language” (p. 25). Additionally, the authors speak about the role of teachers in creating conditions of language use outside of the classroom, and also suggest exploring translation and literature as potential means of inducing learner engagement.

### YouTubers and motivation

Media consumption data shows that the Internet (81.9%) is the most frequently used media among Catalan teenagers aged 16-24, largely exceeding television (12%), print media (4.2%) and the radio (1.2%) (Massaguer et al., 2020). As to social networks, YouTube stands on the third podium place in terms of use (26.8%), outranked only by WhatsApp and Instagram.

Youtubers, some of which have become true icons, are considered to be a phenomenon that is closely linked to this massive shift in audio-visual consumption habits<sup>3</sup>, which is not just happening in our country but globally.

And yet, what is it that makes Youtubers so appealing to teenagers? According to Massaguer et al. (2020), the answer lies in their communicative style, which makes them appear very relatable. Additionally, Dredge (2016) argues that it is their ordinariness, their candidness in speaking about life that creates a sense among teenagers of having an intimate connection with them —an “older brother” of sorts. No matter how, it is clear that when we talk Youtubers we are stepping into teenage territory, and that since Youtubers’ communication vehicle is the spoken language, they offer an excellent opportunity for EFL teachers to tap into. Still, there is no clear data shedding light on how much English-speaking Youtuber content Catalan students are watching and whether this has a positive impact in motivating them to learn the language. However, it does not stretch the imagination to think that an L2 learner could definitely benefit from regularly exposing themselves to L2 Youtubers that are all about a topic of the students’ own interest. As Dörnyei (1994) put it, and as seen above, the concepts of *interest* and *relevance* have long been identified as motivational factors. It seems even more obvious that such students, if they might try and start their own YouTube channel in English, could benefit even more from attempting to create their content in that language. This phenomenon, which may not be happening in our country that much, is nevertheless not that far-fetched in Northern countries such as Finland, where many Youtubers choose English as their language of communication in order to reach a broader audience (Stylman, 2017). According to this author, who has studied the increased use of English among Finnish teenagers on social media, young people from countries with a strong national language tend to use that national language to create their videos. Conversely, young people whose L1 is deemed “less strong” or “less prestigious” tend to resort to English as a communication vehicle in their YouTube videos, potentially with an *integrative motivation* to integrate the global community, as redefined by Dörnyei & Csizér (2002). An example illustrating this is the Swedish Youtuber PewDiePie —one of the most followed online content creator to this point—, who exclusively edits their videos in English. In our country, this digital diglossia is also happening and there is actually much

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<sup>3</sup> The older the age group, the more the Internet predominance diminishes: 73% of people aged 25-34 use the Internet over the other media. This percentage decreases to 59.6% in age group 35-49; 37.9% in age group 50-64 and 12.4% in age group 65+ in Catalonia in 2019 (Massaguer et al., 2020).

debate around it (Massagué et al., 2020), not so much with a Catalan/English dichotomy but with Catalan/Spanish, with Catalan teenagers resorting to Spanish both to watch their YouTubers and also when creating their own content. Interesting as the topic is, it does not have a direct bearing with this study.

There are infinite possible ways in which the vast sea of YouTuber content could be taken advantage of in the EFL class to motivate students depending on their level. Unfortunately, though, there is not much literature about it. Aristizábal-Jiménez (2020) used YouTuber material to foster talk with 11<sup>th</sup> grade students (aged 16-17) through project-based learning (PBL), and was able to conclude that the speaking activities she designed —involving YouTubers' critical analysis— motivated students to speak, improving their oral skills, while also making them more aware of the content they were consuming on the platform. Likewise, Abad (2018) designed six successful projects suitable for lower-level students (7<sup>th</sup> grade, aged 12-13) where they had to describe a room, introduce themselves, talk about hobbies, write and talk about music or describe a place, among others, following YouTubers' typically-structured videos such as "A Room Tour", "30 Random Facts About Me" or "20 Songs Tag".

It only seems obvious to suppose that, in terms of sparking students' L2 learning motivation, drawing on content that is that familiar and attractive to students is bound to succeed. As MacIntyre (1998) already put it, "the familiarity with a certain register will boost one's linguistic self-confidence, whereas a lack of these may inhibit even a generally confident L2 speaker" (p. 554). Both Aristizábal-Jiménez (2020) and Abad (2018) report that using YouTuber content in the class generated engagement. Abad (2018) reports that:

by finding inspiration in the YouTuber phenomenon, I saw that my students were more motivated to learn English. They started to look at English as a real-life language beyond the course books. Before each project was presented, students were already eager to know what it was going to be about and what they were going to do. (p. 12)

Additionally, according to Araujo (2014), introducing a video in an oral speech lecture helps and facilitates the task, as he found that students' spoken interventions were more frequent, fluid, and more grammatically correct. Cassany (2021), as discussed above, also stresses the importance of using authentic materials from the Internet as there might be a chance that students keep following the YouTubers watched in class, explore new ones or simply join a fan community in English.

## 3 Methodology

### Research methods

In order to provide answers to the research questions posed —that is, (1) does drawing on L2 YouTuber content impact students' L2 learning motivation?— we designed a DU<sup>4</sup> called “My favourite YouTuber” which incorporated all the relevant motivational strategies from Dörnyei & Csizér's (1998) list, to which we added three from Csizér & Illés (2020)<sup>5</sup>. That, in turn, allowed us to answer the second research question: (2) what are the most effective motivational strategies from the students' perspective?

The DU “My favourite YouTuber” was made up of 3 sessions. The goal of the 1<sup>st</sup> session was to explore students' interests in a game-like manner, trying to build a positive relationship with them by involving the teacher(s) as well. In terms of motivational strategies, the focus was on creating a good climate, developing rapport, tapping into students' personal interests and their personal relevance, and increasing their sense of belonging in the group. This last strategy was considered relevant as the students did not know each other very well. During that same session, students were also presented with a selection of English-speaking YouTubers covering different areas of interest: food, fashion, sports, wellbeing, mental health, sports, history, comics, gaming and environment. Students watched a video from @FitGreenMind, a 16-year old German YouTuber that shares vegan-lifestyle tips and recipes (in English, of course). After that, students answered comprehension questions and discussed veganism and tricky words from the video. Regarding motivational strategies, drawing on YouTubers fulfils the recommendation of using authentic material and one that is particularly relevant among teenagers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century — social media content. Additionally, students heard English from a non-native German girl, which according to Csizér & Illés (2020) is also necessary because it raises students' awareness of English as a global *lingua franca*. After that, the group discussed YouTubers (what YouTubers the students like or follow, what topics do they cover, why do they like them, if they follow or not English-speaking YouTubers...), and the teacher shared the instructions for the task in hand. During the following week, students were to find an English-speaking YouTuber of their choice that touched on a topic of their own interest —for example, one student that

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<sup>4</sup> The detailed DU including the breakdown of the specific motivational micro-strategies used can be found on [Appendix 1](#).

<sup>5</sup> The complete list of micro-strategies classified by conceptual domains, adapted from Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) and Csizér & Illés (2020) that we based our questionnaire on can be found on [Appendix 2](#).

was a climber chose a climbing YouTuber. The students were to watch at least 4 videos from them, and then prepare a brief oral presentation in which they introduced their YouTuber to the rest of the class. An outline of the questions students needed to cover for the presentation was provided, such as for example what they had learned from the YouTuber both in general terms but also linguistically, explaining at least 5 language items they did not know before. From a motivational strategies point of view, this was meant particularly to stress the usefulness of the language, and to encourage students to be autonomous language users outside the classroom. During the second session, students prepared their presentation in class, allowing space for the teacher to provide feedback and guidance. The third and last session was the students' presentations. Assessment was done through a rubric that had been previously shared with the students.

This research study was carried out under the characteristics of a qualitative inquiry. Our study's nature is to explore a very specific topic in a very specific context, and therefore it is non-generalizable. Also, this was a non-numeric study, and a naturally subjective one, as the researcher was also the observer. According to Hernández Sampieri (2014), the observer-investigator approach has the advantage that the researcher has direct experience with the participants.

### Participants

The setting where this research study took place was a public high school located in a small town in Girona, Catalonia. The high school offers compulsory secondary education and Baccalaureate studies and currently provides education to about 200 students. According to the context data contained in the high school's educational project document, the vast majority of the students are from Catalan/Spanish origin (91.7%), followed by Morocco (5.6%) and others (2.7%) including the Ukraine, Romania, Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia and Russia.

Specifically, the study was conducted with one single class group of 22 1<sup>st</sup> of Baccalaureate students, 4 males and 18 females, whose age ranged from 16 to 18 years and whose L2 proficiency level revolved around B2 in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). From the 22 students, 13 were enrolled in the social studies Baccalaureate, 6 in the scientific studies Baccalaureate and only 3 in the humanities studies Baccalaureate.



Taking another look into the high school's educational project document, this time focusing on the foreign language section, it is stated that after completing their Baccalaureate studies, students should be able to express themselves fluently in the social, academic and professional domains. They need to be able to produce complex texts that are clear and coherent, as well as understand any written and oral text without significant difficulties. However, and although the importance of the oral skills is in theory levelled with that of the written skills, the reality seems to show that students get less speaking practise than they get writing practise. During observation week we had the chance to confirm this by trying to get them to answer questions about them such as what their interests were and what they wanted to study moving forward. Their answers were short and rigid. Their current English teacher reported basing her Baccalaureate lectures on following the textbook and promoting individual work in order to prepare the students for their university-access examinations. She also reported that particular 1<sup>st</sup> of Baccalaureate students group as being incohesive and demotivated. This might be due to the fact that there is a second high school in town, and that it is in 1<sup>st</sup> of Baccalaureate that students from both high schools meet for the first time in class, not necessarily knowing each other very well from before. Another aspect that was noted speaking with students during observation week is that none of the students reported having interest in pursuing a language career —they mainly wanted to follow careers in psychology, business and law.

During the 6<sup>th</sup> week of our school placement as a trainee teacher, we had the opportunity to implement our 3-session-long DU, designed in an attempt to remedy students' lack of motivation by drawing on L2 YouTubers' content that was relevant to the students and incorporating the motivational strategies reviewed from literature. Our DU emphasised the oral practise over the written practise as a means not only to get the learners to use the language but also to level it up with the written practise.

## Tools

Three questionnaires<sup>6</sup> were designed in order to try and answer our double-fold research question.

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<sup>6</sup> The three questionnaires can be found on [Appendix 3](#).

Our first research question —that is, (1) does drawing on L2 YouTuber content impact students' L2 learning motivation?—, is explored basically through students' perceptions, thoughts and feelings, collected via two questionnaires, an initial and a final one.

The two questionnaires followed Hernández Sampieri's (2014) structure and included both semi-structured and open-ended questions, some of which with a Likert rating scale. The initial questionnaire included 11 items with the aim of gauging, on the one hand, students' initial interest in YouTuber content and their YouTuber consumption habits, in terms of L1/L2 usage so as to be able to contrast them. Students were also asked whether they believed watching more YouTubers in L2 would benefit them in terms of L2 learning. Finally, we tried to gain insight into what motives students' initially had to learn English as veering toward the extrinsic or the intrinsic side of the spectrum. The final questionnaire was designed to measure students' sense of enjoyment and learning after the DU, and their interest in potentially exposing themselves more to L2 YouTuber content moving forward. This final questionnaire also included the same extrinsic/intrinsic motivation questions from the initial questionnaire to check whether students' type of motivation had changed or not as a result of the DU.

Regarding our second research question — (2) what are the most effective motivational strategies from the students' perspectives?—, we designed a third questionnaire containing the 36 motivational strategies consciously implemented over the course the DU. The students, using a Likert scale ranging from 1 (not relevant at all) to 4 (of maximum relevance), had to evaluate the extent to which each particular strategy was relevant in motivating them.

Our final list of 36 motivational strategies (Appendix 2) is adapted from the questionnaire designed by Dörnyei & Csizér (1998), which was based on Dörnyei's (1994) original paper. Dörnyei & Csizér's (1998) selected 51 micro-strategies and assembled them into various conceptual domains which teachers were to rate. In our study, however, it is the students themselves who rate the relevance of the each micro-strategy. Similarly, Mauludin (2021) adapted Dörnyei & Csizér's (1998) list of micro-strategies into a questionnaire which he then administered to college-level students from an ESP context. Following what Mauludin did, we also eliminated from our micro-strategy list items that (1) did not apply to the Baccalaureate setting —for example, “find pen-friends for your learners” or “decorate the classroom”—, (2) were not relevant in such a short-timed DU —for instance, “organize out-

of-class activities” or “regularly review the classroom rules with your students” and (3) were considered redundant—for example “offer a variety of materials” and “vary the activities”.

Apart from dismissing some of Dörnyei & Csizér’s (1998) original list of motivational micro-strategies, we added three additional ones that were considered especially relevant for this study and that stem from Csizér & Illés’s (2020) research on motivating students taking into account the specificity of our very current 21<sup>st</sup> century context. Those are strategies (34) “let students sign up for tasks according to their interest”, (35) “try to exploit the almost unlimited exposure the Internet offers these days” and (36) “encourage students to be autonomous language users outside the classroom” (p. 211).

Finally, to round up the data gathering tools for this research, direct and participatory field observation sheets were also used. According to Fuertes Camacho (2011), when using observation as a research technique we need to make it deliberate, specific and systematic, and that calls for prior planning. With this in mind, we designed an observation sheet adapted from Estaire’s (2004) with a focus on students and their learning process (p. 140). Our field observation sheet targets aspects such as: motivation, active participation, collaboration, attention to what students are doing, signs of interest or disinterest, teamwork dynamics, use of L2, etc. We also tried and gauge their sense of achievement and proof of improvement through those.

### Data collection

All three questionnaires were translated into Catalan to avoid students’ misunderstanding of the items.

The first questionnaire was administered during the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the school placement and before carrying out the YouTuber DU to prevent bias in students’ responses regarding their initial L1/L2 YouTuber consumption habits, interests and motives to learn English. It only took the 22 students around 5 minutes to complete it individually on their laptops.

The second questionnaire was administered during the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the school placement, a few days after having implemented the DU so that students’ sense of enjoyment, learning and motivation was still fresh to them. The questionnaire took no more than 5 minutes to complete.

Finally, the motivational strategies questionnaire was carried out during the 7<sup>th</sup> week of the school placement so as to avoid administering 2 questionnaires in the same week and

overloading students, especially because this one was long in comparison to the last two. This time it took 10 minutes for the students to complete it.

As to the field observation sheet with a focus on students and their learning process, it was completed diligently right after each of the sessions to make sure it was as accurate as possible (Bisquerra, 2016).

### Data analysis

As all questionnaires were administered through Google Forms, data of close-ended questions was automatically transformed into percentages by the tool itself.

For the items that were analysed via a Likert scale —such as the 36 motivational micro-strategies that students had to rate 1-4—, the mean was calculated, obtaining an out-of-4 punctuation that allowed us to rank the micro-strategies from the most relevant to the least. It was also through mean calculation that conceptual domains were rated from the most to the least relevant. For example, if the domain *teacher* contained 3 motivational micro-strategies, the overall punctuation of the *teacher* domain was equal to the mean of those 3 motivational micro-strategies. Other domains such as *rapport* were only comprised of one micro-strategy — in that case the *rapport* score equalled that of its only motivational micro-strategy.

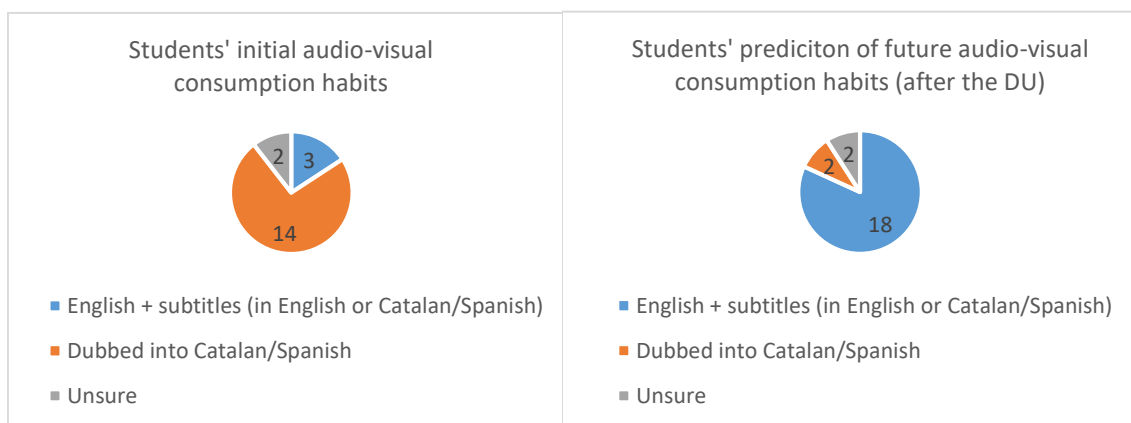
The answers of open-ended questions were categorised into topics of common occurrence and assigned a number of incidence (number of students out of 22). The data from the observation sheets was also categorized into topics and analysed accordingly.

## 4 Results

### YouTubers

The data analysis reveals that in terms of YouTuber content consumption, initially, the vast majority of the students (90.9%) had the habit of consuming it in L1. In contrast, only half of the students (50%) had the habit of watching YouTuber content in L2. After implementing the DU, however, the data gathered reveals that, moving forward, 59.1% of students have the intention to keep watching English-speaking YouTubers —there is, thus, an increase of 9% of students initially exposing themselves to L2 YouTubers and students potentially doing so in the future. A remarkable 36.4% reports being hesitant about watching L2 YouTubers in the future.

Zooming out, in terms of more general audio-visual consumption habits —we are referring to films and series in the questionnaires—, graph 1 shows that the same L1-L2 tendency is valid —the majority of students watches their audio-visual content dubbed into L1 (63.6%). Only 27.3% of students has the habit of watching it in L2, half of them with Spanish subtitles and the other half with English subtitles. After implementing the DU, however, graph 2 indicates that 81.8% of students foresee themselves switching into English + subtitles. In this case, then, there is an increase of 54.5% of students switching from L1 to L2 in their general audio-visual consumption habits.

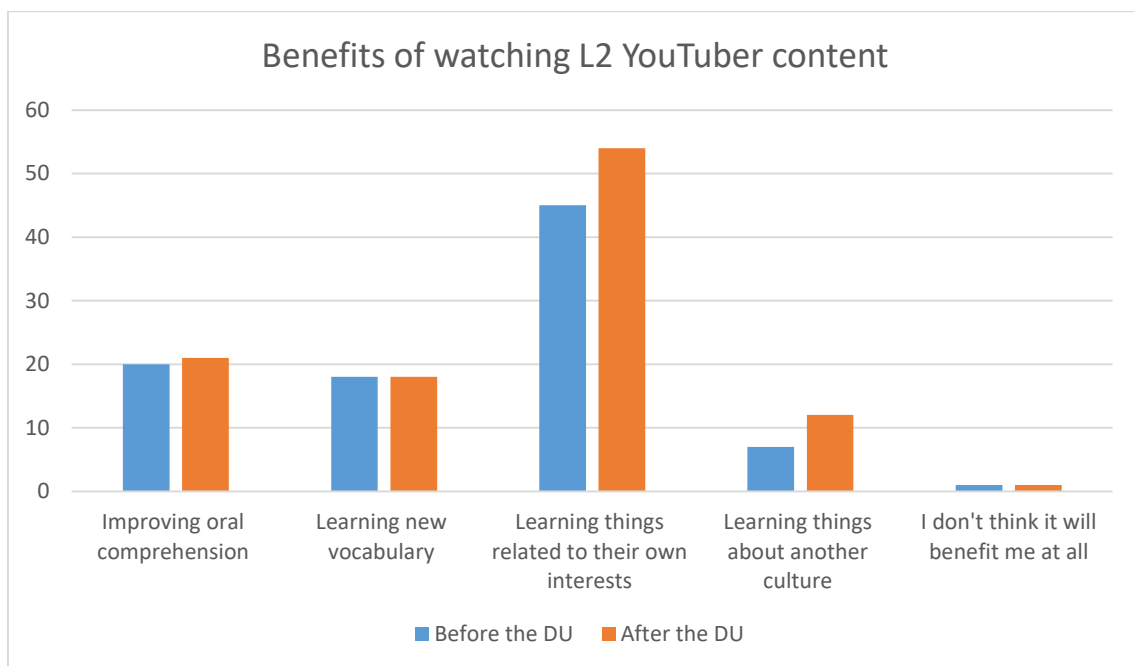


Graph 1: Students initial audio-visual consumption habits.

Graph 2: Students prediction of their audio-visual consumption habits (after the DU).

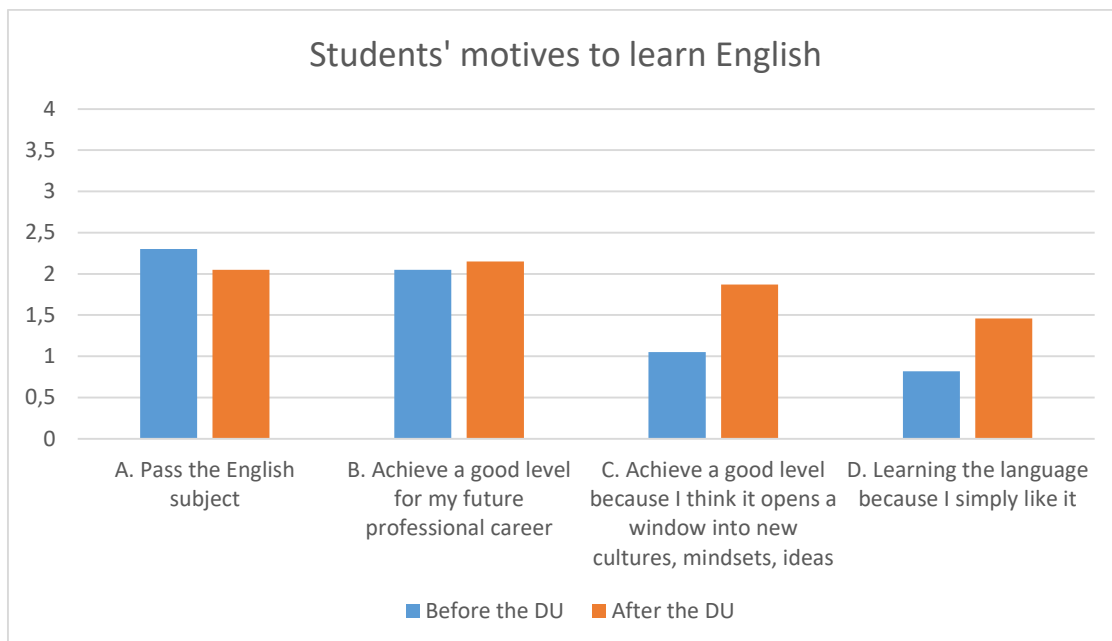
Regarding reasons to watch YouTubers in general, students report entertainment reasons (81.8%), although a solid 45.5% of them also show being aware that one can learn things about their interests through them. In a more modest note, students also report being aware of learning in general (22.7%), and studying (4.5%) through YouTuber content.

Initially, and as shown in graph 3, students reported being almost unanimously aware (90.9%) that watching L2 YouTuber content would help them improve their L2 competence. The data analysis does not show a significant difference between what students specifically thought it would help them with and what they felt it had actually helped them with after the DU. Still, after the DU, there is an increase of 9% of students believing that watching L2 YouTubers is beneficial in terms of learning things related to their interests, and an increase of 22.7% of students believing that it allows them to learn things about another culture.



Graph 3: Perceived benefits of watching L2 YouTuber content in L2 before and after the DU.

Graph 4 indicates that, in terms of motivation, initially students rated the extrinsic, instrumental motives (A and B) as their more salient motives to learn the language. The intrinsic motives (C and D) were considerably deemed less relevant. After implementing the DU, however, there is a significant increase in relevance among the intrinsic motives — the mean score of motive C increased by 20.5%, and motive D is increased by 16%.



Graph 4: Students' motives to learn English before and after the DU.

Table 1 shows answers students gave to the final open-ended question of whether there was anything else they wanted to express regarding their motivation, coded by common topic and incidence (number of students).

TOPIC	INCIDENCE
Having noticed the difference in teaching styles between their current teacher and the placement teacher — the placement teacher being more fun and interactive.	6
Demotivation in learning English linked to their current teacher's style.	4
Having had a sense of improved learning with the placement teacher's teaching style.	3
Potential increase of motivation if more videos were watched and more games were played in class, as experienced with the placement teacher.	2

Table 1: Students' answers to the open-ended question.

### Motivational strategies

The 36 motivational micro-strategies based on Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) and Csizér & Illés (2020) were ranked following students' perceptions. Table 2 displays the micro-strategies ranked from the most to the least relevant within each domain, based on their mean score.

DOMAIN	STRATEGY	M
Teacher	2. Show a good example by being committed and motivated.	3.86
	1. Prepare for the lessons properly.	3.50
	3. Be as sensitive and accepting as you can	3.50
Climate	5. Bring in humour, laughter and smile.	3.91
	4. Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.	3.73

	6. Have games and competitions in class	3.64
<b>Task</b>	7. Give clear instructions.	3.64
	8. Provide guidance about how to do the task.	3.23
	9. State the purpose and the utility of every task.	3.14
<b>Rapport</b>	10. Develop a good relationship with your students	3.59
<b>Self-Confidence</b>	11. Give positive feedback and appraisal.	3.86
	13. Demystify mistakes: they are a natural part of learning.	3.50
	12. Constantly encourage your students.	3.23
<b>Interest</b>	14. Select interesting tasks.	3.68
	15. Choose interesting topics and supplementary materials (beyond the textbook)	3.68
	17. Build on the learners' interests rather than tests or grades, as the main energizer for learning.	3.68
	18. Raise learners' curiosity by introducing unexpected or exotic elements.	3.64
	16. Make tasks challenging to involve your students	3.23
	20. Encourage questions and other contributions from the students.	2.86
<b>Autonomy</b>	19. Encourage creative and imaginative ideas.	2.77
	21. Try and fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students	3.18
<b>Personal relevance</b>	22. Increase the group's goal-orientedness.	3.23
<b>Goal</b>	24. Use authentic materials (such as YouTuber videos or real books).	3.55
	23. Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the language they are learning.	3.09
<b>Group</b>	25. Include regular groupwork in your class.	3.50
	27. Be an ordinary member of the group as much as possible.	3.45
	26. Help students to get to know one another.	2.77
<b>Effort</b>	28. Help students realize that it is mainly effort that is needed for success.	2.95
<b>Usefulness</b>	19. Encourage creative and imaginative ideas.	3.18
<b>Reward</b>	30. Besides the grades, give the learners other rewards.	3.68
<b>Rule</b>	31. Involve students in creating their own classroom rules.	3.50
<b>Finished products</b>	32. Allow students to create products that they can display or perform (ex: a video. a PPT. a poster)	2.55
<b>Comparison</b>	33. Avoid any comparison of students to one another.	3.73
<b>21<sup>st</sup> century</b>	35. Exploit the almost unlimited exposure the Internet offers to watch up-to-date English content	3.91
	36. Encourage students to be autonomous language users outside the classroom	3.18
	34. Let students sign up for tasks according to their interest	3.14

Table 2: Micro-strategies ranked from the most to the least relevant in each domain.

Table 3 shows the conceptual domains, ranked from the higher-rated to the lower-rated. The domains comprising more than one motivational micro-strategy were given the mean score of those micro-strategies.

DOMAIN	GLOBAL M
Climate	3.76
Comparison	3.73
Reward	3.68



<b>Teacher</b>	3.62
<b>Rapport</b>	3.59
<b>Interest</b>	3.58
<b>Self-Confidence</b>	3.53
<b>Rule</b>	3.50
<b>21<sup>st</sup> century</b>	3.41
<b>Task</b>	3.34
<b>Culture</b>	3.32
<b>Group</b>	3.24
<b>Goal</b>	3.23
<b>Personal relevance</b>	3.18
<b>Usefulness</b>	3.18
<b>Effort</b>	2.95
<b>Autonomy</b>	2.82
<b>Finished products</b>	2.55

Table 3: Ranking of conceptual domains.

Table 4 reveals the overall five most motivational micro-strategies according to the students. On the other end, table 5 shows the five lowest-ranked motivational micro-strategies.

<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b>MICRO-STRATEGY</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Climate</b>	5. Bring in humour, laughter and smile.	3.91
<b>21<sup>st</sup> century</b>	35. Exploit the almost unlimited exposure the Internet offers to watch up-to-date English content	3.91
<b>Teacher</b>	2. Show a good example by being committed and motivated.	3.86
<b>Self-Confidence</b>	11. Give positive feedback and appraisal.	3.86
<b>Climate</b>	4. Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.	3.73

Table 4: Five most motivational micro-strategies.

<b>DOMAIN</b>	<b>MICRO-STRATEGY</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Finished products</b>	32. Allow students to create products that they can display or perform (ex: a video, a PPT, a poster)	2.55
<b>Group</b>	26. Help students to get to know one another.	2.77
<b>Autonomy</b>	19. Encourage creative and imaginative ideas.	2.77
<b>Autonomy</b>	20. Encourage questions and other contributions from the students.	2.86
<b>Effort</b>	28. Help students realize that it is mainly effort that is needed for success.	2.95

Table 5: Five least motivational micro-strategies.

## 5 Discussion of the results

### YouTubers

In order to evaluate the impact of using L2 YouTuber content in students' L2 learning motivation, we tried to understand, on the one hand, whether our DU "My Favourite YouTuber" affected students L1/L2 consumption habits. On the other hand, we also checked whether it affected students' motives to learn the L2.

The data gathered revealed that the vast majority of students (90.9%) watch YouTuber content consistently during the week. These findings confirm the global national tendency on media consumption habits among young people explained in Massaguer et. al's (2020) study. Still, only half of the students had the habit of watching YouTuber content in L2. After implementing our DU, however, there was an increase of 9% of students stating that, moving forward, they would watch L2 YouTuber content. A remarkable 36.4% moved from initially not watching L2 YouTuber content at all to expressing uncertainty as to whether they would, moving forward, watch L2 YouTuber content. If we accept the underlying notion put forth by Csizér & Illés (2020) that a motivated language learner in the 21<sup>st</sup> century looks like someone who exploits the almost unlimited exposure the Internet offers to expose themselves and interact in L2 in an autonomous way, then it could be concluded that incorporating L2 YouTuber content in the EFL class does impact the students' YouTuber consumption habits positively in the sense that there is an increase, albeit small, of students exposing themselves more to L2 YouTuber content beyond the classroom. In other words, we consider that incorporating L2 YouTuber content in the EFL class does to certain extent motivate students to learn the language. These results are perhaps not surprising, as there is no denying that teenagers are very much in their element when exposed to YouTubers.

Students in this study were also inquired about their general audio-visual consumption L1-L2 habits — that is, the language in which they watch their films or series. In that area, there is an even bigger positive increase in terms of raising students' L2 exposure outside of the classroom. Initially, only 27.3% of students reported watching their audio-visuals in English + subtitles. Here again, after implementing the DU, that figure increased by 54.5%, as 81.8% of students expressed being motivated to switch from watching their audio-visuals in L1 into watching them in L2.

We believe this contrasting raise between L2 YouTuber content and general audio-visual content could be due to two facts. On the one hand, to a difference in accessibility — while it is very easy to switch your audio language in today's audio-visual platforms, it is not that easy to find the right L2 YouTubers that you really enjoy watching in the vast world of YouTube. On the other hand, during the school placement, our intervention was not limited to the 3-session YouTubers DU — in fact, in several previous sessions we dealt with film reviews, watching film clips and discussing language consumption habits. That allowed us to stress the benefits of watching audio-visual content in L2 in terms of learning. In that sense, students' answers from the final questionnaire could also have been influenced by that. In conclusion, these findings seem to confirm Cassany's (2021) idea that by selecting real-life materials and presenting them in an engaging way, teachers have the power to raise students' motivation to seek real use of L2 beyond the classroom, thus increasing their intrinsic motivation to learn the language.

The second piece of data we used to determine the effectiveness of incorporating L2 YouTuber content in motivating students to learn the language was comparing students' initial and final motives to learn English. Initially, students' motives were clearly on the extrinsic side of the spectrum — they rated (A) *passing the English subject* and (B) *achieving a good language level for my future professional career* clearly as their main motives. The intrinsic motives — (C) *achieving a good language level because English opens a window into new cultures, mind-sets and ideas*, and (D) *achieving a good language level simply because I enjoy learning the language* were deemed only half as relevant as the extrinsic ones. After implementing the DU, however, intrinsic motives C and D were better ranked — they were virtually level with the extrinsic motives A and B. The rate increase was of 20.5% for intrinsic motive C and of 16% for motive D.

In conclusion, the fact that after the L2 YouTubers DU students felt motivated to learn the language for intrinsic as much as for extrinsic reasons seems to indicate that our intervention was effective in raising their right type of motivation. As reviewed in the literature on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, it is particularly relevant that students feel intrinsically motivated to learn the L2 as it is this type of motivation that correlates with successful learning. According to Noels et al. (1999), learning a language for material rewards or because of some pressure is not supportive of sustained effort or eventual

competence. In contrast, the more students feel that they personally have chosen to learn the language, the more effort they make and the more they intend to pursue their studies.

Moreover, and under the assumption that students' intrinsic motivation is also highly influenced by their enjoyment, as stated by Carreira (2011), it only makes sense that students report feeling more intrinsically motivated to learn the language when exposed to L2 YouTuber content. To that respect, one of the questions in the final questionnaire assessed the degree to which students had enjoyed the DU, with 95.5% of students recounting having had fun.

While our findings seem to indicate a positive correlation between incorporating L2 YouTuber content in the EFL class and student motivation, and thus we could conclude that incorporating L2 YouTuber content in the EFL is effective in motivating students, there are several limitations inherent to this study that should be discussed. In this sense, we cannot fail to mention that our second questionnaire, administered after the DU, only gathered students' predictions of their future habits, not their actual future habits. Our results, given the short-time period that we had with students, are thus limited to predictions. In order to determine if those predictions would actually become realities, we would need to inquire students further down the line. Therefore, in future research it could be interesting to analyse this effectiveness in the long run — for example, incorporating L2 YouTuber content in a monthly basis and examining the impact in student motivation after the school year. Using L2 YouTuber content in the EFL class in the long run would also allow for more varied activities. In this respect, our intervention was also limited in the sense that it consisted of a 3-session DU in which students had to present their favourite L2 YouTuber to the rest of the class. Therefore, we believe that there is still much room for further action in the field, specially taking into account the meagre amount of authors that have explored this topic such as Aristizábal-Jimenez (2020) or Abad (2018). Finally, our results also suggest that apart from L2 YouTuber content, incorporating more general L2 audio-visual content in the EFL is also motivating.

## Motivational strategies

### The five most motivational conceptual domains

In order to analyse the effectiveness of the motivational strategies we incorporated in the DU from the perspective of the students themselves, we ranked them according to students' answers. Firstly, we extracted the five better-ranked conceptual domains, which, as Dörnyei

& Csizér (1998) put it, reflect the various general elements that influence motivation. Those domains turned out to be, by order, *climate*, *comparison*, *reward*, *teacher* and *rapport*. Perhaps not surprisingly, four out of five of these domains —*climate*, *comparison*, *teacher* and *rapport*— coincide with those revealed by Mauludin (2021), whose Indonesian students had *task* instead of *reward* among their top five. Contrasting our results with teachers' rankings such as, firstly, Dörnyei & Csizér's (1998), perhaps again not surprisingly, three out of four domains coincide —*climate*, *teacher* and *rapport*. Secondly, if we compare them to Cheng & Dörnyei's (2007) results, again three domains coincide —*climate*, *teacher* and, this time, *reward*. These results seem to suggest that the *climate* and *teacher* domains are the most universally motivating, as perceived both by teachers and students. That being said, the prevalence of the domains *rapport*, *comparison* and *reward* should not be overlooked either.

Our students' top rated motivational conceptual domain, *climate*, indicates that students feel more motivated when exposed to a learning environment that is pleasant and enjoyable. This possibly needs little explanation, especially because, as just explained above, this perception appears rather universal. Moreover, already back in the 1980s, Gardner (1985) stated the importance of the variable *attitudes toward the learning situation*, arguing that depending on students' experiences in the classroom, their positive or negative attitudes towards learning the language may change or be reinforced (p. 89), thus promoting or hindering language acquisition. As discussed above in the YouTuber section, our findings also seem to point out that students' sense of enjoyment throughout our DU positively impacted their intrinsic motivation to learn the language. In conclusion, it seems clear that having a good, enjoyable climate in the classroom is a powerful ally in generating student motivation, regardless of where we are in the world.

Having *teacher* and *rapport* as the second and third more recurrent motivational domains — and almost unanimously across the four studies reviewed— stresses the huge responsibility that the teacher has in motivating their students. In class, it is up to teachers to try and develop a good relationship with their students, and to be a role model by showing enthusiasm and commitment to the learning process. According to Dörnyei (1994), teachers, in their position as group leaders, embody the group conscience, and, as a consequence, student attitudes and orientation toward learning will be modelled after their teachers, both in terms of effort expenditure and orientations of interest in the subject.

The last two domains within our top five, *comparison* —in line with Mauludin’s (2021) results— and *reward* —in this case, coinciding with Cheng & Dörnyei’s (2007)—, also have a direct bearing with teacher-specific motivational practises. According to our findings, for students to feel motivated it is paramount that their teacher avoids, on the one hand, comparing them to their peers, and, on the other hand, rewards them beyond good marks by showing approval when they get it right. In fact, considering that *comparison* and *reward* are components of teacher feedback, and to the extent that teacher feedback can support students’ self-perceptions on their competence, according to Noels et al. (1999), when teachers provide students with useful, relevant feedback about their progress, they are exerting their power to enhance students’ sense of self-determination and enjoyment, and their intrinsic motivation to learn L2.

#### The five most motivational micro-strategies

As much as the top conceptual domains as perceived by students give away valuable information, it might be even more informative to look into how they ranked micro-strategies specifically.

Out of the five most motivational micro-strategies as ranked by our students —*bringing in humour, laughter and smile; exploiting the almost unlimited exposure the Internet offers to watch up-to-date English content; showing a good example by being committed and motivated* (teacher); *giving positive feedback and appraisal* and *creating a pleasant atmosphere* (teacher)— three coincide with Mauludin’s (2021) findings —*creating a pleasant atmosphere; showing a good example by being committed and motivated* and *bringing in humour, laughter and smile*—. Two coincide with Dörnyei & Csizér’s (1998) —*creating a pleasant atmosphere* and *showing a good example by being committed and motivated*—, and finally three with Cheng & Dörnyei’s (2007) —*creating a pleasant atmosphere, showing a good example by being committed and motivated* and *giving positive feedback and appraisal*.

Contrasting our top micro-strategies with those from the other studies, again, allows us to conclude that at least certain specific micro-strategies seem to be “universal”, or at least transferable across contexts. These are, particularly, *creating a pleasant atmosphere* and *showing a good example by being committed and motivated*. This comparison confirms our conclusions from the conceptual domain section that the most powerful motivators are related both to the teacher and the climate in the classroom. At the same time, though, it

also seems to indicate that some of the micro-strategies are specific to particular contexts. For example, in Cheng & Dörnyei's (2007) study, *recognising student's effort and celebrate any success*, a micro-strategy pertaining to the *effort* conceptual domain, was ranked second most important. Comparing this with the rest of studies, where the *effort* domain was not considered motivating, seems to suggest that promoting effort attributions in Taiwan is culturally more important than in the other contexts from the studies. This could be because an achievement-oriented tradition is more prevalent in Taiwan.

Our top-rated micro-strategy, *bringing in humour, laughter and smile*, and the fifth one, *creating a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom*, both pertain to the *climate* domain. As already discussed in the domain section, it seems almost unquestionable that students will feel more motivated if they perceive the learning environment to be comfortable and enjoyable. Learning a second language is a challenging process and one that can naturally generate anxiety and insecurity among learners (Noels et. al., 1999), especially among teenagers. The evidence also shows that anxiety has a consistently negative bearing on L2 performance (Dörnyei, 2001). In this respect, using humour, laughter and smile could help students release part of that anxiety and have a more positive attitude toward the whole L2 learning process. In that sense, it does not stretch the mind to think that if teachers manage to make the learning process attractive and fun, they can increase students' attention and make them feel less anxious and more motivated to learn. According to Noels et al. (1999), the more students are learning because they enjoy the learning process, the more effort they make and the more they intend to pursue their studies. Moreover, as is consistent with this greater effort, they are also likely to feel more competent and less anxious in the classroom. As pointed by Mauludin (2021), this sense of enjoyment seemed to be especially relevant in an ESP context, because, as this type of students have no personal interest in making English their career, having a good time during the English lessons is definitely something they value. This could also be true for the students from our study, none of which reported wanting to pursue their studies in the languages field. In fact, only three out of the twenty-two students (13%) were enrolled in the humanities studies Baccalaureate. We could thus argue that the group was not very much language-oriented and that precisely for that reason, enjoyment was particularly relevant for them.

Our second top-ranked micro-strategy, which was added to the original list by Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) drawing from Csizér & Illés (2021), confirms the latter authors' thesis on the

specificities of L2 motivational strategies within the 21<sup>st</sup> century context. Among the three added motivational micro-strategies retrieved from their paper, one was deemed second overall more important from the point of view of our students —that is, *exploiting the almost unlimited exposure the Internet offers to watch up-to-date English content*. It could be argued that this micro-strategy is similar to that from the original list —*select interesting tasks*, ranked 6<sup>th</sup> most important in Dörnyei & Csizér's (1998) study— in the sense that the Internet is interesting to teenagers, but made more specific to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Again, this finding is perhaps not surprising if we take into account what literature says on current media consumption habits, specially that reviewed in this study by Massaguer et al. (2020), which places the Internet on the first podium place among the younger population. In a way, linking English with teenagers' preferred means of communication —that is, the Internet— allows us to tap into their world, so it only makes sense that watching up-to-date English content in this media makes them feel in their element. Having this particular micro-strategy on the 2<sup>nd</sup> podium position also confirms our conclusions from the YouTuber section that incorporating L2 YouTuber content —basically, *up-to-date English content*— is effective in raising students' L2 learning motivation.

The third overall top-ranked micro-strategy is *showing a good example by being committed and motivated*, belonging to the *teacher* conceptual domain. It is worth noticing that this particular micro-strategy was ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in Dörnyei & Csizér's (1998) ranking and Cheng & Dörnyei's study (2007), as well as 3<sup>rd</sup> too in Mauludin's (2021). What this confirms, again, across diverse cultural and linguist contexts, and both from students' and teachers' perceptions, is that the role as teachers as models is perhaps the most powerful tool to motivate students.

Fourth top-ranked motivational micro-strategy of our survey outcome was *giving positive feedback and appraisal*, pertaining to the *self-confidence* conceptual domain. Again, this micro-strategy also made the top 5 in Dörnyei & Csizér's ranking (1998) and in Cheng & Dörnyei's (2007). What this implies is that teachers seem to be aware that boosting their students' self-confidence is motivating for them. If we take into account that in the L2 context *self-confidence* is “the overall belief in being able to communicate in the L2 in an adaptive and efficient manner” (MacIntyre et al., 1998), it only makes sense that our students corroborate that feeling self-confident in English makes them feel more willing to use the language and possibly motivated to learn it. It is worth noticing that, although this



micro-strategy did not make the top 5 in Mauludin's (2021) survey, it was the 9<sup>th</sup> top ranked out of the 46 strategies they used, so we can be reassured that this micro-strategy, although it seems particularly more important in our cultural context, is also considered fairly relevant by students from another part of the world.

Finally, we would like to conclude by discussing the thoughts collected through the open-ended questionnaire questions, which massively reveal that students are aware of the contrasting teaching styles —made up, ultimately, of the motivational strategies a teacher chooses to implement. In that sense, we believe that the recommendation by Bernaus & Gardner's (2008) that teachers should assess students' perceptions of the motivational strategies they employ is definitely one that should be taken into account, as it is only by checking what is working on students' end that we will be able to hopefully raise their motivation to learn English.

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## 7 Appendixes

### Appendix 1: DU My Favourite YouTuber

<b>UNIT 1: MY FAVOURITE YOUTUBER</b>		<b>TIMING:</b> 3 sessions. Session length: 1 hour		
<b>KEY COMPETENCES:</b> Communicative skills, information management and processing, digital skills, personal and interpersonal skills, knowledge and interactive skills				
<b>UNIT GOALS:</b>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To be able to sort through English-speaking YouTubers to find content that is personally relevant</li> <li>• To reflect on what can be learned from watching English-speaking YouTubers</li> <li>• To be able to share with the rest of the class what has been learned from a specific YouTuber, both in terms of language and beyond</li> <li>• To acquire and retain vocabulary related to the selected topic of interest</li> <li>• To develop productive skills, specially speaking, through the final presentation</li> <li>• To develop receptive skills, specially listening, through watching English-speaking YouTubers</li> </ul>				
SESSION 1	Skill	Description and Contents	Motivational strategies <sup>7</sup>	Timing
	SPEAKING WRITING LISTENING	As a warm-up activity, Ss are asked to write down on a post-it one thing that is true about themselves regarding their interests, hobbies... — for example “I am a huge fan of Real Madrid”, “My favourite sport is rollerskating”, “I want to become a psychologist”, “I am a professional swimmer”. T collects the post-its and redistributes them among Ss. Then each Ss must guess who that post-it belongs to, passing them their turn. The teacher(s) also play(s).	4. Create a pleasant atmosphere in the class (climate) 5. Bring in humour, laughter and smile (climate) 6. Have games and competitions in class (climate) 10. Develop a good relationship with your students (rapport) 15. Choose interesting topics and supplementary materials beyond the textbook 17. Build on the learners’ interests rather than tests or grades, as the main energizer for learning. 18. Raise learners’ curiosity by Introducing unexpected or exotic elements.	20 min

<sup>7</sup> Motivational micro-strategies concerned with teacher attitudes and the task were incorporated throughout the three sessions and thus have not been copied here.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Try and fill the tasks with personal content that is personally relevant to the students</li> <li>22. Increase the group's goal-orientedness</li> <li>23. Help students to get to know one another.</li> <li>27. Be an ordinary member of the group as much as possible.</li> </ul>	
	LISTENING	<p>YouTubers. T shows Ss a selection of English-speaking YouTubers on <a href="#">Wakelet</a>. Ss watch one of the videos and answer comprehension and discussion questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Create a pleasant atmosphere in the class (climate)</li> <li>5. Bring in humour, laughter and smile (climate)</li> <li>6. Have games and competitions in class (climate)</li> <li>10. Develop a good relationship with your students (rapport)</li> <li>15. Choose interesting topics and supplementary materials beyond the textbook</li> <li>16. Make tasks challenging to involve your students</li> <li>17. Build on the learners' interests rather than tests or grades, as the main energizer for learning.</li> <li>18. Raise learners' curiosity by Introducing unexpected or exotic elements.</li> <li>19. Encourage creative and imaginative ideas.</li> <li>20. Encourage questions and other contributions from the students.</li> <li>21. Try and fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students</li> <li>23. Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the language they are learning.</li> <li>24. Use authentic materials.</li> <li>29. Emphasize the usefulness of the language</li> <li>34. Let students sign up for tasks according to their interest</li> <li>35. Try to exploit the almost unlimited expose the Internet offers these days</li> </ul>	15 min
	SPEAKING	<p>Ss seat in groups and discuss the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Do you follow any YouTubers?</li> <li>-What topic(s) do they cover?</li> <li>-Do you follow any English-speaking YouTubers?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Develop a good relationship with your students</li> <li>14. Select interesting tasks.</li> <li>15. Choose interesting topics and supplementary materials <b>beyond the textbook</b></li> <li>16. Make tasks challenging to involve your students</li> </ul>	5 min

		<p>-Why yes, or why not?</p> <p>T asks some groups to share their answers with the rest of the class.</p>	<p>17. Build on the learners’ interests rather than tests or grades, as the main energizer for learning.</p> <p>18. Raise learners’ curiosity by introducing unexpected or exotic elements.</p> <p>21. Try and fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students</p> <p>22. Increase the group’s goal-orientedness.</p> <p>25. Include regular groupwork in your class.</p> <p>26. Help students to get to know one another.</p> <p>27. Be an ordinary member of the group as much as possible.</p>	
	<p>SPEAKING WRITING</p>	<p>T tells Ss that for this project they will need to — individually or in pairs— find an English-speaking YouTuber that shares interesting content to them, watch some of their videos (at least 4) for the week, and then present it to the rest of the class ( min presentation)</p> <p>Ss can start forming groups and brainstorming the area of interest of the YouTuber they’d like to focus on.</p>	<p>4. Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.</p> <p>10. Develop a good relationship with your students</p> <p>14. Select interesting tasks.</p> <p>15. Choose interesting topics and supplementary materials beyond the textbook</p> <p>16. Make tasks challenging to involve your students</p> <p>17. Build on the learners’ interests rather than tests or grades, as the main energizer for learning.</p> <p>18. Raise learners’ curiosity by introducing unexpected or exotic elements.</p> <p>19. Encourage creative and imaginative ideas.</p> <p>20. Encourage questions and other contributions from the students.</p> <p>21. Try and fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students</p> <p>22. Increase the group’s goal-orientedness.</p> <p>23. Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the language they are learning.</p> <p>24. Use authentic materials.</p> <p>25. Include regular groupwork in your class.</p> <p>26. Help students to get to know one another.</p> <p>27. Be an ordinary member of the group as much as possible.</p> <p>29. Emphasize the usefulness of the language</p>	<p>20 min</p>

			<p>32. Allow students to create products that they can display or perform</p> <p>34. Let students sign up for tasks according to their interest</p> <p>35. Try to exploit the almost unlimited expose the Internet offers these days</p> <p>36. Encourage students to be autonomous language users outside the classroom</p>	
		(One week will pass between this session and the following one. During this week the T will make sure that the YouTubers chosen by the students are suitable for the task in hand, and offer YouTuber possibilities to those that hesitate from the Wakelet list.)		
<b>SESSION 2</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Description and Contents</b>	<b>Motivational strategies*</b>	<b>Timing</b>
	SPEAKING LISTENING WRITING	<p>Ss work on their favourite YouTuber' presentation in class. T goes around solving providing feedback and solving doubts.</p> <p>T gives Ss the outline they will have to use to present their YouTuber: who they are, where they are from, what they talk about, why students like them, what have they learned from them, 5 language items/words that they didn't know and have learned from them.</p>	<p>4. Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.</p> <p>10. Develop a good relationship with your students</p> <p>19. Encourage creative and imaginative ideas.</p> <p>20. Encourage questions and other contributions from the students.</p> <p>34. Let students sign up for tasks according to their interest</p> <p>35. Try to exploit the almost unlimited expose the Internet offers these days</p> <p>36. Encourage students to be autonomous language users outside the classroom</p>	1 hour
<b>SESSION 3</b>	<b>Skill</b>	<b>Description and Contents</b>	<b>Motivational strategies*</b>	<b>Timing</b>
		Ss do their 3 min. oral presentations presenting their YouTuber to the rest of the class. T assesses them according to the provided rubric.	<p>4. Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom.</p> <p>5. Bring in humour, laughter and smile.</p> <p>10. Develop a good relationship with your students</p> <p>19. Encourage creative and imaginative ideas.</p> <p>20. Encourage questions and other contributions from the students.</p>	1 hour



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>21. Try and fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students</li> <li>22. Increase the group's goal-orientedness.</li> <li>23. Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the language they are learning.</li> <li>24. Use authentic materials.</li> <li>25. Include regular groupwork in your class.</li> <li>26. Help students to get to know one another.</li> <li>27. Be an ordinary member of the group as much as possible.</li> <li>29. Emphasize the usefulness of the language</li> <li>32. Allow students to create products that they can display or perform</li> <li>34. Let students sign up for tasks according to their interest</li> <li>35. Try to exploit the almost unlimited exposure the Internet offers these days</li> <li>36. Encourage students to be autonomous language users outside the classroom</li> </ul>	

**DIVERSITY / STUDENT LEARNING NEEDS:** This unit is designed to work in pairs or in teams, which caters to the needs of students with lower levels. The main bulk of the unit (i. e., preparing a final presentation) is done in class in session 2, which allows for the teacher to make sure all students (both lower and higher students) are well taken care of. Also, students are encouraged to choose their YouTubers according to interest/comfort/background knowledge, which should give them all a sense of control. YouTube videos can be played at a lower-speed if necessary.

Appendix 2: List of micro-strategies classified by domains and adapted from Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) and Csizér & Illés (2020).

<b>1 Teacher</b>	1. Prepare for the lessons properly. 2. Show a good example by being committed and motivated. 3. Be as sensitive and accepting as you can.
<b>2 Climate</b>	4. Create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom. 5. Bring in humour, laughter and smile. 6. <i>Have games and competitions in class.</i>
<b>3 Task</b>	7. Give clear instructions. 8. Provide guidance about how to do the task. 9. State the purpose and the utility of every task.
<b>4 Rapport</b>	10. Develop a good relationship with your students
<b>5 Self-confidence</b>	11. Give positive feedback and appraisal. 12. Constantly encourage your students. 13. Demystify mistakes: they are a natural part of learning.
<b>6 Interest</b>	14. Select interesting tasks. 15. Choose interesting topics and supplementary materials <i>beyond the textbook</i> <sup>8</sup> . 16. Make tasks challenging to involve your students. 17. Build on the learners' interests rather than tests or grades, as the main energizer for learning. 18. Raise learners' curiosity by introducing unexpected or exotic elements.
<b>7 Autonomy</b>	19. Encourage creative and imaginative ideas. 20. Encourage questions and other contributions from the students.
<b>8 Personal relevance</b>	21. Try and fill the tasks with personal content that is relevant to the students.
<b>9 Goal</b>	22. Increase the group's goal-orientedness.
<b>10 Culture</b>	23. Familiarize the learners with the cultural background of the language they are learning. 24. Use authentic materials. <i>Such as YouTube videos or real books.</i>
<b>11 Group</b>	25. Include regular group work in your class. 26. Help students to get to know one another. 27. Be an ordinary member of the group as much as possible.
<b>12 Effort</b>	28. Help students realize that it is mainly effort that is needed for success.
<b>13 Usefulness</b>	29. Emphasize the usefulness of the language.
<b>14 Reward</b>	30. Besides the grades, give the learners other rewards.
<b>15 Rule</b>	31. Involve students in creating their own classroom rules.
<b>16 Finished products</b>	32. Allow students to create products that they can display or perform <i>(for instance, a video, a PPT, a poster).</i>
<b>18 Comparison</b>	33. Avoid any comparison of students to one another.
<b>19 21<sup>st</sup> century</b>	34. <i>Let students sign up for tasks according to their interests.</i>

<sup>8</sup> Slight adaptations from the original list are in italics.

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*35. Exploit the almost unlimited exposure the Internet offers to watch up-to-date English content.*

*36. Encourage students to be autonomous language users outside the classroom.*

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## Appendix 3: Data gathering tools: questionnaires

### Youtubers initial questionnaire

1. Mires vídeos de Youtubers en català/castellà?
  - a. Sí
  - b. No
2. Amb quina freqüència?
  - a. Cada dia
  - b. 3-4 cops la setmana
  - c. 1-2 cops la setmana
  - d. mai
3. Per quins motius mires vídeos de Youtubers en català/castellà? (Selecciona les opcions que siguin veritat per a tu.)
  - a. Simplement per entretenir-me
  - b. Perquè aprenc coses en general
  - c. Perquè aprenc coses relacionades amb els meus interessos
  - d. Altres:
4. Mires vídeos de Youtubers en anglès?
  - a. Sí
  - b. No
5. Amb quina freqüència?
  - a. Cada dia
  - b. 3-4 cops la setmana
  - c. 1-2 cops la setmana
  - d. mai
6. En cas que hagi respost que no mires vídeos de Youtubers en anglès, per què diries que no ho fas?
7. Creus que veure vídeos de Youtubers en anglès et pot ajudar a millorar la teva competència en aquesta llengua?
  - a. Sí
  - b. No
  - c. No ho sé
8. Per a tu, veure vídeos de Youtubers en anglès et beneficiaria a l'hora de...
  - a. No crec que em beneficiés en res
  - b. Millorar la meua comprensió oral (el listening)
  - c. Aprendre vocabulari nou
  - d. Aprendre coses d'una cultura diferent a la meua
  - e. Aprendre coses relacionades amb els meus interessos
  - f. Altres:
9. Ara mateix, la teua principal motivació per aprendre anglès és...  
(Ordena les opcions A, B, C i D següents per ordre de rellevància: 1 és la més rellevant i 4 la menys rellevant per a tu.)
  - a. Aprovar l'assignatura.
  - b. Assolir un bon nivell perquè creus que et serà útil en la teua futura vida professional
  - c. Assolir un bon nivell perquè veus que t'obre una finestra a altres cultures, maneres de pensar, idees...
  - d. Assolir un bon nivell simplement perquè disfrutes aprenent aquesta llengua
10. Tens una altra motivació? Quina?
11. Quan mires sèries o pel·lícules, en quina llengua tens costum de fer-ho?
  - a. En anglès + subtítols en anglès
  - b. En anglès + subtítols en català/castellà
  - c. Doblada al català/castellà
  - d. Altres:
12. Vols dir-me res més? Ara és el moment!

## Youtubers final questionnaire

1. T'ho has passat bé amb la unitat en què hem treballat amb vídeos de Youtubers en anglès?  
(Gens bé) 1 2 3 4 5 (Molt bé)
2. Tens la sensació d'haver après coses, amb la unitat?
  - a. Sí
  - b. No
3. En què creus que t'ha beneficiat més la unitat en termes d'aprenentatge?
  - a. No m'ha beneficiat en res
  - b. He millorat la meva comprensió oral (el listening)
  - c. He après vocabulari nou
  - d. He après coses d'una cultura diferent de la meua
  - e. He après coses relacionades amb els meus interessos
4. Creus que a partir d'ara, fora de classe, continuaràs veient vídeos de Youtubers en anglès?
  - a. Sí
  - b. No
  - c. No ho sé
5. Amb quina freqüència?
  - a. Cada dia
  - b. 3-4 cops la setmana
  - c. 1-2 cops la setmana
  - d. mai
6. Per quins motius?
7. Creus que a partir d'ara, fora de classe, tindràs ganes de veure més sèries o pel·lícules en anglès?
  - a. Sí
  - b. No
  - c. Altres
8. Per quins motius ?
9. Ara mateix, la teua principal motivació per aprendre anglès és...  
(Ordena les opcions A, B, C i D següents per ordre de rellevància: 1 és la més rellevant i 4 la menys rellevant per a tu.)
  - a. Aprovar l'assignatura
  - b. Assolir un bon nivell perquè creus que et serà útil en la teua futura vida professional
  - c. Assolir un bon nivell perquè veus que t'obre una finestra a altres cultures, maneres de pensar, idees...
  - d. Assolir un bon nivell simplement perquè disfrutes aprenent aquesta llengua
10. Tens una altra motivació? Quina?
11. Vols dir-me res més? Ara és el moment!

## Motivational strategies questionnaire

Com de rellevants són per a tu els aspectes següents a l'hora de motivar-te a Aprendre anglès?

1. Gens rellevant a l'hora de motivar-me
2. Poc rellevant a l'hora de motivar-me
3. Força rellevant a l'hora de motivar-me
4. Molt rellevant a l'hora de motivar-me

1. Que el professor es prepari bé les classes.
2. Que el professor es mostri compromès i motivat.
3. Que el professor sigui al màxim de sensible i comprensiu amb mi.
4. Que a classe es respiri bon rotllo.
5. Que les classes siguin divertides i de tant en tant puguem riure.
6. Que s'inclouin jocs, competicions, etc. a classe.
7. Que les instruccions de les tasques siguin al màxim de clares.
8. Que el professor em guïi molt a l'hora de fer les tasques; és a dir, que em pauti molt com ho he de fer.
9. Que el professor em faci entendre el sentit i la utilitat de cada tasca.
10. Desenvolupar una bona relació amb el professor.
11. Que el professor em mostri aprovació quan ho faig bé.
12. Que el professor m'animi constantment.
13. Que el professor em transmeti que fer errors quan parlo anglès és normal i que no passa res.
14. Que les tasques que fem a classe siguin interessants.
15. Que el professor no es limiti a seguir el llibre de text i ens proposi altres materials.
16. Que les tasques em suposin un repte, en comptes de limitar-nos a anar fent exercicis del llibre.
17. Que el professor doni més importància a tractar temes que ens interessin que no pas a l'avaluació.
18. Que el professor sigui capaç de sorprendre'm i despertar la meva curiositat.
19. Que hagi de fer servir la meva imaginació i creativitat sovint per resoldre les tasques.
20. Que jo pugui contribuir a la classe amb les meves idees personals.
21. Que les tasques incloguin contingut personal i rellevant per a nosaltres com a persones.
22. Que els objectius d'aprenentatge de les tasques siguin molt clars.
23. Que a través de les tasques aprengui coses sobre altres països o cultures on es fa servir l'anglès.
24. Que el professor ens faci treballar amb materials reals (ex.: vídeos de Youtube o textos de llibres reals).
25. Que puguem treballar en grup o per parelles sovint.
26. Que el professor ens faci parlar entre nosaltres per conèixer-nos més els uns als altres.
27. Que el professor ens faci sentir que és un membre més del grup.
28. Que el professor em faci entendre que per sortir-me'n només cal que m'hi esforci.
29. Que el professor em faci veure la utilitat que té saber llengua anglesa.
30. Que el professor em valori més enllà de la nota que tregui.
31. Que el professor ens deixi participar de les decisions de la classe.
32. Que les tasques que fem comportin un producte final (ex: un vídeo, un pòster...)
33. Que el professor no em compari amb els meus companys.
34. Que pugui triar el contingut de les tasques segons els meus interessos.
35. Que a classe aprofitem Internet per veure continguts actuals en anglès.
36. Que el professor m'inspiri a ser un usuari autònom de la llengua fora de classe.