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Robert J. Di Pietro. IN MEMORIAM.

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Robert J. Di Pietro. IN MEMORIAM.

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PREFACIO

La idea para la organización de las primeras Jornadas Internacionales de Lingüística Aplicada en la Universidad de Granada, surgió en 1991 durante mi estancia como profesor invitado en la Universidad de Delaware, en los Estados Unidos. En principio se pensó en un encuentro a nivel de grupo de trabajo de profesores de lingüística y de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. Aprobada la propuesta de celebración por el Consejo del Departamento de Filología Inglesa de la Universidad de Granada, se constituyó el Comité Organizador de dichas Jornadas.

Habiendo fallecido a finales de 1991 el Profesor Robert J. Di Pietro, director del Departamento de Lingüística de la Universidad de Delaware, se pensó dedicar las Jornadas In Memoriam de Di Pietro y se decidió como fechas más apropiadas del 11 al 15 de Enero de 1993.

La celebración del encuentro científico se difundió por todas las universidades del mundo y se solicitó la participación de todos aquellos profesores que quisieran presentar sus investigaciones y experiencias en el mismo. La respuesta fue, para nuestra sorpresa, sorprendente; se recibieron más de doscientas propuestas de participación y más de mil profesores y estudiantes de universidades de todo el mundo deseaban asistir al mismo.

Ante el interés despertado por el encuentro, organizamos un denso programa de conferencias, mesas redondas y ponencias al más alto nivel. Se invitó a quince profesores de reconocido prestigio universal, especialistas en distintas ramas científicas de la Lingüística Aplicada, para impartir conferencias plenarias y participar en las nueve mesas redondas seleccionadas. Asimismo se hizo una selección de ponencias rechazando aquellas que no se enmarcaban en ninguna de las distintas áreas científicas reconocidas por AILA o cuyo resumen no nos garantizaba el grado de calidad determinado por el Comité Organizador.

Por otra parte, se invitó a estar presentes y exponer sus últimas publicaciones a aquellas entidades editoriales más representativas en el campo de la Lingüística Aplicada, y la respuesta fue también significativa.

Un encuentro científico tan intenso de cinco días de duración debía complementarse con actividades de tipo socio-cultural, así se organizó un programa también denso de recepciones, conciertos, visitas, etc. Para poder acometer este ambicioso proyecto, se solicitó la colaboración de organismos nacionales, autonómicos y locales, así como de entidades privadas y medios de difusión.

En nombre de los componentes del Comité Organizador expreso mi más profunda gratitud a todos los que han colaborado de una u otra forma, haciendo posible que la celebración de las primeras Jornadas Internacionales de Lingüística Aplicada de la Universidad de Granada no sólo hayan sido una realidad, sino que hayan constituido uno de los mayores encuentros de este campo acontecidos en España hasta la fecha.

Jorge Fernández-Barrientos Martín
Presidente de las Jornadas

SOURCES OF MOTIVATION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: THE TEACHER.

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University of Granada (Spain).

1 TEACHERS AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

It is currently assumed that success or failure in learning a foreign language depends on some fundamental factors:

- a) The learner's social context: sociocultural and socioeconomic factors.
- b) The learner's personal characteristics: age, cognitive and affective characteristics, and personality traits.
- c) The learning process: quality of strategies, techniques, and cognitive operations.
- d) Conditions under which learning takes place, which includes EFL and/or ESL situations.

Our work has been done in EFL contexts, that is, in Spanish classrooms where English is taught as a compulsory curriculum subject, in a non-supportive environment. In these situations, results depend very much on the didactic treatment applied by the teacher:

- Types of objectives that teacher and students aim to achieve.
- Contents selected to obtain the objectives
- Strategies and techniques employed in the classroom
- Materials and resources used

But not only the didactic treatment in itself is important, the personal characteristics and personality traits of the person that applies that treatment in the classroom, his/her teaching style, attitudes and personal qualities are also fundamental.

Dunkin and Biddle's model of teaching (1974:38) suggests the outcome of the teaching and learning process depends on three major sets of variables:

- a) The teacher's characteristics (presage variables)
- b) The pupil's properties (context variables)
- c) The classroom teaching (process variables: including teacher and students' classroom behaviour)

According to this model, EFL teachers cause certain effects (presage variables) depending on their characteristics as individuals, their formative experiences, their training, etc. EFL teachers' classroom behaviour and teaching styles are considered process variables and are influenced by the former.

Stern (1984:500) maintains the major variables identified by Dunkin and Biddle (1974) but introduces some changes in the model he proposes. The teacher's characteristics, together with those of the learner are considered presage variables, and influence the process variables.

Both of these models can be included within the process-product paradigm (see for example Gage 1978, Brophy 1983, Good 1979, Wittrock 1986), and consider that the teacher's didactic and personal qualities have a great influence on the learning process and, consequently, on the learning product. The influence on the learning process is exerted not only through effective teaching strategies and techniques, but also by generating positive attitudes and motivation for learning the FL.

2 TEACHERS AS MOTIVATORS

Finocchiaro has identified twenty-four hallmarks of superior teachers, some of which are related to personal and affective factors (1988:3-5):

- Making learners feel loved, respected and secure, and that they can achieve success by concentrating on the teacher's comprehensible input and tasks.
- Keeping students' motivation at a high level.
- Offering a relaxing atmosphere for learning.

Prodromou (1991) aimed to discover students' views of good and bad language teachers and found out that students

<u>like teachers to</u>	<u>dislike teachers to</u>
be friendly	be very strict
know how to treat them	be too authoritarian
be forceful, but not strict	be very serious
be educated	be bad tempered
be funny	talk too much
believe in students	speak in a flat monotone
be proud of students	be distant from students
have a personality of their own	treat kids like objects
be good advisers	be too sarcastic and ironic
be experienced	make them feel anxious

We believe that all these attitudes towards the foreign language teacher, and others too, have a strong influence on the student's motivational state because motivational factors determine to a great extent the degree of learning success.

Gardner, in his social-educational model (1985:147), relates student outcomes to four individual differences: intelligence, language aptitude, attitudes and motivation, and situational anxiety. In previous works, he summarized the major components of motivational characteristics. He distinguishes a set of variables (1975:58):

1. Group specific attitudes. In our case, attitudes towards English-speaking communities and the desire to integrate into those societies.
2. Attitudes toward English as a subject in comparison with other curricular subjects.
3. Attitudes toward the foreign language teacher
4. Attitudes toward the classroom methodology: activities, tasks and teaching resources.
5. Influence of parents and the social environment as sources of motivation.

3 OUR RESEARCH WORK

We have made a survey of these variables in the Spanish educational context and have presented some provisional results in Madrid et al. (1993). In this paper, we focus our attention on the teacher as a source of motivation.

3.1 Variables controlled

3.1.1 The first questionnaire provides information about the motivational agents or factors that most influence student's interests and attitudes toward the study of English:

- Tasks carried out in the EFL classroom
- EFL teacher's qualities

- Parents
- Characteristics of the subject in itself, as a linguistic discipline
- The desire to integrate and live in the foreign country
- The instrumental importance of English in present day society

3.1.2 Open questionnaire. This gave us reasons why students like or dislike their EFL teacher and their opinion about the fundamental characteristics and qualities of good English teachers.

3.1.3 Closed questionnaire. This was administered in order to find out, firstly, which of the following characteristics were more relevant to students:

- The English teacher's physical appearance
- His/her scientific knowledge
- The teacher's didactic preparation
- Personality traits

And secondly, which specific qualities and behaviours from among the following, were liked and disliked:

Physical appearance:

- 1 Being handsome/pretty
- 2 Being elegant

Scientific preparation:

- 3 Having a deep knowledge of the subject
- 4 Having good pronunciation
- 5 Being fluent

Teaching performance:

- 6 Preparing classes
- 7 Informing about objectives and contents
- 8 Trying to motivate students
- 9 Explaining with clarity
- 10 Following an adequate pace
- 11 Organizing games
- 12 Being fair with grades
- 13 Encouraging participation
- 14 Assigning homework
- 15 Controlling discipline
- 16 Assigning pair work

- 17 Preventing anxiety
- 18 Offering oral activities
- 19 Assigning written tasks
- 20 Using the students' names
- 21 Testing students frequently

Personality traits

- 22 Tolerant and flexible
- 23 Hard, rigid, strict
- 24 Hardworking
- 25 Authoritarian
- 26 Fair and just
- 27 Available and helpful
- 28 Kind and polite
- 29 Active
- 30 Original and creative
- 31 Responsible
- 32 Balanced and quiet
- 33 Firm and confident
- 34 Tidy and careful
- 35 Happy, optimistic and friendly

3.2 Sample

The three questionnaires were administered at the three educational levels, in centres in the city and province of Granada: in primary education (7th & 8th grades); secondary education (3rd & 4th); and at university (1st year).

4 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Primary Education (7th grade, age 12-13; 34 learners; private, church-sponsored school)

The instrumental value of the language in society, followed by parental influence and classroom activities were, in that order, the three most important sources of motivation. At the opposite end of the scale came the teacher's qualities, the subject itself, and the integrative motive.

A large majority of the learners stated that they liked their current teacher (88%). The reasons given were that "She understands learners", and "She feels very confident and explains well." In support of this they indicated that the qualities of the teacher which they most highly valued were that he/she should be "pleasant", and that they should "use the FL in class".

Academic training took priority over other aspects of the "ideal" teacher, followed by didactic abilities, personal characteristics, and appearance, in that order.

These children liked their English teacher. Their opinion was that of informed learners as many of them attended private classes outside of the school. As a consequence, they had had experience of (an)other English classes, given by (an)other teacher. They were therefore aware of a number of classroom activities which their school teacher did not use. This explains why the activities they stated that they would like to do in class were not those they actually did.

In this group the use of the FL in class was an important source of motivation. Some students had demanded this of the teacher, although she had insisted - and they recognised - that most of them would not understand her. After having read these results, the teacher's solution to this problem, was to use English from the lowest level, in order to make the students feel more comfortable when having to use the FL in class.

4.2 Primary Education (8th grade, age 13-14)

When students were questioned in relation to their sources of motivation, it was obvious that the figure of the teacher did not seem to be very important compared to other potential motivating factors. Instrumental and integrative incentives, the influence of the parents etc. were regarded by students as more attractive sources of motivation. We should not forget that the learning of a second language differs broadly from other disciplines also imparted in a classroom setting. Obviously, the main difference lies in the very peculiar circumstances surrounding this particular subject. Indeed, the attractiveness intrinsic to the learning of a second language contributes to the existence of a significant increase in the degree of motivation. In this specific case, we are not just dealing with the teacher and the student somehow isolated in the classroom. The learning of a second language is not only restricted to the subject itself. On the contrary, it also implies the acquisition of a vast amount of cultural input reflecting different aspects of an idiosyncratic nature. A possibility to communicate with other individuals belonging to completely different cultures, the opportunity to understand different ways of expression, music, traditions and customs, all undeniably lessen the strength of the teacher as a potential source of motivation.

Nevertheless, we should take into consideration that, when students were asked to evaluate their attitude towards their teacher, the result, surprisingly, could be regarded as fairly positive. This teacher's interventions in class do not, therefore, seem to have had a negative effect on motivation. 42.1 % of the class asserted that they liked their teacher; 44.7 % of them selected the second choice (I like him/her a little bit), whereas just 13.1 % of the students chose the third alternative (I do not like him/her). A striking fact to be underlined is that the students configuring this 13.1 % were characterized by a high level of academic achievement. However, a significant number of the subjects who showed a

preference for the first option controversially presented a low level of academic achievement. How are we supposed to interpret this? In a different section of the test, students were asked to justify, in very specific terms, their positive attitude towards the teacher. Two factors were constantly repeated: "She explains well", and "She is nice".

Congeniality, as we can infer from the outcome of the tests, is one of the most important aspects for these teenage students. On the other hand, it becomes clear that students pursue an ideal teacher with a good academic/professional standing and, at the same time, a more casual way of implementing his/her work. They want a good teacher (in a stricter academic sense) but they also want a good communicator as their instructor; a person who shares their problems and goals and who, to a certain extent, becomes their friend.

In relation to the physical features, it is interesting to point out that even though they are taken into consideration by the students, they are not highlighted as an issue of outstanding relevance. However, those qualities referring to the personal, didactic and scientific aspects were regarded as decisive by a significant number of individuals. Consequently, we can infer the importance not only of a good academic standing but also the relevance of the teacher's personality. The classroom, it is important not to forget, is a living body formed by emotional individuals. This reflects a need for a teacher who offers positive feedback and responds to very specific requirements of support, help and understanding.

In relation to the scientific training of the teacher, the subjects of our study regarded "having good pronunciation" as a key quality in the teacher, even more important than for instance "having a good knowledge of the subject". When asked about the didactic aspect, the students considered that "explaining with clarity" and "creating a relaxed atmosphere" in conjunction with "organizing games in the classroom" and "being fair and equitable", were very significant features in a teacher. Other options such as "assigning homework regularly", "setting exams" and "organizing a significant number of written activities", were not very popular.

Finally, we can generalise by saying that when dealing with personality, qualities such as being nice and polite, congenial, funny and optimistic were considered very important. Other qualities such as being demanding and authoritarian, which obviously denote a stricter view of the system were characterized by an evident lack of popularity.

4.3 Secondary Education (3rd grade, age 16-17; 28 students; state secondary school)

In this case, the context in which we carried out our survey compelled us to modify to some extent Gardner's conclusions (1985) on which it was based. It was then that we could observe how important the teacher was in the language learning process as an influence on the student's motivational state.

It was easy to confirm that the main source of motivation was none other than an instrumental one, after which came others concerned, firstly, with the learning situation - the subject itself, the classroom work, the teacher's qualities, and finally, with a very distant integrative motive and an apparently irrelevant parental encouragement.

From this we conclude that, first of all, when students do not have any

real contact with the language they necessarily are interested in it or moved towards it simply because of some practical reasons; and secondly, that, as a consequence, the teacher must be ascribed an important role in this process for introducing the student to the foreign language as a subject, for becoming the closest and most decisive representative of both of these in a non-supportive context. And finally, for moulding, whether consciously or not, the student's attitude towards these through his/her own attitude shown in the classroom.

Considering this, we have studied the student's attitude towards the teacher. Our results differed according to the different motivational states of the students, but on average they were rather good; correlating closely with the students' rates of achievement.

The less motivated students (21%) took into consideration the teacher's less positive personal features ("being occasionally angry", "elitist") rather than academic ones, in order to explain their dislike. Some of them also added their dislike of the methodology used ("somewhat boring"). The more motivated ones, however, looked on her academic abilities to express both their liking for her ("teaching well", "planning well", "keeping herself up-to-date with methodology") and their criticism ("limited use of English in the classroom", "over-theoretical lessons").

In spite of the different points focused on by these students, their "ideal" teacher was very alike. Her/his main characteristics were having a knowledge of English, an ability to teach it, and showing kindness in carrying out the process. They preferred a teacher who could master both didactic and academic skills, such as: good pronunciation, fluency, clear explanation, fair marking, using new exercises -especially oral ones-, or helping less advanced students; and appearing personally engaging and encouraging the student's interest. Thus, other questions such as either scientific preparation and physical appearance, or more precise features such as their homework and the excessive control of the class were quite irrelevant.

Accordingly, we come to the conclusions that the teacher seemed to have a key role in the LL process, and that both personal and academic features were taken into account by students as motivating or demotivating tokens. Although it was somewhat easy to make up the image of the archetypal teacher, it is really hard to achieve an ideal when so many contextual constraints are involved.

4.4 Secondary Education (4th grade, age 17-18; 17 students)

"If students aren't learning it is assumed to be the fault of the method, the materials or the teacher. Yet the success of a learning program involves far more than the mere act of teaching" (Richards, 1990:1).

An in-depth study of the motivating forces in a group of language students should prove to be a very useful tool in understanding important attitudes for language learning. The study may be conducted at the beginning of the course, in which case it will provide information vital to the teacher conducting needs analysis; or mid-term, for the teacher to take stock of the situation and effect any changes deemed necessary in the light of the results; or at the end of the course, to investigate past methodology. The results, if studied carefully, will offer insights that should not fail to be revealing.

These students were studying English because they had to, a foreign language being a compulsory part of the curriculum, and this may or may not have coincided with their wanting to study a language. The group had had the same teacher for the two preceding years and some of them for longer. The teacher was placed fifth in order of importance only ahead of the influence of their parents. This negative attitude towards the importance of the teacher was borne out by the analysis of their comments on what they considered to be the qualities of a good teacher.

The overall rating for the teacher was of 1.3 (in a scale ranging from 0 to 2), and was explained by the students in the following way. Forty per cent stated that the teacher had shown marked preferences towards certain members of the group (the academically good ones) and despised and looked down upon the others. Thirty-six per cent of the group also thought the teacher was impatient and moody, and did not use good teaching methods,

On the same scale, scientific knowledge obtained a rating of 1.8, didactic preparation 1.6, personality traits 1.5, and physical appearance 0.5. Forty per cent considered that the language teacher ought to be good-tempered, pleasant, patient and interesting. Thirty per cent emphasised the importance of explaining well and assessing fairly, while twelve per cent stressed the importance of knowing the subject well and being able to maintain discipline.

These results show how a teacher who receives a low rating in the questionnaire can affect the learners' feelings about the teacher's role, and in particular how the teacher is considered to be a relatively unimportant motivating factor in the language learning process.

Allwright & Bailey (1991:162) point out that "a teacher may be liked as a person, and well respected as a professional, and yet not teach in a way that suits everybody in the class, to the extent that some learners may find that teacher quite useless to them". So it appears to be important to discover what activities and learning strategies suit a particular group as well as to understand what profile they expect in a competent teacher. This study revealed significant ideas about the language teacher as seen from the learners' point of view.

4.5 University level (1st year; 32 students)

Frequently two teacher "types", known as the *instructor*, and the *socializer*, are described (Brophy 1985). Essentially these are opposites, which we might call the stereotypes of the university teacher (*instructor*) and the primary school teacher (*socializer*). Characteristically, the former presents academic content and supervises what is learnt, whereas the latter aims to develop learners' mental capabilities, promotes good interpersonal relations and a good inter-group atmosphere, and prepares learners to be good citizens. Some of the differences in their behaviour are that *instructors* emphasize academic input; are impersonal in their relations with learners; put the blame for problems on factors other than themselves; and promote the idea of the teacher as a just, authoritarian figure. In contrast, *socializers* emphasize the socializing of learners; pay attention to personal and behavioral problems; personalize their interaction with learners; put the blame for problems on family or social background; promote qualities of patience, love for learners, and so on, as being those of the teacher; consider the classroom to be where learning should take place, and where human relations should be developed.

In the light of this division, we begin by placing the teacher in context,

when compared with other motivating factors. Then, we describe how participants saw their teacher - whether as an *instructor* or a *socializer* - and examine their preferences for an "ideal" teacher, in the same terms.

On the basis of the average scores recorded in the rank-ordering exercise, we establish that the instrumental motive is the most important (4.94, out of a possible 6), the subject matter itself second (4.48), and the integrative motive third (4.32). The qualities of the teacher ranks fourth, scoring 3.46; and the other two factors are significantly less important still. Moreover, 25% of the sample did not respond to this item.

Participants gave the teacher an average score of 2, meaning that the person in question was very popular. The lists of reasons supporting this, and of preferred qualities and characteristics show that participants clearly considered their teacher a *socializer*, with 61.3% of responses falling in this bracket, and only 15.3% in that of the *instructor*. The remaining responses could be attributed to either category. This preference was carried over when the question was depersonalized: 62.1% of the total responses can be classified in the *socializer* category, and only 14.1% in that of the *instructor*.

Average scores of 2, for didactic preparation, 1.94 for scientific knowledge (more *instructor* than *socializer* characteristics), and 1.88 for personality traits (more *socializer* than *instructor* characteristics) indicate that participants perceived little difference between each of these. Physical appearance (0.03) was not even considered.

In contrast to what was indicated by the open questionnaire, the most highly rated characteristics were all of the *instructor* type. Ten items were specifically attributable to each type of teacher, and the average percentage score giving *instructor* characteristics most importance was 52.6%, with a range from 97% to 0%. For *socializer* characteristics, the average was 46.3%, with a narrower range of between 78% and 28%.

A clear and consistent impression of the learners' image of a "good FL teacher" as a *socializer* comes from the results of the open questionnaire. However, this is contradicted by their thoughts on the "ideal" teacher. In order to put this into perspective there are two points that we will make before drawing specific conclusions. Firstly, it is clear that a highly popular teacher can distract learners' attention from their initial objectives even in an examination-specific class. Secondly, on a clearly instrumental course of this type, participants could have been expected to be concerned about their teacher's ability to prepare them to work as translators. However, this does not appear in any responses. Perhaps this clarity is lacking as learners had yet to verbalise their expectations of the course.

Perhaps, then, the principal message of this sample is that teachers, whichever their personal style, should be aware of the needs of their learners, and that they should be able to broaden their approach so as to provide learners with both *socializer*-type and *instructor*-type teaching.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND TEACHERS' TRAINING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: THE ITALIAN EXPERIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

Before dealing in some details with the specific topic of my paper, I think it may be useful to hint briefly at those features of the Italian educational system which are relevant to the topic itself.

After that, I will present the main points of the experimental phase of FLT (Foreign Language Teaching) in Italian primary schools.

The third part will deal with the new primary school curriculum and the FL syllabus. Both will be analysed, the latter in some depth.

The fourth point will focus briefly on the problem of FL continuity with the lower secondary school.

The fifth, final part of the paper will be about the experience I have lived in the teachers' in-service training courses in my region. These courses will be analysed in their contents, methodology and evaluation (both of the trainees and of the trainer).

1. THE ITALIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

As I have just mentioned, I will consider those features of the Italian educational system which are relevant to the topic of this paper.

From this point of view, I think it may be useful to remember that compulsory education, in Italy, starts at the age of 6 and lasts 8 years. This means that children are compelled to go to school from the age of 6 to 14. That implies that they have to attend:

- 5 years of primary school
- 3 years of lower secondary school.

After that, they can either go to one of the many types of higher secondary schools or start working, if they are lucky to find a job.

Until 1991, one or more foreign languages were included only in secondary schools curricula.

As far as lower secondary schools are concerned, their curriculum has only one foreign language. There is to say, however, that pressures from parents have led the Lower Secondary School General Directorate to authorize an increasing number of schools (which we call *scuola media* and whose pupils are aged between 11 and 14) to introduce a second foreign language (L3) into their curriculum. At present, out of about 7,000 schools all over Italy, more than 1,000 are carrying out that experimental project.