

Fostering Motivation in an English Phonetics Class Using Active Learning

Methodologies

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Abstract

Title: Fostering Motivation in an English Phonetics Class Using Active Learning Methodologies

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Key Words: Active Learning Methodologies, Phonetics, Gamification, Game-Based Learning, Situated Learning, Collaborative Learning

Description:

This study looks at how active learning methods assist to motivate first-semester students in the *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* course at Universidad Industrial de Santander. Many students feel worried or unmotivated in phonetics classes because they are usually very theoretical and taught in traditional ways. To address this, this qualitative action research implemented gamification, game-based learning, situated learning, and collaborative learning across six lessons. The researchers gathered information through questionnaires, class observations, and interviews. The results showed that using active learning methodologies helped students feel more engaged and less anxious about pronunciation activities. It also increased their motivation, both from inside themselves and from outside factors like participation and completion of the tasks. Activities that used stories and games, as well as tasks connected to students' cultures, were especially helpful. They made students participate more and feel more positive about learning phonetics and English in general. This research shows that active learning can change how students feel about phonetics classes. It suggests that using these methods can help students feel more motivated and create classes that focus on their needs and experiences. Moreover, active learning turns traditional strategies to teach phonetics such as drillings, into more attractive activities.

1. Contextualization

When studying “Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés” at Universidad Industrial de Santander (UIS), students go through *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* in the first semester of the program; being this subject their initial encounter with English phonetics and phonology according to the curriculum of the university (See PEP). As pre-service teachers, phonetics plays a main role in English Language teaching (ELT) since inadequate pronunciation could lead to both communication and comprehension issues; what is more, English teachers can be judged by their overall language proficiency not only by their peers, but also from their students (Aksakalli, C. and Oktay, Y., 2020). Thus, this subject is offered at the beginning of the bachelor degree at UIS in order to provide learners tools that enhance speaking skills from early stages and have an impact not only on their correct pronunciation but also in their understanding of other classes since they are developed completely in English.

Among the members of this bachelor’s degree program at UIS, it has been perceived that pre-service teachers tend to develop a reluctant feeling towards studying and practicing phonetics. For this reason, it has been identified two possible features that could lower students' motivation to acquire English phonetics knowledge. First, Learners’ prior English knowledge may not be fully sufficient to manage phonetics studies in the light that at a school level English teaching is mainly grammar and vocabulary; hence, when facing subjects in which the main focus is pronunciation on practical and theoretical aspects, they might encounter some difficulties (Sahatsathatsana, 2017). Second, the learning material used could be considered less than ideal due to the fact that both the book *English Phonetics and Phonology: a practical course* written by Peter Roach on its fourth edition published in 2009,

and the methodology have been implemented for a considerable long period of time; this suggests a need for a research on cutting-edge English phonetics teaching practices.

Moreover, this material might be perceived as plain since it lacks pictures in order to illustrate theoretical aspects; for instance, in chapter two “The production of speech sounds” Peter Roach provides a description of the lips and tongue position in order to articulate English short vowels (see Figure 1), however, a picture modeling the instructions would complement the understanding of the theory.

Figure 1

Articulatory phonetics of short English vowels.

- ɪ** (example words: ‘bit’, ‘pin’, ‘fish’) The diagram shows that, though this vowel is in the close front area, compared with cardinal vowel no. 1 [i] it is more open, and nearer in to the centre. The lips are slightly spread.
- e** (example words: ‘bet’, ‘men’, ‘yes’) This is a front vowel between cardinal vowel no. 2 [e] and no. 3 [ɛ]. The lips are slightly spread.
- æ** (example words: ‘bat’, ‘man’, ‘gas’) This vowel is front, but not quite as open as cardinal vowel no. 4 [a]. The lips are slightly spread.
- ʌ** (example words: ‘cut’, ‘come’, ‘rush’) This is a central vowel, and the diagram shows that it is more open than the open-mid tongue height. The lip position is neutral.
- ɒ** (example words: ‘pot’, ‘gone’, ‘cross’) This vowel is not quite fully back, and between open-mid and open in tongue height. The lips are slightly rounded.
- ʊ** (example words: ‘put’, ‘pull’, ‘push’) The nearest cardinal vowel is no. 8 [u], but it can be seen that ʊ is more open and nearer to central. The lips are rounded.

Note. This fragment was taken from the book English Phonetics and Phonology: A practical course written by Peter Roach, the second chapter named “the production of speech sounds”, and the page 14. (Roach, 2009)

In addition, the material could be outdated as this version was published more than ten years ago. While other books on phonetics and phonology have been published since then, none have been adopted within the program. Moreover, the book itself mentions the need for further

research, yet there have been no updated editions incorporating these improvements. (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Further research is needed.

seems likely that a considerable amount of valuable new research on pronunciation will grow out of the study of discourse.

Note. This fragment was taken from the book *English Phonetics and Phonology: A practical course* written by Peter Roach, the nineteenth chapter named “Functions of intonation”, and the page 160. (Roach,2010)

As a result of the above mentioned, self-efficacy¹ levels are likely to drop among first semester students, which may lead to developing pronunciation anxiety and lowering their motivation towards studying phonetics. Fostering high self-efficacy in terms of phonetics is an important matter to bear in mind for it is a crucial factor to achieve proper skills on the subject; otherwise, pre-service teachers would experience apprehension and fear of practicing and improving their pronunciation levels as stated by Baran-Łucarz (2017).

It is worth mentioning that the authors of this research conducted a small-scale study in which the findings showed that these feelings of apprehension were already adopted by first-semester students. Specifically, in the previous research project, through interviews, it was found that half of the student population already expressed negative feelings towards the subject, and the other half did not show interest in deepening their knowledge. However, after implementing some game-based learning activities that fostered transcription and production abilities students started to feel more motivated and their self-efficacy began to strengthen. For this reason, it was decided to explore this issue more in depth since the previous research was performed with a narrow scope

Taking into account the previous contextualization, this report aims at explaining the potential of active learning methodologies as an alternative way to teach English phonetics in order to foster motivation in first semester students coursing *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* at UIS.

1.1 Research question

To what extent do active learning methodologies foster motivation in first semester students of Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés taking *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* at Universidad Industrial de Santander?

1.2 Justification

This research is driven by the perceptions that EFL pre-service teachers have towards English phonetics and phonology on the program Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés. From personal experiences, the authors have noticed a common reaction from certain peers in which they adopt behaviors such as apprehension, anxiety, and negative self-efficacy throughout their learning process in this topic during their first, second, and third semester. Some possible causes for these particular reactions are the ways learners were taught since the content was shown through long readings with high English level terminology that demotivated students. Moreover, the lessons were carried out through answering questions and drilling phonemes independently which put students in unreal situations where they would not produce sounds the same way they would do it in a conversation. Additionally, assessment was carried out through extensive tests where apprentices were not able to make corrections if they wanted to change an answer, therefore, creating a tense environment which did not allow mistakes.

Considering the aforementioned features, it was explored the implementation of active learning methodologies to teach students English phonetics by assigning learners an active role during classes, using different contents in real-life situations, allowing them to work collaboratively as well as give each other feedback, and assessing their progress through different tasks. Several scholars (Haryadi, 2020; Yamauchi, 2020; Martin, 2022; Tejedor-García, 2020) have addressed in their studies enacting active learning methodologies lead learners to lose their dismissive behaviors when learning phonetics, improve their pronunciation as well as their understanding of the topics, and dedicate more time to study and work on their communicative competences.

For the importance that this subject bears in ELT, it was proposed to execute active learning methodologies such as gamification, game-based learning, collaborative learning and situated learning to enhance motivation. In contrast with past approaches, such as audiolingualism, total physical response, the natural approach, or the silent way, active learning promotes students' interaction, interest, cooperation, and focus in the academic goal; thus, motivation increases, the affective filter lowers, and the subject becomes more enjoyable (Özer, 2020).

Furthermore, active learning is a highly recommended approach by researchers and teachers due to the fact that it may have an impact on enhancing students' academic success, eliciting learners' motivation and goals achievement (Yusuk, 2020). In view of the previous outcomes of implementing active learning, it was ascertained that using these methodologies provided enough teaching tools that increased students' motivation and assisted fulfilling the objective of fostering motivation among first-semester students taking *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* at UIS.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 Main objective

To foster motivation towards English phonetics studies through active learning methodologies on first semester students taking the class *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* at Universidad Industrial de Santander.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- To identify the motivation levels of first-semester students taking the class *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* at Universidad Industrial de Santander.
- To design and implement teaching activities based on active learning methodologies.
- To assess the impact of active learning methodologies on the motivation levels of first-semester students taking the class *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* at Universidad Industrial de Santander.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 Articulatory phonetics

The study of the English phonetics field encompasses three categories: auditory, acoustic and articulatory. However, bearing in mind that this study focuses on students who are taking *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés*, the main concept will be articulatory phonetics and its importance in language acquisition. According to Zhu (2015), articulatory phonetics “is concerned with the production of speech sounds (...) how the vocal cords modify the airstream to bring about different voice qualities and how the articulators further modify the airstream coming out of the glottis to form different sound qualities” (p.1). The ability of placing the articulators for a correct realization of speech sounds comes to be crucial since it enhances both the effectiveness of the communication process and students' confidence when speaking.

First and foremost, articulatory phonetics aids students to understand the message of the interlocutor. Considering the Motor theory of speech perception, the receiver retrieves the emmissor's articulatory movements in order to recognize the speech phonemes and convey what he wants to transmit (Poeppel, D. & Assaneo, M., 2020). Hence, the students' failure at comprehending some English sounds can be attached to the variation in the articulation of the phonemes in their mother tongue in comparison to the English language sounds (Li, Y. and Somlak, T., 2019). In addition, being able to identify and produce English sounds appropriately turns conversations more appealing and natural. Consequently, this not only enhances students' English proficiency but also boosts their self-efficacy, increasing their chances of mastering English phonetics (Asadova, 2023, as cited in Gilakjani and Ahmadi, 2011). It is worth mentioning that at any moment learners are required to produce native-like accent, nor the Received Pronunciation since there are some aspects that may limit learners' performance such as their first language, the environment or issues with their articulators. For this reason, developing the ability to at least be understood by native speakers is one of the most important parts of phonetics teaching (Ali, W., *et al.* 2023).

2.1.2 Motivation

One key concept in this study is motivation. According to Bakar (2014, as cited in Filgona, 2020), motivation can be defined as “how individuals choose to invest their time, how much energy they exert in any given task, how they think and feel about the task, and how long they persist in the task”. Moreover, motivation as well is “what causes a person to want to repeat a behavior and vice versa” (Alizadeh, 2016, p.12). This repetition of behaviors may be linked to another definition given by Gopalan (2017) where he describes motivation as the process that “leads individuals to take action to achieve a goal or to fulfill a need or expectation” (p.020043-1). In brief, motivation entails people's direction of attitudes, investment of time

and the amount of energy individuals provide to a task as well as the sense of accomplishment upon completing a task.

There are two types of motivation according to the Self-Determination theory. First, there is the intrinsic motivation which is defined as “doing an activity out of inherent interest or pleasure” (Filgona, et al., 2020, p.241). Then, there is the extrinsic motivation that is understood as “doing an activity to obtain an external outcome” (Ryan and Deci, 2017 as cited in Van den Broeck, 2021, p.241). In view of the mentioned types of motivation, it can be said that they are aligned in the essence of active learning methodologies taking into account that implementing these methodologies could increase both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For instance, on the grounds of intrinsic motivation students are expected to become more engaged and interested during class when developing different phonetic exercises. Regarding extrinsic motivation, rewards and positions on leaderboards may encourage students to strive while practicing phonetics as well as be more focused when listening to topic explanations.

All-in-all, motivation is critical in any learning process. Nevertheless, in pre-service teachers and the area of phonetics, it is a key feature since educators must adapt their speech articulators to a new set of movements and produce proper English sounds. On that account, if they are not motivated to practice consistently and improve their pronunciation, they will not have the capacity neither to communicate nor to teach the English language.

2.1.3 Active learning

Active learning is a methodology that follows the premises of constructivism in which students are the center of the learning process, besides playing the role of active agents by building knowledge and meaning through previous and new experiences (De Moraes Feltes and De Oliveira, 2019). Concerning teaching practices, active learning activities are participatory techniques that allow students to think, analyze, discuss and create; focusing on

developing students' high order skills such as critical thinking and problem solving (Yusuk, 2020). It is worth mentioning that when students are lectured assuming a passive role, just listening to the teacher, it cannot be considered active learning (Demirci & Akcaalan, 2020). To summarize, active learning encompasses strategies that involve learners' active participation and techniques aiming to enhance soft skills; in addition, avoiding high amounts of teacher talking time is crucial for well-structured tasks.

In order to comprehend the functioning of active learning, the following table presents some active learning characteristics bearing in mind the next authors (Al-Ghamdi & Al-Oweidi, 2021) (Özer, 2020) (Yusuk, 2020):

Table 1

Characteristics of Active Learning

Author(s)	Active Learning features
Yusuk, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promoting soft skills development ● Projects and tasks should be real-life oriented
Al-Ghamdi & Al-Oweidi, 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Negotiation of content and development of the activities between the student and the teacher ● Connecting previous knowledge to build new one ● Students should work independently while being supported by the teacher
Özer, 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collaborative learning (students' interaction), without turning into a competition. ● The activities proposed must foster active participation among students ● The input and the process is as important as the outcome itself.

Given the previous aspects, it can be said that for an effective active learning implementation it should be started with a negotiation of a task that represents a real challenge for students to think critically (the task must have an academic and learning purpose); then, create groups for peer support to foster students' support; finally, monitoring students' performance.

2.1.3.1 Advantages and disadvantages of active learning methodologies.

Although active learning methodologies present some drawbacks at the moment of planning and developing a class, they do not directly affect students' learning outcomes. According to Yusuk (as cited in Drew, 2020), the following aspects should be considered: Teachers should implement effective classroom management strategies to keep the control of the class; workload is increased due to the flexibility of the lesson planning; and some activities may require a wide range of materials, including a projector, screen and computer. It is important to highlight that despite the previous features are being regarded as disadvantages, those are the regular workloads of a teacher; however, in active learning methodologies more time is needed for designing the lesson plans.

In regards to the advantages, active learning methodologies offer numerous benefits, not only related to enhancing language skills but also to fostering motivation and engagement towards the learning process. Yusuk (2020) highlights active learning strengths such as fostering motivation and engagement for learning, promoting positive behaviors, besides facilitating learning through collaboration and interaction. He also mentions the opportunities that teachers have to implement knowledge in real-life situations, increase students' self-efficacy, foster long-term retention and understanding of the language content, and validate students' prior knowledge to construct new knowledge.

To sum up, the disadvantages are outnumbered by the benefits of implementing active learning methodologies in class. Indeed, the drawbacks are focused on aspects that teachers

need to bear in mind not only when enacting active learning methodologies, but also in general teaching: classroom management, wide range of materials, and adapting the lesson when it is required. Regarding advantages, they emphasize enhancing students' learning environments by promoting motivation and knowledge acquisition through learner-centered teaching practices; which it would not be possible to achieve with a different methodology.

2.2 Literature Review

This section deals with studies that serve as a background on how implementing active learning methodologies have impacted students' motivation. For this reason, we focused on four methodologies we are interested in implementing during our action research. These methodologies are gamification, game-based, collaborative and situated learning.

2.2.1 Gamification

Gamification, in education, is understood as a variety of procedures implemented in a classroom that involve game elements. In this order of ideas, gamification is not a specific activity, but a group of strategies that incorporate game characteristics in order to enhance teaching practices, motivation, and improve classroom management and assessment (Kim, S., *et al.* 2018). Having clear what gamification is, the following paragraphs will provide two examples of how enacting gamification boosts motivation when studying phonetics.

Shroff, Keyes, and Wee (2020) examined how gamification elements such as rewards and difficulty variation enhance understanding, engagement, and motivation when learning English phonetics. The researchers implemented a gamified app called “*Interactive Phonetics - An Audio-Visual IPA Reference*”, which aided students in the comprehension of articulatory phonetics by displaying animated visuals that illustrate the position of articulators for each speech sound. In regards to students' practices, there were three ways in which they can play: matching symbols with audio pronunciation, matching symbols with descriptive labels, and

matching descriptive labels with audio pronunciation; besides, by fulfilling each challenge learners earned points depending on the difficulty of the exercise. The progress could be seen by students' categories: iron, bronze, silver, gold, and platinum; being the last one the best. The examination concludes that two key factors of gamified pedagogies to motivate and engage students are having a goal in mind, and being able to accomplish more difficult tasks throughout time; furthermore, this app, like others, offers the possibility to practice at any time and space according to students' learning necessities.

Furthermore, Garcia, Mancebo, Payo, and Ferreras (2020) conducted a case study to analyze the effects of competition in motivation by implementing a mobile learning game called *Clash of Pronunciations* (COP), in which students can challenge each other in discrimination and production of minimal pairs. The main dynamic consisted in gathering as many points as possible by achieving discrimination or production activities; however, such tasks can only be completed by challenging a group of maximum five students and the final results are displayed on a leaderboard. The results behind the participants' reasons to keep playing COP are the following: improving English pronunciation (75.2%), climbing the leaderboard (70.3%), winning a prize (48.2%), and beating an already known player (42.4%). The authors conclude that social competition is a fundamental aspect to enhance learners' motivation towards achieving more difficult challenges, increasing students' desires to develop more tasks and keep engaged in the different activities.

From the exposed studies, it can be stated that not all gamification elements are equally effective to foster motivation when teaching English phonetics, the following features can be highlighted in order to create an engaging learning environment: rewards, difficulty variation, goals, and competition. It would not be the same for students to repeat words containing the phoneme /æ/ such as cat, sat or lap (/kæt/, /sæt/, /læp/), than creating a competition of tongue twisters like “At the back of the black shack, Jack packed snacks in a sack” (/æt ðə bæk əv ðə

blæk fæk, dʒæk pækt snæks ɪ ə sæk/). Although the purpose is the same, they are likely to feel more motivated by playing games; moreover, they may easily recall the distribution of a vowel sound by pronouncing a tongue twister rather than trying to produce a word in isolation.

2.2.2 Game-based learning

Although game-based learning is often confused with gamification these two methodologies are completely different. The first one “applies games to facilitate learning rather than for entertainment purposes” (Noemí, 2014 as cited in Zhang, 2022) and the second one implements games elements to engage students, therefore “it does not necessarily require complete games” (Deterding, 2011 as cited in Zhang, 2022). Bearing this in mind, the following studies demonstrate how game-based learning increases students' motivation and facilitates their improvement when producing phonemes, words, and sentences.

Shirmardi, Roohani, & Jam (2022) carried out a study to examine the effect of playing a mobile game-based application named “Spaceteam ESL” on 40 high school students' English pronunciation accuracy. The participants were divided into a control group (CG) and an experimental group (EG) which adopted the app in their lessons once a week for ten weeks. Each class was divided into two phases: (1) Repeating words from a list with frequent vocabulary shown on the app, and (2) Using the same lexicon while playing the game. Additionally, the EG played in groups to become familiar with the app as the game increased the difficulty level hence they cooperated, gave feedback to each other, and sent as well as received instructions from their peers. The results revealed the game not only helped improve learners' pronunciation but also created an enjoyable class environment thus reducing apprentices' anxiety levels, facilitating the process of acquiring English sounds, and encouraging students to improve and work on their pronunciation by themselves. All in all, researchers concluded that implementing this game application created a fun atmosphere in the

classroom leading to social interaction with peers and increasing students' motivation levels to practice their pronunciation during class.

Moreover, Voreopoulou, Mystakidis, & Tsinakos (2024) conducted a research study to design, develop, and evaluate an augmented reality (AR) novel called "LockED in ShakespeARE's Globe Theatre". This AR aimed to cultivate 21st century skills in the participants and allow them to practice all of their four language skills, particularly their speaking and pronunciation as they had consistent discussions to explore potential solutions to the challenges presented. The experiment engaged 10 in-service English language educators from K-12 education who were exposed to 4 game sessions to familiarize themselves with ARECG concepts and mechanisms. Data was collected through a questionnaire and semi-conducted interviews to elaborate on their previous responses. On the one hand, the questionnaire results showed that 90% of the participants strongly agreed that AR was an enjoyable activity and created a fun as well as an attractive environment increasing the participants' motivation levels. Likewise, all of the subjects viewed the game as a positive influence on autonomous learning and increased the learners' attention span. On the other hand, the semi-conducted interview answers highlighted how this immersive experience was stimulating, boosted English language performance, and gave many opportunities for students to improve their pronunciation through scaffolding. In summary, the AR novel offered a space to reinforce vocabulary retention, enhance using the English language meaningfully through conversations as well as in other activities, and develop critical skills holistically and playfully as it increases crucial aspects of learning such as motivation and satisfaction levels.

In light of what has been discussed, employing game-based learning methodologies aligned to technologies may be an opportunity for learners to have an enjoyable environment where their anxiety levels are reduced, their process of acquiring English sounds is facilitated, and their performance at producing sounds is improved. Additionally, involving this

methodology could reform students' perceptions of phonetics by focusing on a practical communicative aspect instead of a challenging theoretical topic.

2.2.3 Collaborative Learning

Collaborative Learning aims at achieving goals by engaging a group of students to work cooperatively. When implementing collaborative Learning, students have the opportunity to enrich their ideas and consolidate their knowledge by sharing thoughts with their partners. Besides, it may encourage shy students to express themselves more since they are provided with a more comfortable environment; in consequence, classroom participation and engagement are likely to increase (Yingling, 2018). In order to illustrate how collaborative learning enhances phonetics teaching practices, two research studies were described.

Fatimah (2019) sought to investigate the impact of Collaborative Learning in both reducing students' speaking anxiety and increasing interest and motivation in 89 eleventh grade students. The participants were exposed to the Mantle of the Expert theory (MoE), which establishes that in order to master language skills students should accomplish different tasks working in groups. In regards to diminishing speaking anxiety, students' expressed improving both their English-speaking confidence and skills since small group discussions allowed better vocabulary retention. The activity that encouraged students the most to talk was roleplaying, given that learners expressed that free production activities led them to be more spontaneous. In terms of motivation and engagement, some students initially hesitated to actively participate in their learning process. However, as they engaged in MoE activities, their willingness to participate increased, likely due to the stress-free environment provided.

Tampubolon (2018) examined some features that Collaborative Learning provides in order to improve motivation and speaking skills when learning English in one hundred thirty-nine tenth-grade students. The research was carried out in 2 cycles where the participants were

given the opportunity to discuss in small groups some issues in order to propose a solution. Throughout the first intervention, most of the students were passive members of their groups; besides, they could not conduct an effective conversation due to the little participation. In the second cycle, the researcher overcame those issues by guiding the discussions and addressing directly to passive learners. In consequence, the participants became active members of their groups, increasing their speaking skills and enhancing their motivation levels towards participating in class. Bearing in mind the previous interventions, the author presented the following aspects that collaborative learning provides in order to enhance students' motivation and English speaking skills: first, it assists passive students to become more active so that they have the chance to share their ideas with their peers; second, it promotes creativity since students are able to listen to their peers opinions on how to solve a problem; third, it increases motivation since students are provided with an environment in which they can express their ideas comfortably with the support of their peers.

Summarizing the ideas of the previous authors, Collaborative learning presents some practical solutions towards common issues that an English phonetics teacher might encounter: speaking anxiety and a high affective filter. As an example, students can be afraid of producing any phoneme sound in front of the whole class; however, allowing small groups for peer practicing and revision will let shy learners develop more confidence while rehearsing in a safe environment, encouraging them to speak out loud the next time. Besides, passive students are likely to be more motivated to engage in their own learning process since the comprehension of the topic will be raised. In terms of the affective filter, collaborative learning promotes stress free settings in which students can express comfortably their ideas and opinion, in this case, they can practice out of a judging environment while being supported by their partners.

2.2.4 Situated learning

Situated learning establishes that “learning must take place in its context and as a result, learners have the chance to seek rational explanations for knowledge by interacting with their physical surroundings and social environment” (Chen et al., 2009 as cited in Bilgin 2018). In this sense, this study conceived situated learning as a theoretical equivalent to what some educators refer to as contextualized learning, given its emphasis on grounding knowledge acquisition in relevant, real-world applications.

According to Suadiyatno et al. (2020), contextual learning emphasizes the importance of integrating students’ interests and experiences into classroom instruction. In a similar perspective, Jalilbayli (2023) describes contextual learning as incorporating social context into the educational process to address various problems or tasks. In line with these thoughts, the current study combined the teaching of English phonetics with students’ cultural context, specifically through the use of popular Colombian TV shows, characters, and locations, to enhance motivation toward phonetics learning.

To exemplify the impact of situated learning, Safri, K.B. (2022) undertook an investigation intending to prove that post-millennials can achieve better performance if phonetics teachers use YouTube short-form content in classrooms. This experimental research dealt with 20 students who were divided into an experimental group (G1) and a control group (G2). From one perspective, learners on the G1 watched a musical video clip of a song and were asked to identify and explain the meaning of some nonverbal messages. Then, they had to take notes on the words they observed. After that, students listened to the song with the video off and wrote the words they heard without paying attention to grammar mistakes. Consequently, the teacher gave pupils, as a test exercise, copies of the song lyrics in phonetic symbols and they had to transcribe them into meaningful words. Eventually, apprentices received the proper transcribed lyrics on the screen, corrected their mistakes individually, and

were rewarded by watching the video clip with sound on. From another perspective, participants in the G2 attended a traditional content-based lesson about the same topic and completed a test based on the lyrics of the song. The results revealed that 60% of the students in the G1 achieved grades between 16 to 20 while 50% of the G2 got grades between 6 to 9. Furthermore, a questionnaire was applied to explore the students' level of interest or boredom and responses showed that in G1 78% of the learners perceived the lesson as "very interesting" whereas G2 was positioned at a "good enough" level. Taking into consideration the aforementioned, the authors claimed that the application of the Edutainment (Education and Entertainment) theory in phonetics lessons grasps more students' attention than pure academic content classes. To conclude, not only did learners demonstrate a positive attitude towards class but they also developed reflections regarding culture, history, humor, ethics, and psychology as well as were motivated to have more lessons in English phonetics

By implementing situated learning through the use of songs in phonetics classes students encounter possible real-life scenarios where they make use of their knowledge in a practical way. Acknowledging this represents a great importance in apprentices' learning process on phonetics since they are able to experience the utility of their knowledge and skills. For instance, students may study how to produce phonemes with BBC accent through drills and audios, however, it is very likely they will forget about them as soon as they answer a test or finish their corresponding classes. Nonetheless, if learners study the same phonemes by watching a news video or a movie scene they will witness their knowledge in action and not merely as a theoretical concept. Furthermore, involving technological elements such as the previously mentioned represents great importance as students' generation is technology native and using these materials brings situations of their daily basis into the class.

3. Methodology

3.1 Type of Research

This study followed a qualitative methodology for three main reasons. First, it considers “a way of looking at research that honors an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of reporting the complexity of a situation” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p.51). Therefore, it is possible to analyze how an abstract concept such as motivation behaves individually on each student and at the same time impacts a group understanding the particularity of the context. Second, this approach emphasizes collecting data through observation of participants’ behaviors when developing activities (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) which follows the first specific objective of our research and is closely linked to crucial features in the Educational field since we, pre-service teachers, need to perceive and understand which methodologies can improve or affect the development of a lesson for our students. Finally, this type of research is intertwined with researchers' reflections and interpretations which is key as we, the researchers of this study, focus specifically on certain factors influenced by our own experiences and emphasize the creation of favorable or unfavorable conclusions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p.299). To sum up, a qualitative study was selected to be carried out as it embraces students' individuality and importance of analyzing a complex context as well as notion, supports analyzing data through observations, and facilitates our contemplations on specific features.

3.2 Sampling

The current research study included fifteen students taking *Introducción a la fonética articuladora del Inglés* at Universidad Industrial de Santander (2024-2). The participants were asked to fill out a consent form (see Annex A) in which they chose whether or not to accept being part of the research. Additionally, they were informed of the anonymity of the use of the data and the possibility to withdraw the process without any kind of consequence. The sampling technique was a convenience sample since it “involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents and continuing that process until the required sample size has been obtained of those who happen to be available and accessible at the time.” (Cohen *et al*, 2018, p.218). On this account, the participants were selected since they shared the geographical place where the study found its core; that is, they are coursing the same degree and classes the researchers took. Moreover, this specific class shared the same learning experience the researchers had, and worked as inspiration to develop this study.

3.3 Research design

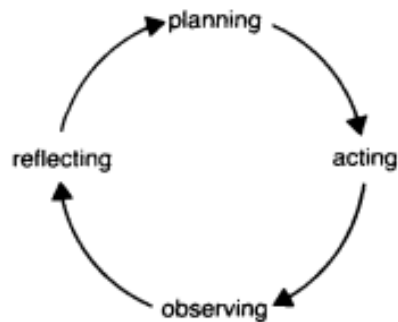
The research study was carried out under the principles of action research. McNiff and Whitehead (2002) define action research as a “practical way of looking at your practice in order to check whether it is as you feel it should be. (...) if your practice needs attention in some way, you will be able to take action and improve it” (p.15). In other words, action research is a self-reflect process to assess our own teaching methodologies seeking to provide a better learning environment and enhance knowledge acquisition.

Action research is usually regarded as a cyclic set of procedures that follow the structure of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (see Figure 3); however, McNiff and Whitehead comprehend action research as a “spontaneous system of inquiry. (...) It is possible to begin at one place and end up somewhere entirely unexpected” (p.56). Therefore, the researcher is able

to reflect on which step requires more improvement and provide the necessary changes for conducting an effective action plan.

Figure 3

Initial Action Research model.

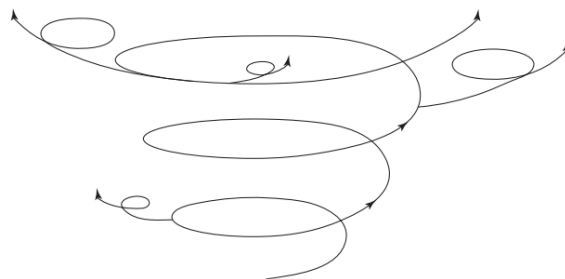


Note. The above figure shows how action research was a structural way of conducting research, following a fixed set of steps that lead to a reflection process. Source: McNiff, H. and Whitehead, J. (2002).

Figure 4 illustrates Whitehead's perspective on action research. It is observed that the assessment process begins at any moment of the cycle, in this way, action plans can be enhanced before developing the didactic sequences with the students.

Figure 4

Whitehead's proposal of action research.



Note. The present figure illustrates that the reflection process can be done at any moment of the research study, not only when the cycle ends, but when it is required. Source: McNiff, H. and Whitehead, J. (2002).

Within the nature of action research as a self-reflective practice, it can be hard to determine until what extent the researcher needs to enhance his action proposal; thus, in order to find out possible solutions not only to the research question, but also to unexpected issues, McNiff and Whitehead (2002) suggest a series of ideas to consider when reflecting on the action plan:

- What is my concern?
- Why am I concerned?
- What do I think I can do about it?
- How will I gather evidence to show that I am influencing the situation?
- How will I ensure that any judgements I make are reasonably fair and accurate?
- What will I do then? (p.72)

Considering that the main objective of the current research study seeks to enhance motivation and teaching practices in English phonetics classes at UIS, action research seems pertinent in order to achieve this goal. The action research model of McNiff and Whitehead is to be followed since it allows the authors of this study to complement and reflect on both existing methodologies employed at UIS for teaching phonetics, and their own teaching proposals. Furthermore, the reflective process is crucial for continuous improvement and assessment throughout the implementation of the activities in order to adapt the materials and dynamics. On the contrary, if any other action research model had been implemented, it would have been required to wait until the end of each cycle in order to overcome any difficulty that the activities carried out by teachers might have come across.

3.3.1 Data Collection Technique and Instruments

The techniques for data collection in this study consisted of a survey, observations and interviews.

Table 2

Techniques and instruments of the research study.

Technique	Instrument
Survey	Questionnaire
Observation	Field notes
Focus-group	Semi-Structured Interviews

Note. This table shows an overall view of the techniques and instruments implemented in this research.

3.3.1.1 Survey and questionnaire

The first technique used was survey since they “gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships that exist between specific events” (Cohen, et al., 2018, p.334). It was important for the authors to comprehend how students’ motivation levels were before implementing the active learning methodologies as well as if they already used those methodologies and how it had influenced students’ learning process. Consequently, we chose to implement this technique through a semi-structured questionnaire (See Annex B) which “sets the agenda but does not presuppose the nature of the response” (Cohen, et al., 2018, p.475). As a result, the utilization of both this technique and instrument enables us to reflect upon students’ experiences through their own narrative and identify certain patterns or similarities in their answers.

3.3.1.2 Observations and field notes

The second technique was observations. This mechanism is “strong on face validity; it can provide rich contextual information, enable first-hand data to be collected, reveal mundane routines and activities, and can offer an opportunity for documenting those aspects of lifeworlds that are verbal, non-verbal and physical” (Clark et al., 2009 as cited in Cohen, et al., 2018). Consequently, the authors considered as crucial employing observations since the study was carried out through action research; thus, it was required to explore and to identify students' behaviors in their reality through phonetics and phonology classes. According to this principle, it was decided to implement the instrument of field notes (See Annex C) defined as “researchers' private, personal thoughts, ideas, and queries regarding their research observations” (Phillippi and Lauderdale, 2018, p. 381). Correspondingly, this instrument granted us the possibility to develop a deeper analysis of how students reflect their motivation through behavioral manifestations during their phonetics lessons.

It is important to bear in mind when reading the results and the analysis of each objective that when the lessons were being designed and developed, a space was opened for students to share their perceptions of the class with physical and virtual forms. Some of the questions were focused on whether they felt comfortable or not, which was their favorite activity, what activities they did not enjoy, would they use those activities for personal study or outside the classroom, etc. The idea of gathering students' thoughts on the lessons came up from the action research model proposed by McNiff and Whitehead which states that any phase of the model could be enacted at any moment. Therefore, instead of only collecting information after the whole implementation, it was decided to reflect on each lesson so that the necessary changes could be applied to improve the following classes in terms of enhancing the activities.

In this order of ideas, although students' comments were not regarded as a data collection instrument at the beginning of the research, it complemented the information

gathered on the field notes. The behaviours observed and written on the field notes by the authors, who worked as external figures, were ascertained by the students' own voice taking into account that those comments responded to previous questions prepared by the researchers.

3.3.1.3 Focus group and semi-structured interviews

The third and last technique was a focus group which is “a form of group interview in which reliance is placed on the interaction within the group, which discusses a topic supplied by the researcher” (Morgan, 1988 as cited in Cohen, et al., 2018). We chose this technique since it allows data to emerge through an exchange of the participants' ideas and experiences in the process. As a result, we decided to implement interviews as an instrument (See Annex D). The implementation of interviews in research establishes a difference between understanding participants as data sources only and viewing them as human beings with perspectives and knowledge shaped collaboratively within a community influenced by their context (Kvale, 1996, as cited in Cohen, et al., 2018). Additionally, interviews are flexible therefore it is possible to press not only for specific answers but for responses about complex and deep issues (Cohen, et al, 2018, p. 506). Consequently, we perceive this mechanism as significant since we are addressing how students' motivation levels are affected by taking the subject *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria* while being exposed to active learning methodologies.

All in all, it is worth mentioning these instruments were likely to be exposed to changes throughout the implementation of the active learning methodologies since the research design allowed adding or deleting sections and questions to collect data properly depending on the necessities encountered.

4. Results analysis and discussion

4.1 First objective results

Bearing in mind the first objective: “to identify the motivation levels of first-semester students taking the class *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* at Universidad Industrial de Santander”; participants were requested to complete a questionnaire prior to the intervention to determine their motivation levels. The questionnaire was divided into two sections as follows: (1) understanding of motivation and (2) motivation in phonetics lessons. The first section sought to link the definitions of motivation proposed by Gopalan (2017), Alizadeh (2016), and Bakar (2014) (see theoretical framework) with students’ perceptions of motivation. In addition, a brief analysis was carried out of what a motivated student looks like according to the participants' opinions.

The second section focused specifically on motivation in English phonetics classes with the purpose of gaining insights into the levels of motivation exhibited by students and the underlying reasons for these. Besides, it was decided to explore whether students would be willing to study outside the classroom, with a view to contrasting the coherence between the participants' perceptions of what motivated students look like and how they act in English phonetic classes. Finally, students were asked to choose what activities in the classroom they enjoyed the most, a step that was crucial when developing the second objective. It is worth mentioning that the participants were divided with the following codes: P1, P2, P3...P13. This comes to be important taking into account that throughout the analysis students’ responses will be shown implementing those codes.

4.1.1 First section: Participants’ understanding of motivation.

In relation to the first section of the questionnaire, students provided definitions of motivation in their own words. Following a thorough analysis of the responses, the students'

definitions were categorised into three themes as follows: first, motivation as a means to enjoy the process; second, motivation as an opportunity to take action; and third, motivation as a chance to engage in tasks without feeling pressure. Their responses were categorized into three main ideas: First, enjoying the process; second, to take action; third, engaging in something without pressure.

The concept of motivation was described by some students as the excitement and happiness experienced during the development of an activity. To illustrate, the aforementioned consider the following excerpts:

“The desire to do something and passion that you feel to do it” (sic). (P7)

“It inspires you and changes your attitude towards something in a positive way” (P3)

“a feeling, a little something in our brain that helps us feel focused, or even excited for something, maybe because of the sense of achievement at the end that makes us happy, or sometimes just enjoying the process” (P8)

It was asserted by some other participants that motivation is feeling passionate about achieving a goal as well as striving to adopt the profile of those who are considered role-models. This claim is present in several students' responses:

“The feeling that makes me want to do anything to achieve something” (P10)

“That feeling that makes me do things, the passion” (P1)

“What makes me want to do or achieve something” (P4)

“the reason why someone can feel inspired or excited about something and work towards it” (P2)

“My motivation is learning English teaching for being like my favorite teacher on high school” (P5)

Last but not least, it was stated by some other students that motivation is the force that enables people to develop any activity without feeling an obligation. As a matter of fact, these quotes exemplify the previous statement:

“motivation is when something inspires you to do it, without any obligation” (P6)

“que desarrollar las actividades se sienta placentero y no obligatorio” (P9)

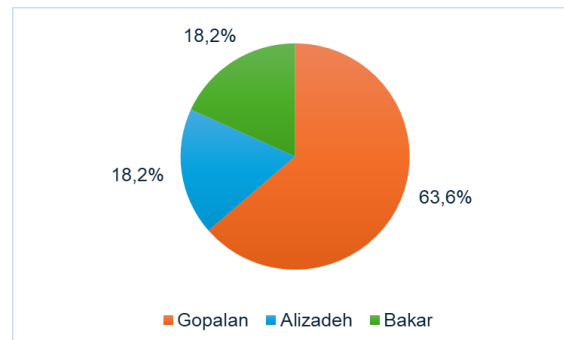
“Is the thing that makes me do some things that can be hard but with the motivation it doesn't matter” (P11)

After the participants defined motivation in their own words, they were presented with the following definitions of motivation to determine which scholar their views aligned with the most. The vast majority of the responses, 63.6%, chose the statement by Gopalan (2017), “The process that leads individuals to take action to achieve a goal or to fulfil a need or expectation” (p.020043-1). 18.2% of the participants expressed agreement with the assertions of Alizadeh (2016); “What causes a person to want to repeat a behavior and vice versa” (p.12).

18.2% of the participants concurred with the definition proposed by Bakar (2014), how people direct their attitudes, time, and energy to develop different tasks. The following graphic illustrates students' responses.

Figure 5

Students' preferences towards motivation definitions



Note. The figure illustrates the percentages of student's responses towards the definition of motivation they felt more aligned with. Source: Google Forms Questionnaire (2024)

It can be said that the motivation definitions of the authors are aligned with students' perceptions of motivation. For instance, the comments made by P10 and P7 are consistent with Alizadeh's emphasis on repeating behaviours, given their enjoyment of the learning process. As well, the perceptions of P1 and P3 go hand in hand with Gopalan's perspective taking into account they are centered on changing attitudes in a positive way to achieve a goal. Moreover, P6 and P9 opinions' are consistent with Bakar since a person that does not feel pressured or obligated will have the desire to continue developing their activities.

As previously mentioned, the highest percentage of students agreed the most with the definition given by Gopalan. A possible reason for it would be the influence that the Hispanic-American culture exerts on students since as Blanco-Mesa, *et al.* (2021) states "Hispanic Americans are motivated by achievement needs, autonomy, or desires for wealth". These factors are evidenced in Colombian culture as it is visualized that motivated people are the ones who achieve a goal, such as obtaining a degree, purchasing a house, securing a promotion, obtaining a recognised job, etc. Furthermore, in Colombia it is thought that being proficient in English would improve the chances of getting a job with an acceptable salary. In some

instances, having a certificate in this foreign language is a prerequisite for certain positions. As Beltran (2015) states “se tiene muy en cuenta el papel que hoy juega el inglés como medio para tener acceso a mejores oportunidades de trabajo, lo que algunos de los estudiantes colombianos ven como motivación” [It is taken into account the role that English language adopts as a mean to access to better job opportunities, which is something that motivates Colombian students to learn this language.] (p.328) . However, this author also suggests that those jobs in which being proficient in English is a requirement do not give people another option but to study that language (p.328). In this sense, being motivated to improve English skills as a way to achieve a goal as getting a job, is strongly related to Gopalan’s view of motivation.

In the final part of the first section, the participants responded to an open-ended question in order to describe characteristics of a motivated student. Their responses were divided into two categories: first, what a motivated student is and second, what a motivated student does.

Some participants listed various features that a motivated student demonstrate, for instance:

“Optimistic, proactive, judicious, open mind” (sic) (P1)

“responsibility, curiosity, patience” (P2)

“They are energetic, optimistic and happy while are doing something with motivation” (P7)

The remaining participants described the characteristics of a motivated student in terms of behaviour. As a general view, they stated that a motivated student is proactive in and out of the classroom; for instance:

“P5, A motivated student is one that answers the questions that are made on class, that investigates beforehand” (sic) (P5)

“He wants to assist to classes, he pays attention, he tries to investigate about the different topics and improve a lot” (P6)

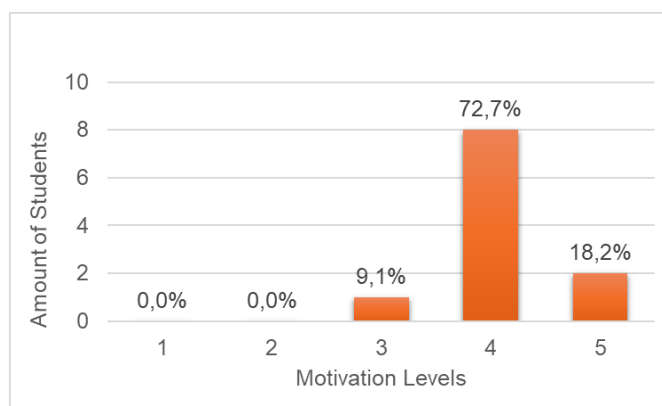
As you can see, taking into consideration students’ responses a motivated student is characterized by their agency, which can be defined as “the experience of controlling one’s own motor acts and, through them, the course of external events... is the association between a voluntary action and an outcome” (Haggard, 2017, pp.197-198). In this sense, a motivated student takes action to achieve their necessities, they make decisions, they try to participate. Nevertheless, it was found that the agency in the participants is driven by intrinsic motivation rather than by external stimuli. In that order of ideas, it was perceived that students understand motivation as an individual process.

4.1.2 Second section: motivation in phonetics classes

This section focused on motivation towards English phonetics classes. The first question was designed to gain insight into whether the participants feel motivated or not to study phonetics in class. It was found that 100% of the students responded that they were motivated in this regard; however, their levels of motivation varied as follows: neutral 9.1%, motivated 72.7%, fully motivated 18.2%.

Figure 6

Motivation levels during Phonetics classes



Note. The figure shows students' motivation levels towards phonetics classes being 1 not motivated at all and 5 fully motivated. Source: Google Forms Questionnaire (2024)

To comprehend the subtle variation in the motivation levels of the students, they were asked to answer an open-ended question to justify their answers. The reasons behind their responses were categorized into three main groups: first, interest in phonetics; second, the desire to improve English skills; and third, the perception that phonetics is a difficult subject.

Some students expressed that they were interested in learning phonetics given the engaging nature of the topics discussed in class. Case in point, participants 6, 1 and 9 manifested the following aspects:

“because I consider that the subject is really important to understand correctly the different aspects related to sounds and speak” (sic) (P6)

“because I find phonetic classes very interesting and I want to know more about it” (P1)

“Me interesan los temas de las clases” (P9)

There were some participants that considered that by studying English phonemes they would improve their speaking skills; for instance, it is worth highlighting the next comments:

“because i find it really interesting the production of the sounds and how every single thing can improve my English skills” (P2)

“because it's important to improve my skills in speaking and is an important topic in English” (P11)

“Because I think this signature it's so important for me in order to improve my English” (P7)

The remaining participants believed that English phonetics can be complicated to comprehend, in fact, one of the students mentioned that it can get trivial; the following statements exemplified the previous description:

“mostly because in my opinion it feels trivial and very very complicated” (P5)

“I plan to get good grades in each assessment activity of this subject, it seems a complicated one but if other people were able to make it, then I can too with enough independent study” (P10)

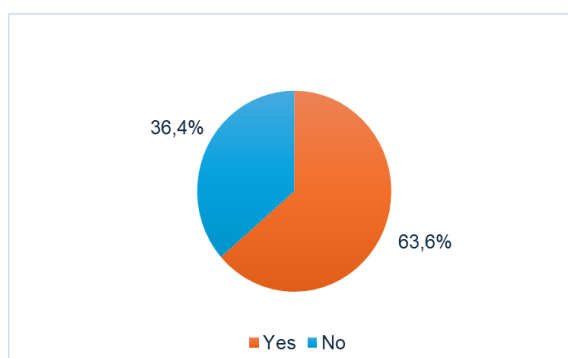
As evidenced in the previous responses, all students expressed a sense of motivation attributing this to the usefulness and challenge they find in phonetics. According to Gopalan, Bakar, Zulkifli, et al. (2017) “individuals with self-motivation always can find a motive and intensity without expecting external encouragement to complete a task even though the task is challenging” (p.2). Therefore, it can be said that not everything that is difficult, lowers motivation. In other words, not everything that provides motivation is easy.

In contrast to their high levels of motivation toward the classes, only 63.6% of students are likely to study phonetics on their own, while the remaining 36.4% probably would not.

The reasons behind this can be categorized as follows: first, English phonetics is engaging; and second, lack of consistent study habits.

Figure 7

Individual Study



Note. The figure shows whether students are motivated to study on their own or not. Source: Google Forms Questionnaire (2024).

It was asserted by students that the study of phonetics is of significant importance to their future paths. As well, by discovering a new field of study in a language they enjoy speaking, students have motivation to dedicate extra time to explore more about it. Some students' responses illustrate this category, such as:

“because, as I mentioned before, it is a really important subject, and yes, I can say I'm motivated at learning phonetics” (P6)

*“it's a new topic for me, I have never worried about pronunciation and it feels like a new world, it's being hard but I feel I'm finally doing something to improve myself.”
(sic) (P10)*

“I mean, more like motivation is like a fascination of knowing a new thing of the language” (sic) (P8)

Some students acknowledged they do not dedicate extra time to study Phonetics since they had not created that habit for other classes either. This claim is present in the following students' responses:

“because I don't have much discipline” (sic) (P7)

“because for me, I feel that it's not necessary at all” (P5)

“generalmente no estudio por mi cuenta.” (P9)

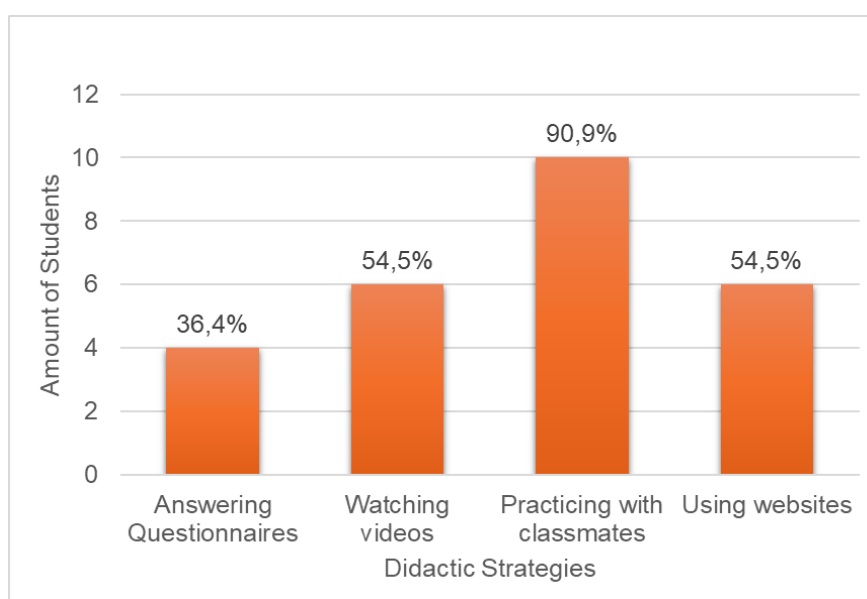
If it is taken into account students' perceptions of motivation and their actions towards English phonetics classes, it can be declared that students' actions are not coherent with their ideas. As stated before by the participants, a motivated student is someone that has agency by

their own; nonetheless, the students are likely to avoid taking action in regards to practicing the topics.

To finish the second section, the participants selected the activities they enjoy the most during phonetics lessons. It is worth mentioning that the participants were not restricted to just one answer. 36,4% answering questionnaires, 54,5% watching videos, 90,9% practicing with classmates, and 54,5% using websites.

Figure 8

Didactic Strategies



Note. The figure represents students' preferences towards didactic strategies implemented in class.

Source: Google Forms Questionnaire (2024).

The previous information was necessary in order to start designing the didactic sequences that incorporated active learning methodologies taking into account that the current study follows an action research structure. Such approach follows the steps of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting.

For this reason, it was analyzed how students felt during phonetics lessons and what they like the most to begin with the planning aspect. After that, the didactic sequences were

carried out and the impact on students' motivation levels was analyzed in order to reflect on the data collected and modify what hindered participants' comfort. In this sense, all the action research steps were achieved effectively since the model proposed is not cyclical.

The next section will be focused on describing the interventions and their impact on students' motivation.

4.2 Second objective results

Considering the second objective: "To design and implement teaching activities based on active learning methodologies"; six lessons were designed and implemented throughout the second semester of 2024 according to the UIS calendar with first semester students of Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés. While developing the lessons a field notes format was filled in order to observe students' behaviours and interactions. The information gathered assisted the researchers to adjust the following lesson plans so that students were able to feel more comfortable in the classes. This process is faithful to the action research model proposed by McNiff and Whitehead in which any stage of the cycle can be intervened when necessary instead of implementing the six lessons at once and ignoring the impact of each class on students' motivation. It is worth mentioning that the subject of phonetics and phonology was divided into the theoretical and the practical part. For that reason, the professor in charge of the class developed the theoretical part while the lessons that the researchers planned covered the practical aspect as it can be seen in the activities. Moreover, the topics were related to the first six chapters of the book *Peter Roach Phonetics and Phonology: a practical course*.

The following table provides a summary of the active learning methodologies implemented along the semester:

Table 3

Summary of the active learning elements implemented in each lesson

Intervention	Topic	Objective	Methodology	Active learning elements
1	Short and long vowels	To differentiate and produce long and short vowels.	Gamification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Narrative ● Gamified questionnaire ● Competition ● Rewards
			Situated learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Personification of vowels as Colombian sodas.
			Game-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bingo ● Charades
			Cooperative learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Group work
2	Diphthongs and triphthongs	<p>To recognize the sound and spelling of diphthongs and triphthongs.</p> <p>To produce diphthongs and triphthongs.</p>	Game-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pictionary ● Guess Who ● Uno ● Snakes and ladders
			Gamification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Narrative ● Competition ● Gamified questionnaire
			Situated learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Production of Colombian sayings in English.

5	Fricatives ʃ, ʒ, s, z, h	To identify the difference between ʃ, ʒ, s, z, h in speech.	Gamification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative • Gamified questionnaire
		To transcribe words with the following fricatives: ʃ, ʒ, s, z, h.	Game-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scavenger hunt
		To produce correctly the following fricatives: ʃ, ʒ, s, z, h.	Situated learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Colombian myths and legends characters.
6	Nasals	To identify the difference between nasal consonants.	Gamification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition and rewards • Gamified Questionnaire
		To transcribe words with nasal consonants.	Game-based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bingo
		To produce correctly nasal consonants.	Situated learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a famous Colombian TV program

The previous table shows the different methodologies implemented in class along with its corresponding active learning elements. This section aims to describe how the active learning methodologies were implemented throughout the semester. To achieve this purpose, each active learning methodology was not analyzed lesson by lesson, instead each methodology was presented individually, gamification, game-based learning, situated learning, and collaborative learning.

4.2.1 Implementation of gamification

To describe how gamification was integrated into the lessons it is important to review the concept itself. According to Hakak, s. et al, (p. 22), gamification is understood as “The

application of game-like environments (game mechanics) to promote motivation for learning and solving problems”. Following this understanding, Kim, S., *et al.* (2018) established that gamification is not a specific procedure nor a task to be carried out, instead, it encompasses a diversity of teaching strategies that involve game characteristics with the purpose of enhancing motivation, classroom management and knowledge acquisition. In other words, Gamification is the implementation of game elements such as rewards, roles, competition, challenges, etc. rather than engaging in actual gameplay; therefore, gamification should not be confused with game-based learning.

In this order of ideas, throughout the lessons gamification was presented in the form of narrative, competition and rewards. The narrative was implemented to connect the activities and to create a setting from lesson one to five. For instance, the lessons were guided by Granny Schwa, an old woman who is passionate about phonetics. It is worth mentioning that it was a character created by the researchers (see figure 9).

Figure 9

Granny Schwa



Note. The figure illustrates an adaptation from an old lady picture mixed with a Schwa symbol.

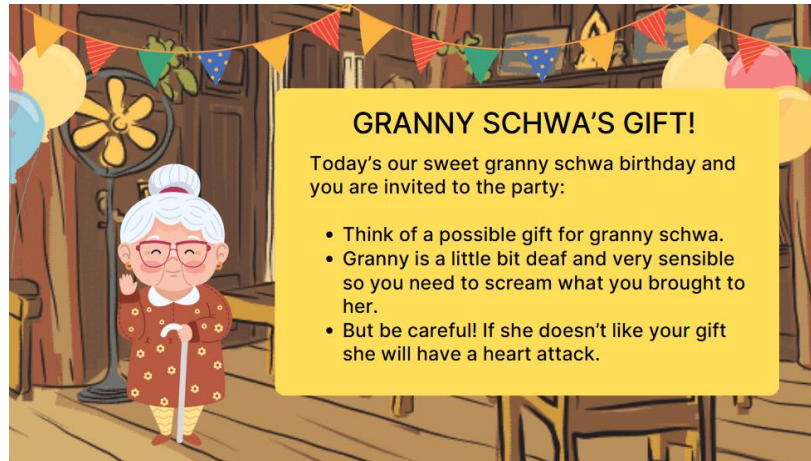
Source: pngtree (2024).

In the first lesson, students were involved in Granny’s Schwa birthday; therefore, all the activities aim at celebrating her birthday by developing some phonetic tasks. The following

picture illustrates the warm up activity, which was students' invitation to participate in Granny's Schwa party (see Figure 10).

Figure 10

Warm up to introduce the narrative

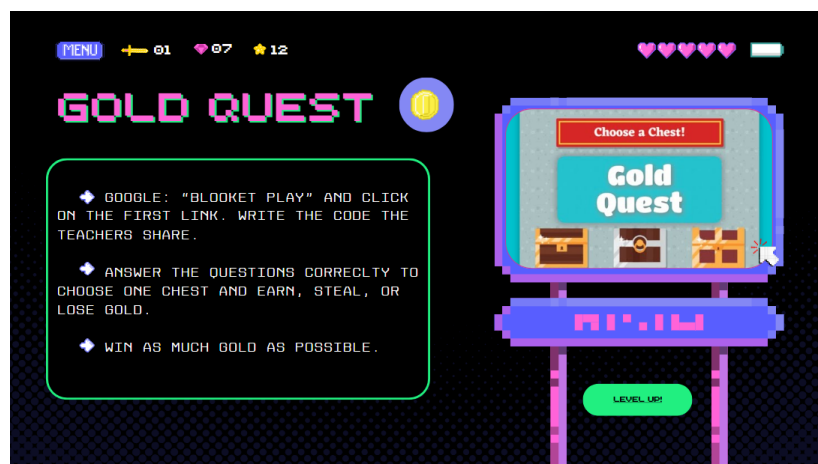


Note. The figure shows one of the slides used during the first lesson to introduce the character of “Granny Schwa” to the students. Source: researchers' own design through Canva, 2024.

In the second lesson, the students were invited to Granny's Schwa arcade; where the students played a lot of games related to phonetics. The following pictures show how the narrative was integrated (see Figure 11 and 12)

Figure 11

Gamified Questionnaire Rules



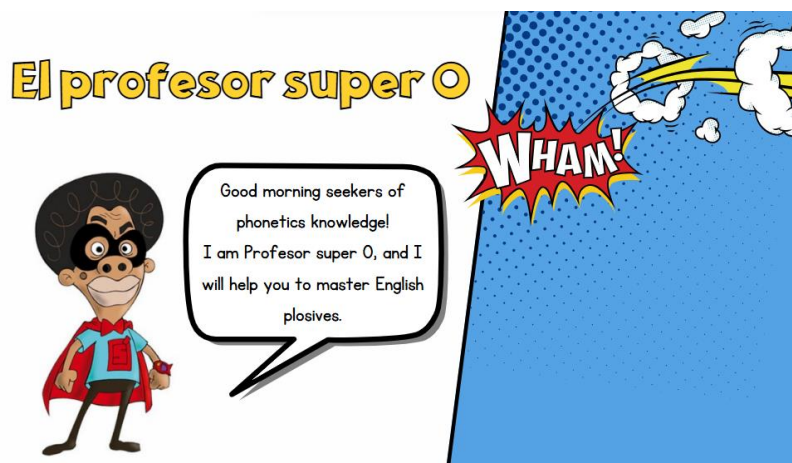
Note. The figure represents the rules to follow in one slide during the second lesson. Source: researchers' own design through Canva, 2024.

Figure 12*Granny's voice in her arcade*

Note. The figure shows how granny's voice was implemented on the slides along the second lesson.

Source: researchers' own design through Canva, 2024..

In the third lesson, Granny Schwa invited Profesor Super O, a famous TV character in Colombia, to host the class (see Figure 13). This time, students played the role of heroes and villains in order to save as many people as possible around Bucaramanga by completing phonetics challenges.

Figure 13*Profesor Super O*

Note. The figure presents Profesor Super O introducing himself and the topic of the class. Source:

researchers' own design through Canva, 2024.

In the fourth lesson, the participants were part of a witch-themed class, in which the activities were related to learning phonetics by doing witchcraft such as creating potions and casting spells (see Figure 14).

Figure 14

Granny's Coven



Note. The figure shows granny schwa introducing the theme of the class during the fourth lesson.

Source: researchers' own design through Canva, 2024.

In the fifth lesson, the theme was a haunted house. Someone murdered Granny Schwa and the students were required to gather clues by completing phonetic activities in order to discover the murderer (see Figure 15).

Figure 15

Granny's crime scene



Note. The figure illustrates the instructions of a scavenger hunt activity along with the crime scene of Granny Schwa. Source: researchers' own design through Canva, 2024.

In the sixth lesson there was no narrative to guide the activities since the authors aim at analyzing students' perspectives of having classes with a narrative and without a narrative. For this reason, the slides did not follow any specific design (see Figure 16). Below there is an example of one of the activities developed in the sixth lesson (see Figure 17).

Figure 16

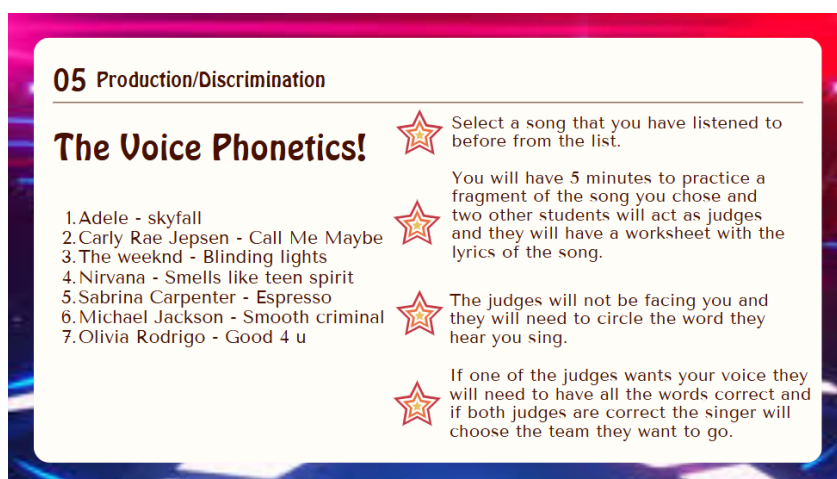
Sixth Lesson Agenda



Note. The figure presents the activities to be carried out during the last lesson where a general theme was not implemented. Source: researchers' own design through Canva, 2024.

Figure 17

The Voice: Phonetics



Note. The figure shows the rules to follow during the last task in the sixth lesson. Source: researchers' own design through Canva, 2024.

After explaining the narrative component of the lessons, the second feature of gamification, competition, was described. The competitive aspect took different forms. Below it is reported how competition was integrated by implementing a gamified questionnaire in all the lessons; besides, a brief description was carried out about how students got engaged in competition while developing some activities in the first, third, and sixth lesson.

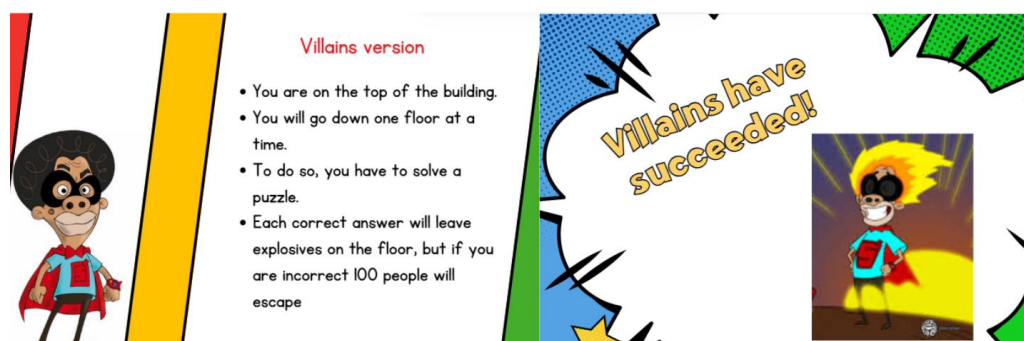
At the beginning of each lesson it was implemented a gamified questionnaire to revise the theory of the topic to be practiced. In this activity, the participants were required to answer some theoretical questions about the corresponding topic of the class (see table 3). Each correct response not only allowed them to earn points, but also to steal or to swap scores with their classmates; besides, the participants could watch the leaderboard while competing against their classmates. It is worth mentioning that three different gamified questionnaires were implemented. In the first lesson there was a questionnaire with limited time to answer and a leader board; in the fifth lesson, there was a gamified questionnaire with no limit of time to answer the questions and a leader board; whereas in the remaining lessons it was implemented a gamified questionnaire with no time limit, rewards, and a leaderboard. To sum up, to review the theoretical aspect of each topic covered, students got engaged in competing against each other to be the first to reach the top of a leaderboard; which aided to boost students' motivation to practice and recall important information.

The competition element was incorporated in different ways in lessons one, three and sixth. In the first one, students earned between two and four points per activity, depending on how quickly they completed them. This created a competitive environment where students aimed to accumulate the most points by the end of the lesson. Additionally, they could spend their points on power-ups, such as asking the teachers for the correct answer or getting extra time to complete tasks. Ultimately, the student with the highest score won the title of "Amazing Phonetician" or "Granny's favorite" and received a medal (see Figure 18).

Figure 18*Medals*

Note. The figure shows the medals given to students at the end of the class on the first lesson.

In the third lesson, students were classified into heroes and villains. Each team had a different aim, while the villains were required to kill as many people as possible, the heroes were trying to save them. Therefore, heroes and villains were competing to be the best in each phonetic challenge to fulfil their objectives. For instance, to practice when to aspirate a plosive or when to shorten a vowel, villains were requested to set some explosives on the ten floors of the golden-green building (see Figure 19), while heroes had to deactivate them (see Figure 20).

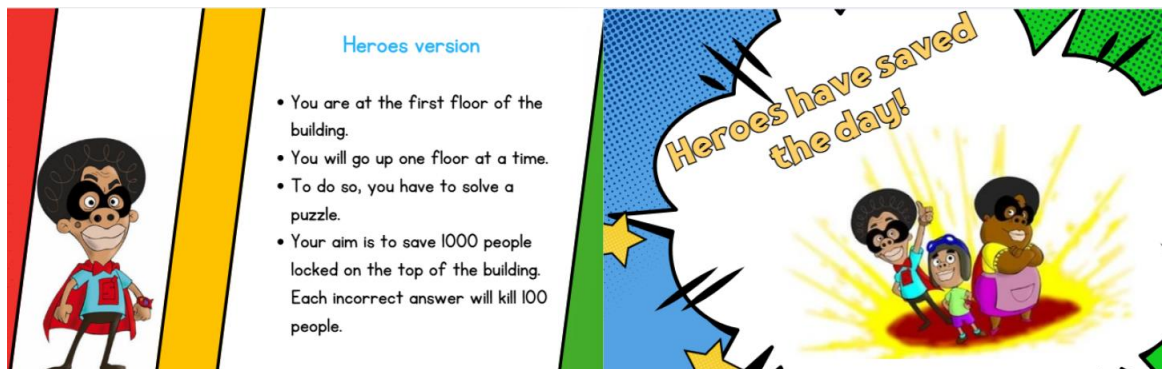
Figure 19*Villains' version*

Note. The figure illustrates the instructions given to the villain groups, and their winning slide.

Source: researchers' own design through Canva, 2024.

Figure 20

Heroes' version



Note. The figure explains the rules provided to the hero groups, and their winning slide. Source: researchers' own design through Canva, 2024.

In the sixth lesson, the students were competing to have the wealthiest pet in the classroom. Each student received a different pet from the teachers and had to answer questions about nasal phonemes. Correct answers allowed them to choose a random item for their pet, such as furniture, a house, or even a celebrity. If they answered incorrectly, another student had the chance to respond (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

Wealthiest Pet Items



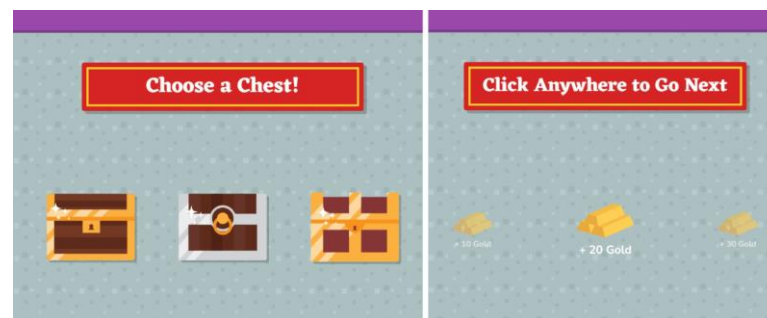
Note. The figure presents one of the pets given to the participants and one reward earned by a student to their pet. Source: Vecteezy (2024).

Considering rewards as an element integrated to the lessons, it is worth highlighting the gamified questionnaires in all the lessons, as well as the activities of “*Building a fancy house*” and “*The wealthiest pet*” in lessons one and six respectively. The gamified questionnaires

rewarded students with points per correct answer (see Figure 22). The participants were able to track their scores with a leaderboard on a T.V.; therefore, students could check their progress in real time and establish who was about to win. Taking the points given in the gamified questionnaire as a reward is an important aspect that was analyzed later on.

Figure 22

Chests and possible rewards

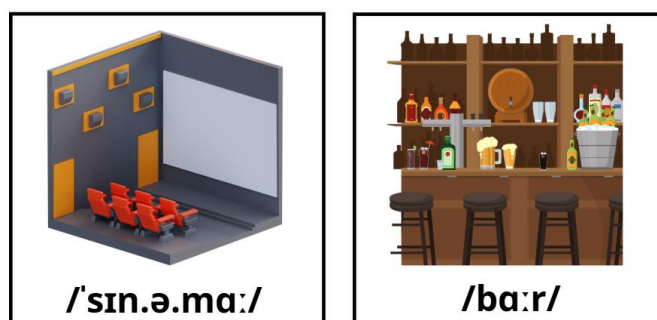


Note. The figure shows the possibility of choosing a chest when answering correctly, and the possible rewards from each chest. Source: Gamified Questionnaire Blooket (2024).

In lesson one, there were two moments in which the rewards were implemented. The first one was throughout the lesson; as explained before, when students completed an activity some points were given depending on the order of completion. In addition, students could spend those points on power ups such as checking the book for 30 seconds to review theory about the distribution of vowel sounds. The second moment was when developing the activity “*Building a fancy house*”. In this activity students formed three groups with the purpose of collecting as much furniture as possible for their houses (see Figure 23). In order to obtain some house elements, a member from each group was requested to be the first one to catch a ball; then, the one who caught the ball had to produce a word with minimal pairs or a vowel in isolation. If they answered correctly, they could choose a part of the house; if not, another group had the chance to respond. The activity continued until all house elements had been collected.

Figure 23

House elements



Note. The figure exemplifies some elements that could be won by the students. Source: Canva (2024).

In the sixth lesson, “*the wealthiest pet*” worked exactly as the previous activity. However, this time the participants played individually and the students had to transcribe in an allophonic way different words in order to get a piece of furniture, a building, a degree or a country for their pets. At the end, the pet with the most expensive objects would win the title of the wealthiest pet. In order to check some pictures about the activity, see figure 21.

At first look, it might seem that the purpose of the activities was entertaining the students rather than practicing English phonetics, but nothing further from reality. It is important to remember that gamification is applying game-like elements in class aiming to improve motivation, engagement, and understanding. The narrative, competition, and rewards are just disguises in order to make more appealing the development of regular production and transcription exercises. As a matter of fact, gamified questionnaires such as Blooket, Quizziz, and Kahoot, engage students in answering theoretical questions about various topics, the difference is that students gain some points per correct answer and compete against their classmates. As a result, they became more focused on earning as many points as possible and less aware that they were recalling information, which reduced the stress associated with traditional quizzes and enhanced motivation. Another example is *The Wealthiest Pet*. Although the main objective of the activity was to practice allophonic transcription, students were more focused on winning different items for their pets than on the potential difficulty of the task.

These two cases demonstrated that, even though mastering English phonetics requires extensive practice and traditional exercises such as production drills as well as transcription activities, it is possible to approach this topic through active learning methodologies that enhance students motivation and engagement while acquiring phonetics skills.

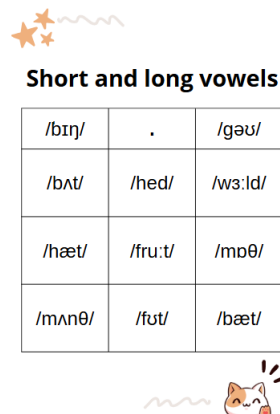
4.2.2 Implementation of Game-based learning

As aforementioned, gamification and game-based learning should not be used interchangeably. While gamification is understood as the implementation of game elements to reshape activities and provide a similar experience to games (Hakak, s. et al), game based-learning “applies games to facilitate learning rather than for entertainment purposes” (Noemí, 2014 as cited in Zhang, 2022). In line with this definition Zohari (2023) explains that game-based learning “utilizes a real game to transfer knowledge and skills. It possesses an independent unit with determined start, gameplay, and ending states.” (p.51). Put in another way, gamification focuses on using only game components to make an experience more engaging while game-based learning finds its core on adapting real-life games to educational settings where students can both learn and have fun.

Following this idea, game-based learning was implemented along the lessons with 8 different games. In the first lesson, students engaged in the game ‘*Bingo*’ where they had to listen to a word, identify whether it was a short or long vowel, and mark it to complete the card and scream Bingo (see Figure 24).

Figure 24

Granny's Bingo



Short and long vowels

/bɪŋ/	.	/gəʊ/
/bʌt/	/hed/	/wɜːld/
/hæt/	/fru:t/	/mʌθ/
/mʌnθ/	/fʊt/	/bæt/

Note. The figure shows one of the bingo cards implemented in the lesson. Source: Canva (2024).

Additionally, students were divided in teams and played ‘*Charades*’ to mimic the correct position of their articulators when producing a vowel and earned points if they guessed the phoneme correctly. This activity was enacted with the assistance of CharadesApp, a mobile game with customizable charades templates (see Figure 25).

Figure 25

Phonetic Charades



Note. The figure illustrates how the participants visualized the phonemes to mimic the articulation of the vowel so that the student who was guessing could produce the phoneme.

In the second lesson, learners worked in teams in the game ‘*Pictionary*’ drawing pictures representing words that sounded similar but had different phonemes in order to produce diphthongs and triphthongs. When the teams produced the words correctly, they had to produce a tongue-twister containing said words and the one who produced the tongue-twister the fastest won a special prize. For instance, the words proposed for the game were: beard, bird,

beer and bear. Moreover, the tongue twisters were created using those words such as: The bear with a beard drank a beer near a bird and birds with beards fear bears with beers.

Then, students took part in a 'Guess who' game where they recognized the characteristics of diphthongs and triphthongs while guessing the phoneme their partner had chosen. Each student was provided with a game card (See Figure 26) which contained twelve phonemes divided in diphthongs and triphthongs. Each player selected a phoneme, then they took turns to ask yes no questions regarding the characteristics of the diphthong or diphthong selected. At the end, the player with the most number of guessings won the match.

Figure 26

Guess who card

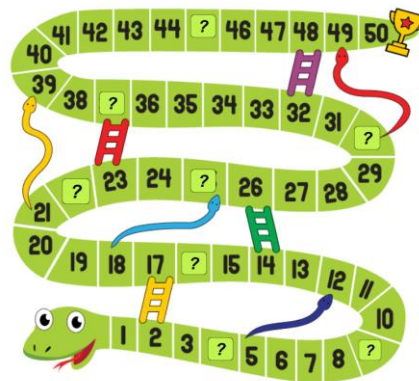


 		
/eɪ/	/ɪə/	/əʊ/
/eə/	/aʊ/	/aɪ/
/ɔɪ/	/ɔɪə/	/ʊə/
/əʊə/ /eə/	/aɪə/	/aʊə/
		

Note. The figure shows the game card that each student had as a guide to guess the phoneme.

Source: Canva (2024).

After that, they formed groups to play the well-known game 'Snakes and ladders' to enhance their production of diphthongs. Each square of the patch not only had numbers, but also some question marks (see Figure 27) which made students produce a Colombian saying with diphthongs and triphthongs in them.

Figure 27*Snakes and Ladders board*

Note. The figure illustrates the board game implemented. A curious remark is that students landed in the question marks more frequently than expected.

At the end of the lesson, students played ‘Uno’ with a phonetic requirement: each player held seven cards and could only throw a card that contained the same diphthong as the one on top of the discard pile. In addition, in order to play the cards the participants had to produce the words in the card, if the pronunciation was incorrect, they had to draw a card. The triphthong cards, which had the most difficult words, were the power ups and the rule of saying the word was also applied (see Figure 28).

Figure 28*Uno cards*

Note. The figure shows the diphthong cards as well as the triphthong power ups. Source: Canva (2024).


In the third lesson, there was not any game-based learning as it aimed to use gamification and situated learning. In the fourth lesson, learners engaged in an individual version of the game ‘*Beer Pong*’ where they bounced a ball to land on one cup with a secret spell containing labiodental and dental fricatives for students to produce. For instance: With fleeting breath, unveil the depth; Beneath the willow, find strength in the hollow; Through flickers and shades, awaken the blades.

In the fifth lesson, the participants played a ‘*Scavenger hunt*’ where they had to read some riddles in order to find two clues consisting of phonetic transcriptions. However, one of these clues was fake and students needed to identify which was the correct one to have access to the real information of a special murder case that was implemented along the class. Some of the clues given were: you use this to go to the fifth floor (sometimes it does not work); look behind the teachers explanation; if you have questions, you can ask her.

In the last lesson, learners participated once again in the game ‘*Bingo*’ which followed the same rules as mentioned in the first lesson. (see Figure 29)

Figure 29

Bingo card

 **Nasals and /l/**

/əlɒŋ/	/pətrəʊl/	/streŋθ/
/pet.rəl/	/bæŋ.gər/	/læmp/
/bæŋ.kər/	/læm/	/əɪmʌŋ/



Note. The figure represents the game card to play Bingo focusing on nasals and the phoneme /l/.

Source: Canva (2024).

On the whole, even though the games implemented have originally an entertainment purpose, they may be used as a stimulator for students' learning drive regarding Phonetics taking into account that it is possible to adapt them for educational motives. As it could be seen, regardless of the nature of the game: app game, board game, or card game, students could be engaged while playing them since they can be adjusted to different types of environments. Moreover, it is uncommon to mix gaming and education; therefore, when being exposed to these two factors at the same time students found an alternative to approach learning, especially considering topics with a high difficulty level.

4.2.3 Implementation of Situated learning

In language teaching, Santos (as cited in Chang et al., 2021) establishes that Situated learning highlights the importance of relating language learning to the physical, social and cultural features of the environment where it takes place; situating the students in a local context. However, as discussed in the theoretical framework, situated learning was interpreted in this study as a synonym of contextualized learning, which is understood as involving students' interests and social context in educational environments to overcome different problems or tasks (Jalilbayli, 2023). Under the premise of these two concepts, some Colombian elements were used in the six lessons in order to explore their impact on students' motivation when being used in phonetics instruction. The following table provides a summary of the Colombian elements integrated in each lesson:

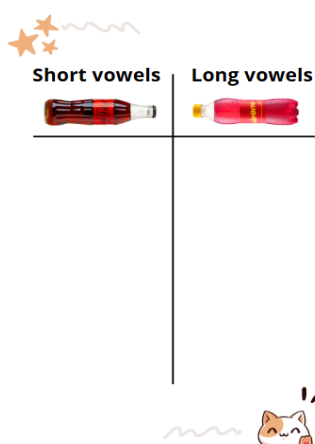
Table 4
Colombian elements integrated in each lesson

Lesson number	Colombian elements
1	- Characterizing long vowels as Kola Hipinto and short vowels as Coca Cola.
2	- Colombian sayings translations to English language.
3	- The host of the class was Profesor Super O, a famous Colombian TV character. - The use of a Colombian fish called cachama. - Different places from Bucaramanga were the scenarios of the activities.
4	- Granny played the role of a Colombian curandera - Monsters from video games
5	- Character from Colombian myths
6	- Implementing a karaoke with a setting of a famous TV show Called The Voice

In lesson one, students were requested to hand in famous sodas drunk in Colombia to the guests of Granny's Schwa party. To achieve this, long vowels were categorized as Kola Hipinto, while short vowels were represented as Coca Cola (see Figure 30). This exercise focused on vowel identification; therefore, students organized long vowels into one column and short vowels into a separate one.

Figure 30

Drinks Card

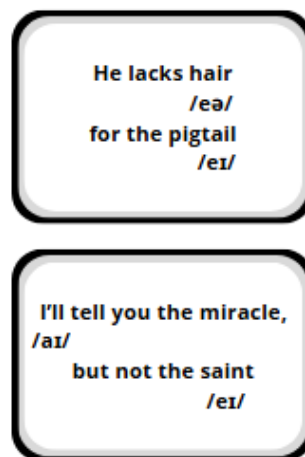


Note. The figure presents the worksheet in which students were required to classify vowels into short and long. Source: Canva (2024).

In the second lesson, in order to practice the production of diphthongs and triphthongs, while the participants were playing Snakes and ladders, they were requested to produce Colombian sayings in English (see Figure 31). An aspect to highlight is that the phrases were not equivalent in English, for instance: “le falta pelo para la moña” was translated to “He lacks hair for the pigtail” instead of finding a saying in English that has the same meaning.

Figure 31

Colombian Sayings



Note. The figure shows two different Colombian sayings with their corresponding diphthongs practiced. Source: Canva (2024).

In lesson number three, the narrative was guided by Profesor Super O, a character known for correcting Spanish grammar (see Figure 32). Additionally, the activities were set in places near Bucaramanga such as Girón, Piedecuesta and Cañaveral. For instance, the villains were about to blow up Girón with a massive bomb, and the only way to deactivate it was by discriminating correctly some phonemes (see Figure 33). Another example involved the Golden Green, a popular building in Bucaramanga, that was on fire; the heroes had to determine whether a vowel was shortened or not in order to save people from the flames. In that class,

there was also an activity that used a “cachama”, a colombian fish, in order to propose a narrative for a production activity (see Figure 34).

Figure 32

Profesor Super O introduction



Note. The figure shows how Profesor super O introduced himself to the students and his purpose in the class. Source: Canva (2024).

Figure 33

Saving Girón



Note. The figure shows how a massive bomb was supposed to explode at Girón park. Source: Canva (2024).

Figure 34

Granny Schwa and Profesor Super O

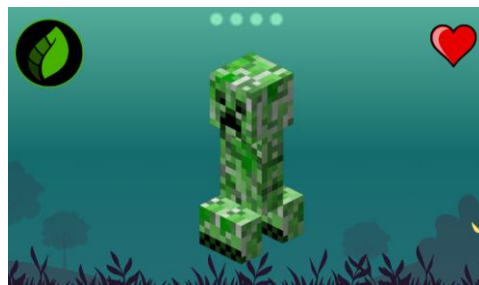


Note. The figure shows Profesor Super O having a delicious cachama with Granny Schwa. Source: Canva (2024).

In the fourth lesson, Granny Schwa came back again to host the class in the role of a curandera (see figure 14), who is a person that uses traditional plants to treat illnesses instead of modern medicine. Besides, in order to practice pronunciation, students were required to produce some words as if they were casting spells for the purpose of defeating some creatures. Those characters were pretty known monsters in the world of gaming, that despite not being Colombian they are part of students' social context (see Figure 35).

Figure 35

Defend the shelter monster



Note. The figure shows a slide containing a picture of a creeper, a famous monster from the video game Minecraft. Source: Canva (2024).

In the fifth lesson, someone murdered Granny Schwa and the students played the role of detectives who were spotting clues to solve the mystery. The possible murderers of Granny Schwa were characters of Colombian myths and legends such as “El hombre caiman” and “El mohan” (see Figure 36)

Figure 36

Suspects of murder



Note. The figure shows two well-known Colombian mythic creatures which are el Mohán and el Hombre Caimán. Source: Canva (2024).

In the sixth lesson, The participants took part in a famous Colombian TV show, *The Voice*, to practice pronunciation through singing. Each student chose a song containing nasal consonants, while three students acted as judges responsible for identifying any mistakes. The role of the judges rotated when a new participant had to sing. If the contestant sang all the consonants correctly, they would win the game; if not, the teachers provided an explanation along with a supportive message. See figure 17 in section 4.2.1 in order to check the possible songs and instructions of the activity.

Overall, situated learning was not implemented as a direct methodology for teaching phonetics, but rather as a strategy to enhance students' engagement and motivation in the classroom. For example, conducting lessons with *Profesor Súper O* or incorporating Colombian sayings to practice pronunciation aimed not only to support students' understanding of

phonetics, but also to create a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment in which students could laugh, make jokes, and feel at ease while being exposed to phonetics instruction.

4.2.4 Implementation of Collaborative learning

Before describing how collaborative learning was incorporated into the lessons, it is important to clarify that, although cooperation can be considered a game element, this research treated collaborative learning as an active learning methodology.

Collaborative learning seeks to fulfil learning objectives by engaging students to work cooperatively. In this sense, it facilitates an environment where students can discuss and share their perspectives about the topics being studied. In addition, more comfortable environments might be fostered so that classroom participation is improved (Yingling, 2018). This feature of boosting classroom participation is also reinforced by Lee (as cited in Qureshi , 2023), who states that collaborative learning involves students to participate and interact in a group environment, manage their relations as well as in developing content. In this order of ideas, collaborative learning was adopted on different tasks to increase students' motivation when learning phonetics throughout the lessons, with the exception of the fifth one which had no significant teamwork.

In the first lesson, students formed 3 teams in order to participate in different activities that would give them a certain amount of points depending if they finished in first, second, or third place. The purpose of incorporating teamwork was to encourage group members to support one another in completing the tasks. Additionally, a competitive element was introduced to give that collaboration a clear goal: to be the first team to complete the activity and earn the highest number of points.

The second lesson followed the same number of teams, however students played real-life games modified to phonetic settings. This time, instead of forming groups to support each

other, the participants were required to make groups to play different games such as Uno, Snakes and Ladders, and Guess Who.

In the third lesson, students answered a gamified questionnaire in order to be divided into two teams: one for villains and the other one for superheroes. Each team had a different narrative for the activities and competed against each other. Heroes team had to support each other to complete the activities correctly so that they could save as many people as possible; while villains had to support themselves while developing the activities in order to kill as many people as possible. Most of the proposed activities were carried out in groups, which were formed with the purpose of encouraging students to engage in discussions to find the correct answers.

In the fourth lesson, students had to play beer pong in order to belong to a coven which consisted of a pair of students. Each coven had to complete certain activities during the lesson, however they did not compete against other covens. In this lesson, although each student had their own worksheet, teamwork was encouraged so that those who needed support with transcription and discrimination exercises could compare their answers with classmates and receive peer feedback.

In the sixth lesson, there was not any mandatory group work, however students started collaborating with their peers when they needed feedback or seemed unsure with their answers.

All-in-all, at the beginning of the implementation students were not used to collaborating with their partners to fulfil phonetic tasks. Nevertheless, while the classes were being developed and the participants were required to interact with their partners, they started to raise awareness of the importance of engaging in discussions to share their thoughts on the possible answers. In the sixth lesson, it was observed that although students were not asked to work in teams, they started to provide peer feedback as a result of their own decisions. This behavioral shift suggests that collaborative learning had a positive impact on the participants,

as it fostered greater interaction and participation during phonetics instruction. Ultimately, the progress made by the students shows the potential that collaborative learning has to enhance phonetics understanding along with developing a more supportive environment.

4.3 Third objective results

In regards of the third and last objective of the research study: “To assess the impact of active learning methodologies on the motivation levels of first-semester students taking the class *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés* at Universidad Industrial de Santander”; students' behaviors were analyzed throughout the lessons using a field note format, alongside with the responses gathered from two focus groups. Each group participated in a separate semi-structured interview guided by the researchers.

To collect this final set of data, participants were divided into two focus groups: one composed of students who considered themselves introverts, and the other of those who identified as extroverts. This division was based on the researchers' observations during the lessons, where some students were more inclined to participate, comment, and laugh, while others appeared to adopt a more passive role. However, it was later found that students who seemed serious or uninterested were enjoying the class in their own way.

In short, the collected information from the field notes and the focus groups was triangulated aiming to analyze the impact of active learning methodologies on students' motivation levels towards the class *Introducción a la Fonética Articulatoria del Inglés*. Each analysis was carried out per active learning methodology as in the description of the second objective.

4.3.1 Impact of Gamification

As aforementioned in the analysis of the second objective, the gamification elements integrated to the development of the lessons were competition, rewards, and narrative. The

impact in the motivation levels of the participants of each gamification feature was carried out individually.

4.3.1.1 Competition

Considering competition, it was observed from the field notes formats and the semi-structured interviews that this aspect of the gamification provides more advantages than disadvantages. In fact, only one participant reported a negative experience related to competition; therefore, it does not outweigh the overall benefits that this element provides. The following table presents both the advantages and the single disadvantage observed.

Table 5

Advantages and disadvantages in competition

Advantages	Disadvantage
Making students more focused	Overly competitive environment
Engaging students in the class	
Increasing interest in the topics	

Regarding students' attention it was identified in the field notes that students were more focused on the activities when the competitive factor was present. Aligning with this benefit Qub'a, A. *et al* (2024) conducted a research study to explore the effects of gamification in students' academic performance when acquiring English language skills. It was found out that "the use of game elements, interactive activities, and immersive experiences captivates students' attention, fosters a sense of achievement, and promotes active participation in the learning process" (p.433).

The effect of gamification in students' attention was evident when answering the gamified questionnaire (Blooket), as they were not only focused on answering questions but also were interested in checking their position on the leaderboard. It is worth highlighting

students were motivated to answer the gamified questionnaire, as knowledge wasn't essential to lead the leaderboard thanks to power-ups like point swapping.; in other words, the student who answered correctly all the questions was not the only one with the possibility to win. Besides, the questions were repeated more than once, which allowed students to not fear making mistakes taking into account that they could correct themselves later while still having the chance to win.

The importance of not focusing only on the competition in terms of knowledge was visualized through the implementation of a different gamified questionnaire where it was not possible to repeat all of the questions nor to swap points, hence, it was not only penalized failing in answering the questions, but also the students were not focused or more interested in participation in the activity. This information can be triangulated with the semi structured interviews, as P11 stated:

“Con el juego de blooquet es buenísimo, tiene muchas variaciones. Entonces aún así uno puede repasar con teoría con esos juegos y se queda bien guardado en la memoria, entonces es muy importante y de hecho uno a veces comete errores pues uno ahí practica mucho.” (P11)

Taking into account that the current research follows the principles of McNiff and Whitehead vision of action research, which states that any process (planning, acting, observing, and reflecting) can be carried out at any moment; at the end of each lesson the participants' perceptions of the class were asked anonymously in order to modify the following lessons. It is crucial to comprehend that such information was gathered anonymously since the authors did not want to put any pressure on the participants; in addition, as it is anonymous the comments are not categorized with the “P” code. These thoughts were collected in both pieces

of paper and online forms. From students perspectives can be said that gamified questionnaire aided them to:

“Me agrada el hecho de competir y quedar en el primer lugar. Lo ayuda a aclarar conceptos, me gusta el booklet pq hay retroalimentación. Repetir las preguntas me ayuda a retener el concepto.”

Another benefit of competition is students’ engagement in the class. For instance, when developing the activity “building a fancy house”, It was identified that competition increased students' participation towards the tasks. This aligns with the case study of Garcia *et al.* (2020), where the majority of the participants were interested in climbing the leaderboard and a significant percentage were interested in beating an already known player during production activities, thus evidencing how using competition during said activities enhanced students’ participation and engagement in the class. The cruciality of this feature may be demonstrated, as well, when the aspect of competing against other teams was temporarily removed and it was given priority to practicing the production of phonemes and some students started to use their cellphone and were not paying attention to their classmates. However, when the competition was added again they got rid of their phones and paid close attention to how their classmates developed the activity. This information can be complemented by the response of P1 in the semi-structured interview along with some participants’ perceptions of the same class where “Building a fancy house” was developed:

“En mi caso a mí me gustó mucho el juego que incluía la competencia, pues no sé como que me motivaba a estar a la par de mis compañeros.” (P1)

“Really comfortable, excited, and with desire of learn.” (sic)

“Great, I think this is what classes need, because it can get to boring a traditional class, so, it’s fun to learn in a different way.” (sic)

“I felt pretty joyful, really dynamic and enjoyable, you learn in a cool way.” (sic)

Regarding the use of competition to increase students' interest in class, it is worth noting that students expressed a desire to engage in gamified transcription activities when competing with their classmates. It is also important to consider that transcription is often perceived as a challenging phonetic feature; however, some participants reported that the difficulty of the task motivated them to improve their skills and deepen their knowledge.

The effectiveness of competition in fostering interest in complex tasks has also been supported by previous research. For instance, Shroff *et al.* (2020) conducted a study to examine how varying levels of difficulty impact understanding, engagement, and motivation in learning English phonetics. Participants used a gamified app in which completing activities unlocked progressively more challenging tasks. The results showed that students were motivated not only to reinforce their knowledge of articulatory phonetics but also to tackle more complex exercises and climb the leaderboard by challenging their peers.

This information is reinforced by the responses of P11 during the semi-structured interview and certain students' perspectives during the the gamified transcription exercises carried out on the third lesson:

“Creo que las que eran de transcripción más que todo, que es muy importante para fonética, obviamente, pues ustedes las hacían muy didácticas claramente, ya sea con canciones, escuchando, pues uno como que tenía esa competitividad a veces de encontrarla más rápido.” (P11)

“La última (escuchar y transcribir) me parece un ejercicio muy retador que repasa todo lo que hemos visto y creo que aprendí bastante con esta actividad.”

As it is evidenced in the previous students' comments, competition aids students to develop their learning drive during complex phonetics components such as transcription; besides, it facilitates learners to complete this type of exercises that usually would lead students to develop a reluctant feeling to learn phonetics as mentioned in the contextualization.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, a single disadvantage throughout the implementation of the lessons was identified. It might happen that depending on the activity, the environment could get overly competitive. As a consequence, some students could get anxious, or think that the activities are aggressive. This aspect was analyzed from students' comments of the classes and one of the focus groups.

“No me gustó el juego de las granadas, creo que pasó a ser competitividad un poco tóxica e incluso agresiva.”

“Lo que no me gustaba mucho era cuando nos ponían como en competencia, o sea como unos contra otros, no me gustaba eso porque me hacía sentir muy ansiosa, pero de resto todo estaba muy bien” (P9)

With the aim of providing some reflective thoughts in competition, it can be stated that competition improves motivation in the sense that it enhances students' attention, engagement and interest in learning English phonetics. This feature of gamification can turn difficult tasks such as memorizing complex concepts into engaging dynamics. For instance, when carrying out a gamified questionnaire, students do not have in mind that the goal of the activity is to answer questions correctly, but to earn points to climb a leader board. Another example would be when practicing transcription while enacting the activity *The Wealthiest Pet*. Students do

not consider that the main objective of the task is to write perfect allophonic transcription, but to have the pet with the major amount of belongings. Furthermore, while competition can carry some disadvantages, these are not significant enough to disregard the use of such game element. Understanding students beforehand allows teachers to design competitive activities that foster motivation without creating a disengaging or overly intense environment.

4.3.1.2 Rewards

Following the gamification features to highlight, it is possible to mention that rewards have an ambivalent behaviour to students, they might bring positive and negative aspects to the learning process. On the favorable perspective, rewards motivate students to finish different types of activities such as answering questions, reviewing theory, transcribing or producing words. However, it is worth mentioning that throughout the lessons, rewards were not focused on grades nor getting extra credits for the subject; students would get prizes by the Blooket itself (a gamified questionnaire), and the participants would get significant objects according to the narrative of the activity. For instance, when developing “building a fancy house” and “the wealthiest pet”, students would get a piece of furniture for their mansions or a country for their pets (see figure 21, 22, 23). The approval of such a way to implement the rewards are not only in the field notes format, but also in the participants' responses on how those prizes impacted them in the way they felt while carrying out the activities.

“Pues a mí lo personal sí, sí me motiva porque era como algo que íbamos a recibir si cumplíamos la actividad la hacíamos correctamente y pues a mí sí me gustaba.” (P2)

“A mí cada clase me motivó, la verdad, o sea, siempre siempre me motivó porque o sea, siempre es como los tipos de actividades que más me gustan, como recibir algo por lo que estoy haciendo, entonces trato de hacer lo mejor para recibir ese premio.”

Entonces pues siento que aprendo eh a confiar en mí más que todo y poder obtener estos premios. Entonces es como una motivación extra.” (P11)

Even though some students were motivated by the rewards during the activities, others manifested how they did not feel driven by them and instead, they were engaged in acquiring knowledge. Additionally, few participants mentioned that rewards made them feel pressured to finish the activity in the lowest amount of time in order to obtain it, leading them to focus more on the reward rather than developing the activity consciously. These drawbacks on rewards were stated by two participants during the semi-structured interviews:

“Pues siento que más que confianza... no era tanto por el premio, sino por pues el hecho de saber que es pues estoy haciéndolo bien y pues que estoy o si me queda algo mal, pues que estoy mejorando en hacerlo. No es tanto cuestión del premio, sino del aprendizaje” (P12)

“Pues la verdad yo no soy muy fan de eso porque siento que no sé, nos da como un tipo de presión porque es como que, no, pues si no lo hago bien o no lo hago rápido no voy a obtener el premio. O sea, en algunos casos, pues porque en otras pues sí uno ya se sentía como más motivado o algo así, pero pues la mayoría de las veces...me ejercía como un tipo de presión porque no, hazlo bien y hazlo más que todo bien rápido, porque si lo haces rápido vas a conseguir el premio. Entonces, como que no me daba el tiempo suficiente de pensar y procesar todo para hacer la actividad y uno pues al final solo quería el premio y no como tal hacerlo bien.” (P9)

From the data analysis, it can be concluded that, in order to minimize the ambivalent effects of rewards and ensure their positive impact, it is essential to carefully plan when to implement them and clearly define their purpose within the activity. Analyzing first the positive impact, participants stated that rewards served as motivational elements that boosted their

interest in completing tasks. They perceived receiving a prize for correctly completing an activity as a motivating factor to continue engaging in future exercises. The use of rewards as external motivators has also been supported by previous research. For instance, Sigalingging *et al.* (2023) carried out a research study to determine the impact of rewards in elementary schools. They found out “that rewards serve as effective extrinsic motivators that encourage students to strive for excellence in their academic pursuits. In this context, rewards act as immediate positive reinforcements, reinforcing the connection between effort, achievement, and recognition” (p.9).

However, the negative effects of rewards must also be considered. It is important to clearly communicate both the purpose of the task and the role of the reward. From the view of Sigalingging *et al.* (2023) involving rewards to activities that students would find motivating already can cause that “Students may begin to focus on the rewards themselves, rather than the learning process or the inherent satisfaction derived from mastering a skill or acquiring knowledge” (p.5). The previous argument was reflected in students' comments, where they stated that they wanted to develop the activities in order to acquire phonetics knowledge; however, when implementing rewards in an activity that they were already motivated to do, students started to feel like if they did not gather enough rewards they were failing in their learning process.

To sum up, when aiming to increase students' motivation through the use of rewards, it is essential to assess the extent to which students require external stimuli to enhance their engagement. On the one hand, If students are already interested in the task, it may be more effective to avoid implementing a reward system. However, if rewards are to be used, it is crucial to clarify that these prizes are not linked to academic success nor are they the main objective of the activity. This helps ensure that students maintain focus on learning. On the

other hand, if students show low motivation toward completing the task, a reward system can be a useful strategy to boost engagement. Nevertheless, it is equally important to preserve the learning focus and avoid creating pressure or anxiety that may hinder the educational experience.

4.3.1.3 Narrative

Regarding the narrative aspect of gamification, it was found out that implementing such element in the class enhanced students' motivation and interest in the class. This result is in accordance with a research study conducted by Hien and Phuong (2024) in which they delved into the implementation of storytelling to enhance students' speaking skills. The authors considered storytelling as “use of stories or narratives as a communication tool to value, share, and capitalize on the knowledge of individuals” (as cited in Ohler, 2013). In this sense, despite using the concept of storytelling, it is accepted the use of narratives also to contextualize the teaching process. Hien and Phuong (2024) determined that “storytelling technique transforms a boring classroom into an engaging environment full of student attentiveness, participation, and productivity” (p.8). In this order of ideas, it can be stated that involving different narratives to English phonetics teaching enhances students' motivation, engagement and participation. However, it is important to highlight that not all narratives affect students' motivation in the same way. For instance, participant P11 and P9 expressed that implementing a narrative is an engaging element that boosts the learning process; besides, they stated that it was intriguing to be under the expectation of what was going to be the next narrative:

“Buena, pues creo que estoy muy de acuerdo también con P9. Todos esos tipos de juegos son muy didácticos para aprender la materia y algo muy original de ustedes fue Granny, obviamente. Entonces eso fue como el plus que le dio ahí a las clases.”
(P11)

“Pues a mí en general me gustaron todas las temáticas. Era emocionante como esperar... como la expectativa de cuál temática iba a ser la siguiente clase y pues a mí me gustaba mucho eso.” (P9)

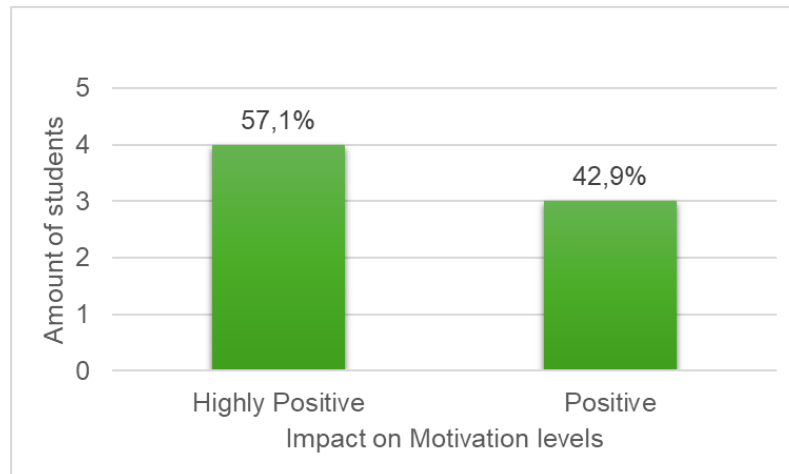
Meanwhile, student P12, who was perceived by the authors as shy and chose to participate in the introverts group during the semi-structured interview, got pretty engaged when the Halloween narrative was implemented.

“La verdad me gustaron mucho las temáticas y los personajes. Me gustó mucho la que hicieron en los días de Halloween donde pues le pusieron una temática como de brujería, hechicería y otras cosas. Siento que fue muy didáctico e interesante y la verdad ahora sí fue una muy buena clase y muy buena idea.” (P12)

In fact, within the participants' comments of lesson four and lesson six (which it did not have a general narrative), it was determined that 57,1% of the students stated that implementing a general narrative affects their motivation highly positively; whereas 71,4% of them expressed that varying the narrative in the same class improved their motivation levels. In addition, the remaining 42,9% of the general narrative, and the 28,6% established that their motivation was not affected highly positively, but just positively; which is still a favorable response towards the implementation of the narratives. The following graphic illustrates this variation:

Figure 37

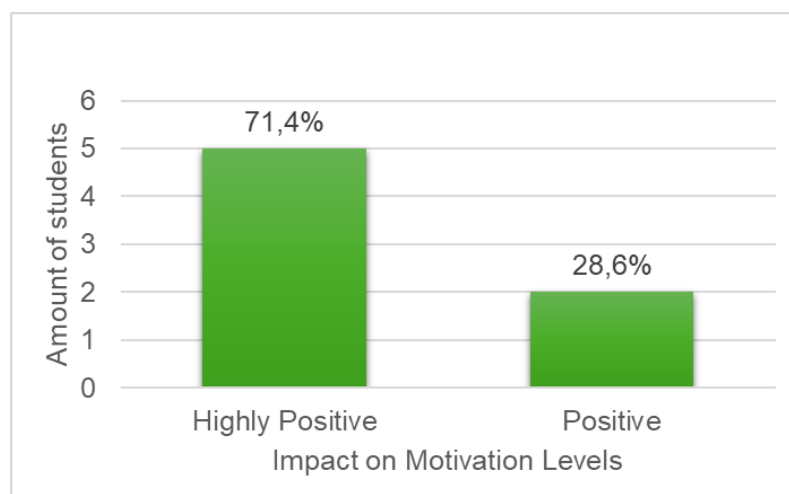
General Narrative throughout the lesson



Note. The figure represents the percentages of students who had a highly positive and positive impact on their motivation levels when using a general narrative along the lesson. Source: Google Forms Questionnaire (2024)

Figure 38

Varying Narrative on each activity



Note. The figure illustrates the percentages of students who had a highly positive and positive impact on their motivation levels when varying the narrative on each activity. Source: Google Forms Questionnaire (2024)

The variation in the percentages between using a general narrative or varying it in each activity found its core on the participants' comments in lesson six. It is worth mentioning that in the previous five classes it was implemented a general narrative throughout the whole lesson; therefore, this lesson varied themes in each activity with the purpose of analyzing participants' reactions towards this feature. The following comments illustrates the previous statements:

“lo hace menos mecánico y más interesante”

“Le agregan un toque de dinamismo y diversión a la actividad que se aprende”

“Es más didáctico y divertido”

“Me da emoción saber cual es la siguiente temática”

“Ayuda a hacer la clase más didáctica”

It is important to remember that since those responses were taken from the participants' comments of lesson 6, they were not categorized with the “P” code.

Taking into consideration the whole analysis from competition to narrative, it can be stated that indeed, gamification is an active learning methodology that enhances students' motivation to study English phonetics. First, the competition aspect brings about engaging dynamics to traditional exercises. For instance, instead of performing drillings in isolation, why not turn producing words into a competition in which for each correct phoneme produced, the student kills a monster; at the end, the students who killed the most creatures would win. Moreover, the competition feature can be complemented with rewards. If students might seem to need extra stimuli, external motivation with some candies or just a stamp with a happy face along with a supportive message would provide enough interest to the student to start trying to develop phonetics tasks. Finally, contextualizing each exercise with an engaging narrative

would draw students' attention to the explanation and performance of the activities. Going back to the killing monsters example, once the class begins the teacher can establish the environment by suggesting that at the moment of getting to the classroom everyone was teleported to a dimension where there are monsters everywhere, and the only way to survive is producing or transcribing words.

4.3.2 Impact of Game-based learning

In order to analyze the impact in motivation of game-based learning, games such as snakes and ladders, UNO, Guess who, and beer pong were adapted so that students could practice some phonetics skills. A general view of the impact in motivation was conducted rather than explaining games in isolation.

To begin with, it was observed in lesson two, which was the class that game-based learning was implemented the most, that some students got deeply engaged in the games that they did not want to stop playing them. In addition, the proposed games were familiar to the participants, thus the game mechanics were not necessary to explain since students already knew what to do. This was not the case of the research conducted by Łodzikowski and Jekiel (2019) where the authors themselves mentioned that a disadvantage of their study was the time needed to familiarize students with the game settings. As it could be seen, it is important to implement well-known games in the classes so that students can focus on the phonetic practice rather than understanding the game's dynamics.

Some responses from the semi-structured interview exemplified how the participants experienced game-based learning; moreover, their answers show a positive impact in their motivation levels:

“Creo que mi favorito fue snakes and ladders porque siento que ya estamos acostumbrados. Todos ya eran juegos que conocíamos y que fueron adaptados a la clase. Pero en un especial recuerdo que el snakes and ladders fue el más difícil entre comillas, porque en lugar de palabras ponían oraciones completas, entonces siento que eso lo hacía más desafiante” (P12)

“Pues a mí gustó mucho ver el UNO porque es como un clásico para nosotros, o sea, pues a mí me gusta mucho y me pareció muy original la manera en la que lo hicieron” (P2)

“A mí me gustó mucho el bingo porque pues en el bingo era más que todo listening, ¿no? Entonces, ahí uno se ponía como muy a prueba porque pues habían palabras transcritas que era la misma palabra entre comillas, pero tenían algún error o algo así, entonces será total nuestra responsabilidad o nuestro entendimiento para saber dónde, o sea, qué palabra se había pronunciado. Entonces, me gustaba mucho eso porque era como ponernos a prueba en el listening y luego mirar si nos había quedado bien o mal y luego descubrir, si nos quedó mal descubrir en qué habíamos fallado y pues la verdad ese me llamó bastante la atención.” (P9)

“Más que ser un concepto de gustar o no gustar con la habilidad que se estuviera trabajando, el simple hecho de que hubiera una dinámica por así decirlo interesante para aprender ese factor de alguno u otro modo ya sea por cuestiones personales o de gusto pues hacía como el tema interesante y más en los casos que no estaba tan reforzado.” (P8)

As a matter of exemplifying the assistance of game-based learning, there was a critical moment where the class got delayed due to technical problems and when the class could finally begin, the students seemed tired and bored. However, after playing Blooket and introducing

the narrative, the students were requested to play Beer Pong in order to create the groups in which they were going to work. This game caused students to show interest and demonstrate initiative when being involved in the narrative and in the activities. In addition, even though the game might be a little bit difficult in terms of ability, the participants got excited every time that a student got their first shot right.

All-in-all, to connect students with previous joyful experiences such as playing well-known games aided not only to improve motivation levels when developing an activity, but also boosted engagement and encouraged students to complete activities. Something to highlight is that since the games were familiar to the participants, simply mentioning that the class activities involved playing popular games was enough to motivate them.

Furthermore, carrying out game-based learning with familiar games provided an opportunity to dedicate more time to phonetics teaching since it eased giving the instructions to students regarding the dynamics. This was not the case on neither the Voreopoulou, *et al.* (2024) research project nor Shirmardi, *et al* (2022) study where students were required to dedicate a considerable amount of time to understand how to address the dynamic or special support to get acquainted with the proposed educational games. In addition, as learners did not need to focus on the game settings, they were allowed to show agency while participating in the games as they checked their notes or the book when having doubts. For this reason, it is possible to see how using games that students are familiar with allows them to focus on the learning aspect of the activity which is enhancing their phonetics skills.

4.3.3 Impact of Situated learning

Before analyzing the impact of situated learning in students' motivation, it is important to bear in mind that this research considered contextualized learning as a synonym for the

mentioned methodology. In this sense, implementing students' social context to the class was the main strategy to integrate situated learning to phonetics teaching.

Situated learning within the classes was integrated by implementing Colombian context such as celebrities, sayings, places, buildings, TV shows, and myths characters; besides, others implemented features were elements from the students' context such as memes, musicians, monsters, and songs. Taking into account the field notes observation, it can be stated that situated learning improved the participants' motivation levels since involving famous singers such as Maluma, Ozuna, or Diomedes Díaz, while playing "The Voice Phonetics" creates an engaging environment where the students not only practiced production of sounds, but also could have fun and enjoy themselves while being exposed to the linguistic aspects. Suadiyatno et al. (2020) conducted a study aimed at reducing students' anxiety when speaking English. The participants were exposed to contextualized learning, which involved designing lesson plans that validated students' personal experiences and social contexts as part of the language learning process. The authors found that this approach not only helped lower students' anxiety when speaking English, but also contributed to improved academic performance.

Following the implementation of Colombian culture in phonetics class, learners were not familiar with some aspects of their culture, for instance, when practicing production with Colombian sayings, most of the students did not even know what they were expressing. However, when realizing the meaning of the phrases, the students were longing to discover more Colombian sayings. As a result, they experienced both a growth in their phonetic skills and cultural knowledge. This feature of raising awareness of students' culture by enacting situated learning was also found by the researcher Safri, K. (2022) where after exposing students to Youtube short-form content. This exposure was referred as Edutainment and students developed their knowledge both in an academic and a reflective way. Not only did students engage in their phonetics classes, but also they went beyond their academic

performance and developed reflections regarding culture, history, humor, ethics, and psychology aspects. Some answers on the semi-structured interview illustrate this positive impact on their motivation levels:

“Pues, la verdad, a mi sí me gustó porque nos sentimos un poco más conectados porque básicamente conocemos esas cosas. Entonces sí, lo motiva a uno.” (P14)

“Pues sí, la verdad como que despierta curiosidad e interés.” (P1)

“esos tipos de elementos como que hacen más llamativo lo que se está practicando en esa clase, en esa actividad. De alguno u otro modo pues teniendo los recursos de las personas siempre los harás más interesante o menos interesante, pero siempre habrá una que otra risa” (P8)

“La verdad sí, claramente ¿Quién no quisiera ganarse un Maluma?. Pero entonces pues es como esa combinación entre lo colombiano, el contexto entre lo que tenemos acá y lo que es el inglés como fonética. También es algo muy importante y aparte de la motivación que claramente pueda dar, claro que eso depende de la persona, pero pues en mi caso me dio motivación, pues es muy divertido, la verdad, asocia mucho a lo que uno puede estar viviendo en el día a día, entonces pues es lo que uno conoce entonces es muy interesante ver ese tipo de actividades.” (P11)

Another aspect to consider regarding situated learning was that students got familiarized with the classroom elements. In this sense, not only the class got funnier and more engaging but also students got the opportunity to get an insight on how to implement the phonetics aspects on a daily basis. For example, when playing “The Voice: Phonetics” students could easily identify diphthongs in words they did not recognize before, improving both their

discrimination and production skills. It is worth mentioning that getting to know the students beforehand is crucial to design an appropriate situated learning class, since some students may be very shy to get engaged with the setting. The following students' responses from the semi-structured interview exemplified the positive impact of situated learning along with the necessity of adjusting the class dynamics:

“Pues a mi me gustó que fueran unas cosas más como familiares con nosotros.

También le da un no sé, un toque más gracioso a la clase” (P3)

“Para mí pues esas actividades me hicieron útiles porque pues me ayudaron como a asociar en qué se puede usar la fonética en contextos reales, en la vida diaria y sí, la verdad se me hizo muy bien eso y como que todo era muy dinámico y muy divertido, entonces no en ningún momento se me hizo aburrido” (P2)

“Bueno, siento que no fue malo, pero siento que no era para todos. Era el de el último que hicimos que era el de la voz. No sé si cuenta como juego. Porque siento que no es tanto para personas más tímidas, más introvertidas, pues a muchos les da mucha vergüenza hablar y por lo tanto pues cantar frente a sus compañeros.

Entonces no es un mal juego, pero siento que no es para todos” (P12)

To summarize, situated learning improves students' motivation as learners are engaged in familiar environments that boosts their participation, interest, and curiosity regarding both phonetic abilities and Colombian culture. For instance, students were not expected to watch a D1 store as a phonetics learning tool, nor received a Maluma picture as a prize for providing a correct allophonic transcription of a word. Additionally, it provides a safe environment where students are allowed to have fun, make jokes, and laugh while enjoying the learning process. It is recommended to carry out a needs analysis of the classroom to get to know students interests to prepare an effective situated learning environment. In this order of ideas, situated

learning is a methodology that focuses on enhancing, motivation, engagement, attention, and participation in class. However, in order to foster a better understanding of phonetics it should be complemented with other active learning methodologies. It is worth highlighting that this research was focused on increasing students' motivation; therefore, it is still a valid methodology to be enacted.

4.3.4 Impact of Collaborative learning

Throughout the lessons, collaborative learning was integrated by grouping students to develop the activities. This dynamic was applied with the purpose of fostering collaboration within the students bearing in mind that the participants were in the first semester of the program; therefore, they were not acquainted with each other. This follows Yingling (2018) vision of collaborative learning as reserved students are given an amicable environment where they may participate and engage comfortably. In this sense, the main outcome from the implementation of this methodology was students' initiative to support each other, in other words, peer feedback. The relevance of peer feedback was expressed by some participants during the semi-structured interview:

“Pues yo creo que es superimportante porque siempre pues quizás nosotros no sabemos mucho y quizás los otros sí saben lo que a nosotros nos falta. Entonces pues siempre es importante el trabajo en grupo, tener en cuenta las opiniones de los demás y pues con eso siempre se puede aprender muchísimo más” (P11)

“La retroalimentación también me gustó mucho porque puede ser que me haya equivocado, pero con eso ya me quedaba más claro y lo tenía en cuenta. Incluso me quedaban grabadas las cosas más cuando me equivocaba y después lo corregía pues que cuando ya estaba bien” (P1)

“Pues creo que estuvo bien. Siendo que a veces sí necesitamos como una especie de crítica constructiva pues para poder mejorar cualquier cosa en lo que estemos fallando.” (P12)

“sí siento que fue diferente. Pues en las clases tradicionales con el profe, era un aprendizaje pasivo en el que simplemente aprendíamos conceptos y ya. No había mucha participación por parte del estudiante. Y bueno el hecho de poderse equivocar, participar y equivocarse pues siento que me ayudó mucho, y en un ambiente, así como de juego como no de notas, como relajada” (P1)

It is worth mentioning, this peer feedback was not only developed by students when it was mandatory for the activities, but also it was a spontaneous and voluntary initiative during individual tasks. In this order of ideas, the feedback process was taken as an important feature in the phonetic learning path as students abandoned their shy attitude and began searching for support. In this sense, students not only sought assistance in their notes, books, or the professor itself, but also in their peers, which allowed them to view how intellectual growth goes hand in hand with the support of others who are facing the same learning process.

“Pues a mí al principio se me hacía algo extraño, pero ya poco a poco como que eh entendí Empecé a tener más confianza y pues entendí que es para nosotros mejorar poco a poco y así” (P2)

“Pues a mí sí me motivaba la verdad. Cuando un compañero entiende y yo no, pues me parece que, si él entiende yo también puedo, incluso me puede ayudar. Que me enseñe su estrategia para aprenderlo” (P1)

“Respondiendo la pregunta anterior, pues siento que realmente me motivaba más que digamos mis amigos y compañeros alrededor entendieran para ese intercambio de conocimientos. Digamos que yo no sepa algo, y él entiende algo que yo no entiendo. Digamos que diferentes perspectivas pueden llenar ese vacío de conocimiento que nos hacía falta.” (P8)

On the whole, the main aspect that improves learning engagement and motivation in collaborative learning was peer feedback, taking into account that students perceive exchanging ideas with their partners as a means of growing their phonetic skills. Another feature that demonstrates how collaborative learning enhances motivation in phonetics classes is that it provided an engaging environment that gave the opportunity to shy students to start exchanging thoughts and ideas with their partners. This is crucial not only in a motivational aspect but also in academic growth taking into consideration that participants are in the first-semester in the program and interacting with their peers will give them a chance to become well-rounded professionals who are willing to collaborate and build knowledge.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, active learning methodologies such as gamification, game-based learning, situated learning, and collaborative learning foster motivation to learn English phonetics by giving an active role to students, validating social context as a teaching tool, and turning traditional strategies such as drillings into engaging dynamics. In order to promote an active role among students, it was given the possibility for students to comment and reflect on the teaching practices in regards to their engagement in the class; Therefore, they had a voice in their learning process. In this sense, the teachers could apply the necessary changes in order to keep engaged learners during the class. Moreover, contextualizing the activities with familiar elements to the students, creates an engaging and comfortable environment where students not only acquire phonetics skills, but also have fun while doing so. This comes as

something crucial since learners visualize the topic of Phonetics as something difficult; hence, if they are having fun and engaged while developing the activities their stress and anxiety levels will lower. Additionally, active learning methodologies provide an opportunity to disguise common phonetic exercises such as producing, transcribing, and discriminating as games or see their use in real life settings so that students are more engaged and willing to develop class tasks.

Before enacting active learning methodologies in first semester students, it was determined that the participants were motivated already to study phonetics, yet it was out of intrinsic curiosity as it was a new subject for them. Even though learners assured they were motivated based on the questionnaire results, their behaviors and interactions showed the contrary, they were restrained, static, and not willing to study phonetics by themselves. For this reason, active learning methodologies were suggested to increase students' motivation from the idea of enhancing the learning environment in terms of giving an active role, promoting students interaction, and a different way to approach phonetics skills acquisition. It is important to remember that some advantages of enacting such methodologies were facilitating learning through collaboration, promoting learner-centered classes, increasing students' self-efficacy, fostering long-term comprehension of the contents, and encouraging positive behaviours. After having implemented all the lessons, it was established that students got motivated, this time not just for a curious feeling towards something new, but because of a real engagement and enjoyment towards being exposed to phonetics instruction. Although students may have not expressed explicitly to be extremely motivated, their own voice gave a clear example of their motivation as they defined their experience as something more appealing, more didactic, less mechanical, and something they can connect with.

It is important to highlight that it was found out that active learning methodologies assist creating interesting mechanics where students perceive learning as something fun.

Moreover, if learners require some external stimuli to develop the activities, gamification provides the opportunity to include rewards that may work as an encouragement for a proper work. Furthermore, enacting game-based learning allows the teacher to reduce time to explain activities taking into account that students would be familiarized with the dynamics; therefore, the academic purpose would be the main focus of the classes. Besides, implementing well-known games to the students brings to the class a positive attitude since they recall past engaging experiences since they might have already played them with their friends in a different context. Continuing with an engaging setting, situated learning provides an engaging environment that reduces anxiety and stress, as adopting students' social context in the classes connects them deeper to what they are learning and find utility to the new knowledge they are acquiring. Moreover, this contextualizing invites students to provide their voice and thoughts to class, thus creating an amicable environment where jokes and comments are well-received. Finally, through the lenses of collaborative learning it is possible to see how promoting interactions in classes may provide shy and reserved students the opportunity to learn to be more open to exchanging knowledge. This comes as something critical since building knowledge with their peers is a necessary experience on their career paths to become an outstanding professional.

It is the authors' hope that the findings made in this research made phonetics teachers want to implement active learning methodologies within their classes with the purpose of not only motivating their students to study English phonetics, but also to have fun while developing classes. It is worth considering that the main limitation of the study was that it was only focused on the practical aspects of phonetics teaching. For this reason, further research is suggested to explore to what extent the theoretical feature of phonetics can be enhanced with active learning methodologies.

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Annexes

Annex A Consent form

Consentimiento informado

Cordial saludo,
Somos [redacted], estudiantes de octavo semestre del programa Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en Inglés. En el marco de la realización de un estudio cualitativo perteneciente a la asignatura de Trabajo de Grado 1, queremos realizar una investigación con el propósito de promover la motivación del estudio de la fonética Inglesa a través del uso de metodologías de aprendizaje activo en los estudiantes de primer semestre del programa de Licenciatura en Lenguas Extranjeras con énfasis en Inglés cursando la clase "Introducción a la Fonética Articularia". Por esta razón, se implementaran 3 instrumentos para recolectar la información: (1) un cuestionario sobre los niveles de motivación respecto a la materia, (2) notas de campo que se documentaran al hacer intervenciones en clases durante 5 semanas, y (3) una entrevista a un grupo focal la cuál se grabará en audio con el fin de no omitir datos importantes en las respuestas de los participantes.

Si decide hacer parte de este estudio toda la información recolectada permanecerá en completo anonimato por lo que ningún dato será filtrado o manipulado para otros fines que no sean netamente académicos. Así mismo, tiene completa libertad de abandonar el estudio en el momento que usted lo desee y ninguna de las actividades afectará su nota en la materia.

No compartido

* Indica que la pregunta es obligatoria

Nombre Completo *

Tu respuesta

¿Acepta hacer parte del estudio? *

Sí

No

Annex B Motivation Questionnaire

Fostering Motivation in an English Phonetics class using active learning methodologies

The aim of the following questionnaire is to collect information about students' motivation toward Phonetics and Phonology classes; as well as the methodologies that have been implemented throughout the semester.



No compartido

* Indica que la pregunta es obligatoria

Name *

Tu respuesta

Students Perceptions Towards Motivation in Class

Your answer can be written in English or Spanish.

1. What is motivation for you? *

Tu respuesta

2. Read the following definitions of motivation and select the one you feel more related with. *

- How people direct their attitudes, time, and energy to develop different tasks (Bakar, 2014)
- What causes a person to want to repeat a behavior and vice versa (Alizadeh, 2016)
- The process that leads individuals to take action to achieve a goal or to fulfill a need or expectation (Gopalan, 2017)

3. What are some characteristics a motivated student must have? *

Tu respuesta

4. Do you consider you are motivated to study phonetics in class? *

Yes

No

5. How motivated do you feel during your Phonetics classes? (**Answer the questions taking into account that 1 is not motivated at all and 5 fully motivated**) *

Not motivated at all 1 2 3 4 5 Fully motivated

Annex C Field notes

Field notes					
Class objectives		1. The Ss will be able to differentiate the difference between long and short vowels. 2. The Ss will be able to produce short and long vowel sounds.			
Active methodology		Gamification			
Time	Activity	Implementation of the lesson	Students' behavior in the lesson	Students' interaction in the lesson	Reflective notes
Descriptive Field Notes	Introduction	Teachers connect their technological devices.	Some Ss seemed show curious expressions such as opening their eyes or paying close attention to what the teachers do.	Ss whisper among them. There are no comments.	The participants seemed curious and open to new experiences.
	Granny's schwa gift	Warm-up activity	Ss are smiling and making direct eye contact with the teacher. Some students show anxious movements when they hear they need to scream their gifts to granny since she cannot hear well.	There are no comments among students. However, they all participate in the activity.	Teachers considered using more activities where students loosen up and speak loud as well as clear.
	Narrative - Context	Teacher explains the narrative	Ss are smiling and paying close attention. They are making eye contact. Some Ss are using cellphones. While they are doing their groups they are smiling. They are gathering on their own and discussing their names energetically.	Among the groups Ss suggest different names to represent them. Some Ss are commenting on their partners choice of group name. Some Ss are making jokes about said names.	The first teamwork activity was well received, further group activities can be conducted.

Annex D Semi-structured Interview Focus Group

Semi-structured Interview Focus Group

1. What do you think that active learning is? Have you ever heard of active learning methodologies before?
2. Do you think your motivation towards the subject has improved after implementing the implementation we carried out in this classroom?
3. What activities carried out in class would you regard as motivating? (Mention some examples)
4. Do you think that the way this class was conducted could be useful in future learning scenarios?
5. Do you consider that the elements implemented in class would be useful when studying for phonetics exams?
6. Which activity implemented in class do you consider that helps you the most to understand a topic? (Mention some examples / provide details)
7. Do you think that the teaching strategies that were integrated in this class may complement the methodology of the class as well as Peter Roach's readings?

Entrevistador: Hubo algunos momentos en los que quisimos meter contexto Colombiano en las clases, como el profesor super 0, cuando produjeron dichos colombianos traducidos al inglés (traducidos literalmente), o cuando pusimos a Maluma. ¿Creen ustedes que usar esos elementos como las celebridades en las clases los motiva a participar? ¿Les gusta, no les gusta? ¿O bueno más que motivar como que los mete más en el cuento de la clase?

P1: Pues sí, la verdad como que despierta curiosidad e interés. Aunque cuando hay que gastar mucho tiempo contextualizando el juego me pierdo un poquito.

Entrevistador: ¿entonces cuando los juegos son muy complicados tiende a perderse?

P1: sí, pues no es como que sean muy complicados, pero cuando la explicación es muy larga.

Entrevistador: comprendo.

P13: Hace que uno se familiarice más, y saca chistecitos y risas

Annex E Links of the slides of each class

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/14ouKOawZV-2j9nlQgIrATC2UVCZGk9nX>