



“A PROPOSAL OF OUT-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE ENGLISH LEARNING AUTONOMY IN BASIC LEARNERS”

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ABSTRACT

This thesis project was inspired by people who have learned English by themselves and how they have been developing their macro-abilities without getting stressed. It was elaborated and applied at the Ciex Institution because it is an excellent school that lets its students increase their knowledge and skills as researchers. The researcher used some teenagers' interests that can be useful to improve English skills, and how important these are for English foreign language students, considering their out-of-school activities of learning something attractive and meaningful. This project was carried out using a qualitative approach due to this approach does not limit the ideas or thoughts about any theme, and it is free to gather information and complete the research. On the other hand, the method used was action research because the researcher had to develop activities that were more common for the participants in this case, for teenagers. To consider teenagers' context was very important because the researcher wanted to develop useful activities that help them to improve their English, and they feel comfortable learning more. Out-of-school activities such as listening to music, playing video games, reading books, watching videos, or watching some movies are excellent tools that teenagers may consider helpful to increase their macro-abilities, showing interest in doing them by themselves, and at the same time promoting their autonomy.

KEY WORDS:

Out-of-school activities, autonomy, motivation, learning styles, learning strategies.

RESUMEN

Este proyecto de tesis se inspiró en personas que han aprendido inglés por sí mismas y cómo han desarrollado sus macrohabilidades sin estrés. Se elaboró y aplicó en la Institución Ciex, una excelente institución educativa que permite a sus estudiantes ampliar sus conocimientos y habilidades como investigadores. El investigador se basó en los intereses de algunos adolescentes que pueden ser útiles para mejorar sus habilidades en inglés, y en la importancia que estos tienen para los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera, considerando sus actividades extraescolares de aprendizaje como algo atractivo y significativo. Este proyecto se llevó a cabo utilizando un enfoque cualitativo, ya que este no limita las ideas ni los pensamientos sobre ningún tema y permite la libertad de recopilar información y completar la investigación. Por otro lado, el método utilizado fue la investigación-acción, ya que el investigador tuvo que desarrollar actividades que fueran más comunes para los participantes, en este caso, para los adolescentes. Considerar el contexto de los adolescentes fue fundamental, ya que el investigador quería desarrollar actividades útiles que les ayudaran a mejorar su inglés y a sentirse más cómodos aprendiendo. Las actividades extraescolares como escuchar música, jugar videojuegos, leer libros y ver vídeos o algunas películas son excelentes herramientas que los adolescentes pueden considerar útiles para incrementar sus macrohabilidades, mostrando interés en realizarlas por sí mismos y al mismo tiempo promoviendo su autonomía.

PALABRAS CLAVE:

Actividades extracurriculares, autonomía, motivación, estilos de aprendizaje, estrategias de aprendizaje.

Introduction

Out-of-school activities may distract people and relax their minds, which is why people learn unconsciously and keep that knowledge and develop different abilities. Nowadays, people have been changing their interests; specifically, teenagers' likes have undergone an evolution which have disturbed their out-of-school activities. As teachers of teenagers, it is necessary to contemplate their environment and context, and consider out-of-school activities that might help teachers develop attractive activities that could influence students to increase their knowledge and help them to discover new ways to improve and be autonomous.

One of the current problems is that students do not want to work or improve by themselves because they want technology to do it or for teachers to do their job and take their responsibilities, that is the reason why English teachers should look for new learning strategies that may students

want to learn more and they could consider them in their free time or getting distracted, in this case taking account out-of-school activities such as listening to music, playing video games, reading books, watching videos, or watching some movies could be useful.

Presently, listening to music, playing video games, reading books, watching videos, or watching some movies are some activities on trend which are contemplated to improve English macro-abilities and they are great tools that help learners that are interested in to be improve in English due to these are common activities that students use to do when they are in their relaxing moment, these kinds of activities let teenagers to increase and improve their English knowledge and their abilities avoiding get stressed.

This study takes into account the importance of teenagers at the moment of learning something new and their mentality they have when they know that they will go to school and will learn something they are not used to doing. Teachers have an important role when they are conscious that not all students like to learn English, but using out-of-school activities that are attractive for them might be implemented to influence all students, promoting English in a more fun way and at the same time motivating some students to improve their English abilities autonomously.

Literature review

Language teaching has undergone an incredible evolution and modernization, through the years and technology, teaching has changed spectacularly because the teachers have more instruments for teaching and create a different class with context that carries all students to increase their vision and opportunities. Teaching with new tools such as technology, the internet, online books, and out-of-school activities should be used by people to enrich their knowledge, of course, considering teaching methods to give a good class.

Teaching methods such as the natural approach, communicative language teaching, oral approach, and neurolinguistic programming, audiolingual method were some methods used for developing this study.

The natural approach is characterized by letting students learn, not getting stressed, and doing it at their own pace and comprehension (Sam, 2016), because learners learn progressively. For this study, considering out-of-school activities, the intention is that students enjoy learning while they are having a great time doing activities they used to do for relaxation.

The communicative language teaching, according to Richards & Rodgers (2014), communication and knowledge are part of effective language teaching due as students enjoy sharing what is

happening in their lives. Currently, many students have difficulties socializing with others. One of the activities that was developed for this study lets learners express their ideas and thoughts, giving their opinions about a clip movie as they can, and asking for the teacher's help with new words to complete the idea, making them feel an important part of the class.

Oral approach is a great method in which students need context and something that lets them relate the theme associating the situation. Gao (2011) states that when teachers have to consider how to relate the theme, they should give a context where they can use the language and promote autonomy efforts. Watching movies or series are good tool because people can observe the environment and the context, in some cases, they do not need to change the language because they can understand the movie or video, giving it a meaning with what they observe.

When students are learning a new language, it is good to take into account that students speak and share their ideas using all their knowledge about it. Teachers should develop classes using all the materials and context as it as possible. Considering that students learn better when they can imagine and feel free neuro-linguistic-programming method is a great method because learners imagine and create their interpretation of the language, and they develop the way to say their opinions (Pourbahreini, 2015).

Students have to practice their English and all the new words or phrases they have been learning or have been hearing. According to Mei (2018) mentions that the audiolingual method helps students to rehearse, and during the practice, they memorize the dialogue and remember the sentences' construction.

Being an autonomous person could be a great ability and advantage to learn, specifically when people are interested in something. People who have learned English by themselves and later improved their abilities did so because they felt motivated to improve little by little until to achieve their purpose.

Autonomy is one of the main concepts because this study aims to promote and motivate learners to improve their English skills by themselves. People who enjoy it can spend a lot of time doing what they do, and they do not care about how to do that activity. These kinds of activities are out-of-school activities because people feel well, comfortable, relaxed, etc., and all of these activities promote their curiosity about them. Once they feel interested and are curious about learning, learners are expected to learn something new, exploring and discovering new things (Liu, 2015).

Currently, not all students feel motivated; the reasons could be many and different from one another, but in a classroom, the teacher has the responsibility to make their students feel motivated and comfortable to produce in the learners the desire to learn more due to motivation will help students to be more creative and obtain more chances in society (Sabouri, 2012). According to Kusrkar et al. (2011), motivation plays a significant role in learners because it helps to encourage them to be autonomous, develop their abilities, and being able to create their own knowledge.

Considering that some students do not like learning English, and few of them enjoy learning English, teachers have to develop great classes with attractive activities that make all students part of the class that the reason why teacher have to know the variety of learning styles and obtain enough information about it, this helps teachers to develop good strategies and improve students' macro-skills (Rolfe and Cheek, 2012).

When teachers are preparing the class, it is always important to use learning strategies because these are useful to increase students' abilities and language skills. It happens because people can adapt their brains to the learning process (Muelas and Navarro, 2015).

Students need to be motivated; if they are motivated, they do their favorite activities without someone who reminds them and learn better because they enjoy doing it and are not stressed out-of-school activities play an important role and for this thesis singing songs, playing video games, reading book, and watching videos, series, and movies were some considered activities.

Singing songs during a class is helpful because students change their emotions, and as a result, learners have better comprehension (Savekar et al., 2021).

Playing video games could be considered in English learning because it is a new resource and students have a different context, which is attractive for them, and through video games, they will change their learning habits, promoting their autonomous learning (Toh & Kirschner, 2020). Students enjoy the game, and they are not conscious that they are improving their listening and speaking skills.

One hobby of some learners is reading books, and when they are learning English could produce several benefits because they improve abilities such as structuring a sentence, and obtaining more vocabulary (Albiladi, 2019).

Watching series, movies, or videos helps students to increase vocabulary, learners know better and identify expressions of language, they have a performance in their listening skill, and as

they do not feel stressed, it helps them to be motivated (KOBAYASHI, 2017).

c) Research methodology

For this thesis qualitative approach is the most appropriate because it lets students be themselves and helps to discover their opinions, ideas (Hollstein, 2011), and helps the researcher to conclude and complement the research whether the out-of-school activities are helpful.

To gather more information and express an accurate conclusion, action research is the most suitable research method. Action Research helps make some practices and changes considering students' out-of-school activities, gathering enough information, and taking into account opinions, ideas, and different points of view from participants and researchers to conclude in a specific goal (Banegas and de Castro, 2019).

The context is in a private institution of foreign languages in Chilpancingo, Guerrero, Mexico. It has been established since 1992. And has ranged from Preschool level to advanced level, and it also offers a Bachelor of Arts in English and a Master's program in Applied Linguistics with Modalities online, face-to-face, and online face-to-face.

To apply this study, the activities are considered for Adolescents from 12 to 17 years old. Because at that age teenagers can identify and discover what things they like and enjoy doing.

To collect data information about instruments and conclude that being autonomous and improving English skills using out-of-school activities are great tools for students and teachers, because they can increase the students' English level. For this section, and to conclude that out-of-school activities are efficient, the researcher uses observation notes, an interviewing guide for students, teaching narratives, and questionnaires as instruments.

The aspects that researchers consider in observation notes are two perspectives. First, the teacher's perspective on how the teacher works in classes, observes strategies, the flexibility and performance, about students' perspective, considers their interest, attitude, and whether they can make an extra effort in learning English.

Interviewing guide for students is significant because the researcher knows if the activities work or not and what aspects the researcher have to change in the interviews the questions help to know if the activities are interesting and valuable for improve English skills and students feel motivated to be autonomous do not feeling stressed and if they would like and take into account out-of-school activities by themselves to be autonomous and strengthen their macro-abilities.

On the other hand, the researcher used teaching narrative because she had the teacher's and researcher's role, she could give her own opinion and point of view for this study and it is an advantage because she meets the students, their weakness and their strengths and who can be autonomous and the students could feel comfortable to say if they liked the activities using out-of-school activities and learners will consider to be better in English.

Finally, the researcher considers the questionnaire because the investigator identifies the useful out-of-school activities for learning English and improving skills. With five questions that are helpful to discover if students can be autonomous, and they would consider out-of-school activities to improve and increase English learning and reinforce their English skills, and they agree with the teacher using and adapting out-of-school activities during the classes.

Main findings

Teachers can use out-of-school activities to develop new knowledge and apply new ways to learn English due Out-of-school activities, such as listening to music, watching videos, movies, or series, playing video games, or singing songs allow students learning and enjoy without feeling stressed or bored, and have as advantage of language skills. Not all students must love the activities because they have different likes, but teachers have to motivate their students, making them feel comfortable with the activities. Students may not have idea about what the activity consists of it but the teacher always has the responsibility to promote the pleasure of improving English skills.

The researcher could say that students feel motivated that making an extra effort will make them great speakers, writers, and listeners, as they want to do it by themselves; their idea about learning a new language could be something fun for them.

Conclusions

Concerning subsidiary research questions, it could be concluded that:

Learning autonomy in English as a foreign language implies motivation, considering learning styles and students' likes in out-of-school activities. The learners mentioned that watching series, playing video games, listening to music, and reading books are some of their favorite activities they do in their free time. The importance of implementing out-of-school activities for developing their English learning autonomy is that they can do it in every opportunity they have because they practice activities they used to do. The benefits of integrating out-of-school activities as a strategy for English learning autonomy are that students enjoy learning English

and discovering more about American culture, and learners do not feel stressed as they consider learning English to be easy and fun.

In this regard, out-of-school activities can be useful for students to develop autonomy and reinforce their macro abilities in English learning because these activities help increase vocabulary, grammar, expressions, pronunciation, and understanding the context, among other elements. Students feel motivated and enthusiastic when they discover something new by using or doing activities they enjoy. It makes language learning meaningful for them because they are having fun, but at the same time, they are learning more.

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