

Comparative Study of English Language Learning Motivation of Senior High School Students in Rural and Urban Contexts of Ibarra and Atuntaqui

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Abstract The teaching and learning of a foreign language (FL) is undoubtedly a complex process that involves many factors to achieve a high degree of development by students. These factors range from students' linguistic skills, cultural socio-economic elements of educational institutions and the methodologies used by teachers. The field of foreign language research has found a recurrent factor which can greatly influence the learners' second language achievement or foreign language acquisition, this pivotal factor is motivation. This study is aimed to compare English language learning motivation in urban and rural high school contexts. The sample included students from 16-18 years old. This study took a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional analysis with an exploratory scope. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the relationship between motivation in English language learning and urban or rural context. Utilizing Dörnyei's second language (L2) Motivational Self System as the theoretical framework, for this study, sections from 4 validated questionnaires were utilized. The results showed there is no marked and regular numerical difference for the variables studied. However, throughout the discussion, there were some significant differences in certain variables, so that the particularities represented by them can lead to

important conclusions. These outcomes allow having greater clarity about the importance of contextualizing the English language as a foreign language teaching in both settings to improve the motivation of the students in the process.

Keywords English Language Learning, Motivation, Urban and Rural Contexts

1. Introduction

A foreign language (FL) learning process is undoubtedly complex and very different from learning a subject or discipline. First, because it is cyclic, it demands continuous practice and review. It also requires a period of assimilation and accretion of contents; at the same time, this process implies the acquisition and mastery of a series of linguistic, intercultural competences and a large number of practical skills. Its complexity also ranges in view that social interaction becomes essential; therefore, social skills need to be developed in conjunction with the

skills above mentioned.

The field of foreign language research has found a pivotal and recurrent factor which can greatly influence the achievement of learners' second language or foreign language acquisition, motivation.

Various theories have been developed around motivation in recent decades, which deal with how it arises and how motivation remains and try to explain the different motivational states of the students [1,2,3,4,5]

Throughout the years, the second language learning motivation theory has been shifting. At first, as previously cited in [5] work, motivation in this context is defined as the combination of the desire to learn L2, the effort developed in that direction and the favorable attitudes towards learning [6]. Later, motivation was defined as a complex grouping of factors in which not only the social dimension was relevant, but also other factors are discussed later in this paper. This new approach to language learning motivation instead of being a refutation of previously investigated studies tried to complement them by putting together relevant elements involved in the multifaceted L2 teaching-learning process. Important elements such as external and internal motivational influence, are not left aside, as well as the concept of ideal self, the proposed goals and the socio-cultural context of the foreign language, are included in the development of a new second language learning motivational hypothesis.

Another variable comprised in this study is the learning contexts. In Ecuador, two learning contexts could be distinguished due to the noticeable differences between them, rural and urban contexts. The rural school refers to the set of forms of schooling specific to geographic areas outside the densely populated towns or cities, called rural areas. Which characteristics according to authors like [7, 8] are: the low student/teacher ratio, the groupings by cycles or stages, the incomplete centers, the high mobility of teaching staff and the lack of facilities. On the other hand, urban education denotes the detailed circumstances and elements that portray teaching and learning in metropolitan areas. This study is aimed to compare English language learning motivation in urban and rural high school contexts

In Ecuador, English is the foreign language officially taught in private and public educational establishments nationwide. In this regard, the Ministry of Education of Ecuador, has executed several actions intended at improving the English language teaching-learning process. Despite these measures, the achieved English standards by Ecuadorians are not satisfactory. The international company specialized in teaching Languages, Education First conducted the ninth edition of the study entitled EF English Proficiency Index. In this study, it was announced that Ecuador was ranked 81 out of 100 globally and 19 out of 19 among Latin American countries with a score of 46,57 out of 100 (Education First, 2019).

2. Literature Review

Second language learning motivation

Motivation influences the students' learning, according to [10] "Motivation is the motor of learning. It is that spark that ignites it and encourages the development of the process" (p.158). Conclusively, motivation is a complex construct that explains the reasons why people decide to take any action, the amount of effort they will devote to it and how much time they will be willing to use to develop that attitude in a sustained way.

There are countless investigations in the field of second language learning motivational factors. Among the most representative approaches, it is inevitable to mention the Socio-educational Model developed by [5], which includes the "Attitude / Motivation Test Battery" and the model developed by [11] based on the "Educational Approach", where three levels of motivation are distinguished in L2: the linguistic level, which represents the integrative and instrumental orientations, the level of the student, based on the individual characteristics of each one, and the learning environment, which focuses on practice in the classroom. At the present time, motivation is defined as a complex grouping of factors where not only the social dimension is relevant, but also other factors discussed later in this paper.

Within the period of social psychology researchers such as [11] mention the Clément Theory of Linguistic Self-confidence (1980) the cultural aspect also becomes relevant. These ideas subsequently resulted in the Self-Determination Theory of [14], as well as the L2 Motivational Self System [9]. [4], a researcher dedicated to the application of the Theory of Self-Determination (2002) cited by [4] divides motivation into three sub-aspects: intrinsic, extrinsic reasons and integrative, which are based on the positive contact with the group of the LE and can lead to identification with it.

In light of this study, it will take the 4 most general and well-known distinctions in motivation theories, which are classified into two dichotomies respectively. On one side is that of intrinsic vs. extrinsic motivation; on the other is integrative and instrumental motivation [13].

Types of motivation

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

Various authors [14,4,15] classify intrinsic motivation into three subcategories: the intrinsic motivation towards knowledge, which refers to that which the subjects commit to an activity for the satisfaction they could experience in their learning. Intrinsic motivation towards accomplishment is when the students commit to the task for the pleasure they feel when they master a task or achieve a goal. Intrinsic motivation towards stimulation in which the subject engages with an activity due to the sensations experienced such as aesthetic appreciation, fun

or excitement.

Conversely, extrinsic motivation is determined by rewards, external agents or instrumental reasons. Extrinsic motivation is controlled by external factors. Mostly in language learning, three types of extrinsic regulatory styles are mentioned: external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation. External regulation is the least self-determined since the conduct is carried out due to rewards or to satisfy an external demand such as punishment or avoidance of them. Introjected regulation is associated with expectations of self-approval, ego improvements or the intention to avoid feelings such as guilt or anxiety. In the identified regulation, the behavior is associated with tasks that the subject perceives as important or beneficial, although it does not imply a pleasure inherent in the task or is not pleasant. The individual performs behaviors to gain personal importance and shows conscious valuing towards the behaviors [15,12].

Finally, the motivation is characterized by the perception that there is no link between the completion of the task and the proposed objective, so the subject would not be motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically.

Integrative and Instrumental Motivation

Integrative motivation as defined by [13] is where learners have the desire to integrate into the target language community, culture and become part of that society. Learners learn the second language because they wish to socialize or participate in the target language group. While, instrumental motivation is when learning occurs for utilitarian purposes, for example, to have more possibilities to find a job.

EFL in Ecuador's rural and urban context

In Ecuador, access to formal education in rural areas is very limited due to the high levels of poverty. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Census (INEC) for the month of June 2018, poverty in the rural area stood at 43.0% and extreme rural poverty was 19.1%, compared to urban 15,9% and 4,7% respectively (INEC, 2018). According to the Economic Commission for Latin America for the Caribbean, in Ecuador, 7% of the total population is considered indigenous, of which 82% live in the rural area.

Analyzing the statistics above, it could be affirmed that in the rural area in Ecuador, there is a particular phenomenon. Even though the English language is taught as a foreign language frequently students do not have very similar backgrounds. That represents a peculiarity in terms of having the English language as a foreign language class and students with different backgrounds in a community where English is not their mother tongue and its exposure occurs almost exclusively in the academic environment. Therefore, in rural sectors, negative linguistic transference

is constantly observed where students confuse or transfer structures of their two learned languages to English, so that they delay English language learning compared to students in urban areas who only present this negative transfer from Spanish to English. Moreover, students are learning, in a context where educational resources are conspicuously absent, generating various types of difficulties towards the process

One of the main differences between the context of rural and urban education is in the geographical location and socioeconomic status of students [16]. [17], states that between the two educations there is a wide difference in terms of learning models, pedagogical activities, infrastructure, technology and delivery of information. In the way of teaching, rural education educates people with the resources they have in their environment where students have contact with land, animals, and nature [17]. In urban education, there is not enough space to work with elements of nature. In the urban areas, there is a specialized teacher for each subject, while in the rural part the students attend classes with a single teacher [18]. The rural school is responsible for respecting, valuing the language, customs, and traditions of the region [19]. Schools in urban areas have adequate infrastructure to receive students and in rural areas, there would not be as much capacity. Regarding the distribution of classrooms in the rural context, students of different grades share the same classroom, for [19] this makes the task of some teachers difficult when teaching classes to children of different ages at the same time. While urban classrooms are suitable for better performance and learning, academic achievement regarding the English Language is still below the average in Latin America.

3. Methodology

This study took a quantitative approach using a cross-sectional analysis with an exploratory scope. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the relationship between motivation in English language learning and urban or rural context. For this study, sections from 4 validated questionnaires were utilized

First, a validated adaptation in Spanish made by Fernández-Barrionuevo, E. of LLOS-IEA (Language learning orientation scale-intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and motivation subscales) developed by [4] was implemented. This questionnaire contains 21 items, in different subscales: Amotivation, External regulation, Introjected regulation, Identified regulation, Intrinsic Motivation-knowledge, Intrinsic Motivation-Accomplishment, and Intrinsic Motivation-Stimulation. Since LLOS-IEA has been used for more than 2,000 studies around the world to assess students' level of motivation when learning English, this study it shed light on the reasons the participants have to

learn English. The results showed a slight difference regarding extrinsic and intrinsic motivation where urban students were above their rural counterparts, see Table 1.

Second, due to the nature of this study which aimed to compare motivation in two well-defined settings rural and urban, it used three adapted sections of a validated Spanish version of Lamb's questionnaire self-system perspective on young adolescents' motivation to learn English in urban and rural settings. Lamb's study has been a benchmark since 2000 when comparing students' motivation in urban and rural areas. By using this questionnaire, it was disclosed some important information concerning International Posture (see Table 2); Learning experience outside school can be seen in Table 4, and Language learning self-confidence & Family influence can be seen in Table 5.

Even though, students from both contexts are aware of the significance of the language worldwide and affirm that English is important for hobbies like music, movies, and video games; they also affirmed not spending a lot of time or putting effort outside the class to improve their English language skills. The aforementioned lack of effort could be a consequence of the family influence which in both settings showed a neutral position. The results yield that, families do not encourage students to study English and/or they do not perceive learning the language as a priority for their children's future.

Third, the Intrinsic Satisfaction Questionnaire at the School (ISC), of [20], adapted to Spanish by [21] was used. This instrument presents two subscales that measure satisfaction/fun and boredom within the school using a Likert scale. This section allowed the authors to grasp the students' insight concerning their learning experience within the school, see Table 3. However, students from the rural area thought their English classes were interesting and the urban counterpart stated that they enjoyed the activities proposed in the classes; both settings displayed a neutral perception when it comes to English classes.

Finally, the Questionnaire MAALE (Motivation and attitudes in learning a foreign language) developed by [22], helped to measure the motivation and attitudes of students towards foreign languages in general, the L2 they study, their community of native speakers and the culture it represents. For this study, it was taken in two sections. First, to find out the perception of the learners towards available resources and the classroom environment in general (book, teaching material, number of participants, furniture, and classroom, among others) for this section an intensity scale is applied in the form of a table, see Table 6. Informants can assess each aspect of the environment with gradual elements from very good to very bad. The second section used has the objective of knowing the overall perceptions about the language, using a semantic differential scale, the pairs of contrasting adjectives have been randomly ordered avoiding that the positives or

negatives always appear in the same column, as López Morales (1994) suggests, preventing informants from mechanically marking the same space. After analyzing the results, it is clear that available resources and classroom environments do not motivate students to learn English. An element also depicted in the results is the lack of collaborative work in the classes especially in the rural area where students place this item in the lowest category possible. On the other hand, all the participants of the study agreed that English is a very useful and important language as stated in the previous section International Posture from Lamb's questionnaire. They also perceive the L2 as difficult to learn.

The sample for this study was the total universe of the senior students from one urban and one rural high school. Due to the settings of the study, a paper-based questionnaire was applied in both high schools. The high schools from the study were selected using some criteria as; the number of students, both institutions have 46 senior students, specialization available to choose, both high schools have one class for "Bachillerato en Ciencias" and one class for "Bachillerato Técnico"; and location, the chosen urban high school is situated very close to Ibarra's downtown, in a college neighborhood which gives students the possibilities to have access to public facilities. On the other hand, the selected rural high school is located in a very small rural town having only some of the basic public services. In other words, they were similar high schools in total contrasting settings.

In this study, it was not included a discussion section since it is an exploratory descriptive research whose results will be used in a correlational study to deepen in the most relevant categories given the settings proposed.

4. Results Analysis

Reasons to Learn English

Table 1. Students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Comparison between urban and rural context

Items	Urban Context		Rural Context	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	237	0.25	210	0.21
Agree	172	0.18	233	0.24
Neither Agree or Disagree	202	0.21	237	0.24
Disagree	143	0.15	142	0.14
Strongly Disagree	192	0.20	168	0.17
Total	946	1.00	990	1.00

Using the questionnaire LLOS-IEA the results yield that the participants overall had a neutral position regarding motivation for learning English. In other words, by statistically comparing the 22 items the students from both settings are neither highly motivated nor unmotivated. When taking the statistical average of the 22

items with respect to the total number of participants, in both high schools, the participants placed themselves in a neutral category. Urban high school showed to be highly motivated in 4 out of 5 items concerning extrinsic motivation; on the other hand, the rural high school did not show to be highly motivated in any of the items within this category. Considering language instrumentality, participants from both high schools came out to be highly motivated in 3 out of 5 statements proposed. Finally, in view of intrinsic motivation, it was included 7 items. The students from the urban school were demonstrated to be highly motivated in 5 statements matching with the students from the rural institution who said to be highly motivated in three statements. In the subcategory intrinsic motivation accomplishment, the mean showed the participants from both high schools to have an indifferent standpoint.

International Posture

Table 2. Perception about international posture. Comparison between urban and rural context

Items	Urban Context		Rural Context	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	77	0.45	76	0.42
Agree	34	0.20	52	0.29
Neither Agree or Disagree	46	0.27	38	0.21
Disagree	10	0.06	13	0.07
Strongly Disagree	5	0.03	1	0.01
Total	172	1.00	180	1.00

In relation to the international posture of the language, the results in both high schools showed that students are aware that English is a very important and necessary language to communicate worldwide. Most of the participants agreed that they would like to use English in order to be acquainted with the national and international latest events. Therefore, in this criterion participants were at the highly motivated level.

Learning experience within school

Table 3. Perception about the learning experience within school. Comparison between urban and rural context

Items	Urban Context		Rural Context	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Totalmente de acuerdo	31	0.18	22	0.12
De acuerdo	51	0.30	43	0.24
Ni acuerdo ni desacuerdo	55	0.32	66	0.37
En desacuerdo	20	0.12	33	0.18
Muy en desacuerdo	15	0.09	16	0.09
Total	172	1.00	180	1.00

According to the data collected regarding the classroom learning experience, most respondents in both settings seem to have an indifferent attitude towards how the foreign language academic process is being held. Nevertheless, a slight difference was found between the rural and urban areas regarding the perception of how the English classes are developed. Students in the rural area, noticed that English classes are interesting as a whole process while the students in the urban area remarked that they just enjoy the specific activities carried out in the class.

Learning experience outside school

Table 4. Perception about the learning experience outside school. Comparison between urban and rural context.

Items	Urban Context		Rural Context	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	39	0.23	24	0.13
Agree	33	0.19	31	0.17
Neither Agree or Disagree	49	0.28	46	0.26
Disagree	28	0.16	48	0.27
Strongly Disagree	23	0.13	31	0.17
Total	172	1.00	180	1.00

In what concerns the criterion learning outside the classroom, the results from the survey were different to a certain extent. Although in both settings students are conscious that knowing English is necessary to get hobbies such as music, video games, series, just to mention a few. In the rural area, students affirm that they do not spend much time studying English or developing activities that involve this language at home, while the students in the urban area seem to be apathetic about the topic of using the foreign language outside the school.

Language Learning Self-confidence and Family influence

Table 5. Perception about the Language Learning Self-confidence and Family influence. Comparison between urban and rural context.

Items	Urban Context		Rural Context	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	59	0.17	46	0.13
Agree	71	0.21	63	0.18
Neither Agree or Disagree	111	0.32	128	0.36
Disagree	51	0.15	68	0.19
Strongly Disagree	53	0.15	55	0.15
Total	345	1.00	360	1.00

According to the results obtained in the criteria Self-confidence to learn English, Anxiety, and Influence of the family, it can be seen that due to the little or no importance that the families of respondents give to bilingual education, students showed an uninterested attitude regarding to their own learning and progress in the development of their English language skills to obtain a better performance in a globalized world.

Resources

Table 6. Perception about the Resources. Comparison between urban and rural context

Items	Urban Context		Rural Context	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	15	0.12	12	0.09
Agree	43	0.33	64	0.47
Neither Agree or Disagree	50	0.39	50	0.37
Disagree	15	0.12	5	0.04
Strongly Disagree	6	0.05	4	0.03
Total	129	1.00	135	1.00

The tendency to be indifferent is maintained when talking about teaching resources such as the book, the classroom, and didactic material used in English class. In the same way, respondents maintained an indifferent attitude when responding about their perception of their classmates' behavior referring to classroom work. But in the rural sector, this perception worsens showing that the collaboration is conspicuously absent.

Perception about the language

Table 7. Students' perception about English. Comparison between urban and rural context

Items	Urban Context		Rural Context	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Agree	107	0.62	102	0.57
Agree	10	0.06	23	0.13
Neither Agree or Disagree	38	0.22	34	0.19
Disagree	8	0.05	9	0.05
Strongly Disagree	9	0.05	12	0.07
Total	172	1.00	135	1.00

Students are conscious that English is an important language that can be used in many contexts such as academic, professional, social, entertainment, among others, and, even though they would like to learn it, they also perceive this language as a very difficult one. These

results coincide and reaffirm what was obtained in the criterion about the international posture.

5. Conclusions

In the first part of the instrument, after taking the product of the arithmetic mean of the weighted values of each item, the value obtained was located in the corresponding category to interpret that the participants are indifferent with respect to learning the English language. The section of the instrument containing factors by performing the same procedure, the general arithmetic mean between the factors indicates again that the students have a neutral position. Both contexts only reveal a highly motivated category in "English as a universal language" and "opinion about the English and its culture"; therefore, it could be stated that overall rural and urban students are not highly motivated neither they have a lack of motivation towards learning the language. Nevertheless, the validity of the chosen questionnaires used in this study allowed to scrutinize factor by factor, providing strong evidence for the existence of regional differences

Regarding extrinsic motivation students from the rural area demonstrate lower levels of external regulation, introjected regulation, and identified regulation which will be negatively associated with their overall academic achievement and with more extrinsic goal orientations corroborating the data of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), cited in [16], which shows that for the year 2011 the average number of years of study of the population between 15 and 24 years is 10.8 for urban area and 8.7 for rural areas. In view of intrinsic motivation, the students from rural high schools showed again lower levels. As the results showed this research may have practical implications that could lead to proposing contextualized didactic strategies depending on the setting where the English language is taught.

The results of the analysis presented in this study aimed to be exhaustive with the treatment of the available data. These results allow having greater clarity about the importance of contextualizing the English language as a foreign language teaching in both settings to improve the motivation of the students in the process.

The study limitations may lie in this study's cross-sectional design, in which data were collected at a given spatial-temporal moment. In addition, as Lamb stated any motivation study is limited by decisions about which scales to include. Finally, the schools included in this study may not be representative of the region.

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