

Student motivation in Waldorf foreign language classrooms

La motivación de los alumnos en la clase Waldorf de lengua extranjera

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Resumen

Este trabajo contribuye a la comprensión del concepto de motivación para el aprendizaje de una lengua extranjera. Teniendo en cuenta las experiencias óptimas de un grupo de maestros Waldorf de lengua extranjera (n = 18), este estudio presenta como conclusión dos relaciones que surgen en un proceso de aprendizaje de idiomas: la relación entre el alumno y su entorno de aprendizaje y la relación entre el alumno y su asignatura escolar. Estas relaciones muestran siete aspectos clave: interrelación/autonomía, contemplación, curiosidad, retroalimentación recibida/ofrecida, complejidad de la lengua, tolerancia hacia la lengua y activación sensorial. Estos aspectos se analizaron teniendo en cuenta un marco teórico centrado en la motivación del estudiante. Este artículo invita a los profesores e investigadores a analizar el enfoque Waldorf para la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras, no sólo en las escuelas Waldorf, sino también en escuelas públicas y centros multiculturales que están aplicando este enfoque.

Palabras clave: motivación, experiencia óptima en clase, Enfoque Waldorf, aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras.

Abstract

This paper contributes to the understanding of the concept of student motivation in foreign language learning. Taking into account Waldorf teachers' optimal classroom experiences (n=18) in foreign language classrooms, this study presents as a conclusion two relationships that emerge in a language learning process: the relationship between the learner and his/her learning environment and the relationship between the learner and

his/her school subject. These relationships display seven key aspects namely relatedness/autonomy, contemplation, curiosity, received/offered feedback, language complexity, tolerance towards language, and sensorial activation. These aspects were analysed taking into account a theoretical framework focused on student motivation. This paper encourages teachers and researchers to investigate the Waldorf Approach for teaching foreign languages, not only in Waldorf schools, but also in mainstream public school and multicultural settings that are applying this approach.

Keywords: student motivation, optimal classroom experience, Waldorf Approach, foreign language learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to help foster further understanding of student motivation in a foreign language classroom from practice to theory. After analysing narratives on optimal classroom experiences written by 18 Waldorf teachers of German as a foreign language, I aimed to establish a connection between my findings and some theories of motivation. The objective of this study was to understand the characteristics of student motivation by connecting teachers' voices and theories. I hope these findings and reflections provide insight into the need to understand other ways of teaching and promoting student motivation in foreign language classrooms. This paper forms an introduction to the themes of my research interest, which is to investigate ways of promoting motivation and engagement in the classroom from different perspectives and theoretical frameworks (see Montenegro, 2007). In the next section, I summarize five theories of motivation that allowed me to analyse the Waldorf teachers' narratives on optimal classroom experiences.

2. MOTIVATION: DEFINITION AND THEORIES

Student motivation refers to any force that produces energy (strength, intensity, and persistence) and direction (purposes) (Reeve, 2012). Specifically, motivation is "a private, unobservable psychological, neural, and biological process" (e.g., self-efficacy) "that serves as an antecedent cause to the publically observable behaviour that is engagement" (Reeve, 2012:151). Based on a literature review on student motivation and the findings of this study, the following theories allowed the author to analyse the data on optimal classroom experiences: the Self-determination Theory, the Achievement Goal Theory, the Self-regulation Theory, the Social Cognitive Theory, and the Theory of Flow.

As a synthesis, the Self-determination Theory takes into account the degree to which behaviour can be transformed through autonomy and control (Black and Deci, 2000) and comprises competence (related to self-worth), autonomy (related to perceived control over behaviour and success) and relatedness (feelings of security and belonging in a social environment), which increase intrinsic motivation and self-esteem, and decrease the number of school drop-outs (Urdu and Schoenfelder, 2006).

The Achievement Goal Theory refers to the definition of success that the individual has developed and the influence of the messages received by the context (Urdu and Schoenfelder, 2006). The term “goal” is defined as the structure of knowledge that can be activated by the individual or influenced by the information available in his/her context (Pintrich, 2000). The Self-regulation Theory defines self-regulation as the motivational process and ability to successfully monitor and control actions, emotions and cognitions (Karoly, 1993). According to this theory, the main role of the teacher is to move students from social sources toward self-regulation processes with a clear emphasis on sophisticated self-regulatory capacities (Schunk and Zimmerman, 1997) and school skills such as judgment, performance and reflection (Reeve, 2013).

The Social Cognitive Theory takes into account beliefs about success, skills, commitment, levels of effort, and contextual factors such as verbal persuasion (Urdu and Schoenfelder, 2006). This theory provides “not only knowledge for predicting behavior but also a theory of learning and change” (Bandura, 2012:13). The last theory included in this summary is the Theory of Flow. This theory defines flow as “a satisfied state of consciousness associated with intense concentration, effortless control and deep enjoyment” (Paris and Paris, 2001:94). In order to experience this state, learners’ challenges and skills must be aligned (sufficiently high), feedback must be immediate and clear enough, and a sense of control is supported thanks to a goal-directed activity (Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde, 1993). According to Paris and Paris (2001), flow experiences may have a long-term motivational contribution because the participation of the “desired self” demonstrates both competence and membership, “strengthening both the I-self as agent and the Me-self as identity, which provides positive feedback to continue” (p. 97) in an activity.

In short, these theories of motivation can be summarized and understood through key words such as control, interest, strategies, efficacy, and challenges. These words can be illustrated through statements. Thus, the Self-determination Theory (SDT) may include the sentence “I take control of my learning process”, the Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) may include “*I’m interested in learning for learning*” (mastery goal), the Self-regulation

Theory (SRT) may affirm *"I know what and how to do it"* (self-regulation strategies), the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) includes sentences such as *"I can do it"* (self-efficacy), and the Theory of Flow promotes the growth principle of *"I challenge myself"*. Definitions and details of each theory will be connected in the section of data analysis.

In order to introduce Waldorf Approach and to establish a context for the reader, I present a glimpse of this educational approach. I have been interested in Waldorf pedagogy for more than ten years with the aim of supporting my professional development as well as my own understanding of student motivation. Based on my experience and interest, I decided to explore the Waldorf approach by interpreting a cluster of Waldorf teachers' experiences in which their students were highly engaged in the classroom. Thus, the following sections are organized in three parts: A glimpse of Waldorf approach, understanding this approach through the Waldorf teachers' experiences, conclusions and further research.

3. A GLIMPSE AT WALDORF APPROACH

In September 1919, the first Waldorf School (Freie Waldorfschule, Stuttgart, Germany) was founded by Emil Molt under the organization and guidance of Rudolf Steiner (Grosse, 1968), "an Austrian philosopher, scientist, and educator who lived at the turn of the last century (1861-1924)" (Easton, 1997:88). Based on Goethe's scientific work, Steiner came to "his holistic and spiritual insights and understanding of human nature" (Binimelis, 2014:32). Waldorf education has become a leading international educational reform movement (Lutzker, 2007) and evolved into "multiple applications in kindergartens, schools, teacher training seminars and other institutions around the world" (Rawson, 2010:27). Waldorf schools belong to the private educational sector and their school leaving certificates "are equivalent to those provided by public schools" (Köller, 2005:266).

Easton (1997) identifies the following six characteristics of Waldorf education: (a) a theory of child development, (b) a theory of teacher self-development, (c) a core curriculum that integrates artistic and academic work, (d) a method of teaching as an art that pays careful attention to synchronizing teaching methods with the rhythm of a child's unfolding capacities, (e) integration of teaching and administration, and (f) building the school and the greater Waldorf community as networks of support for students, teachers, and parents (p. 88). Among Waldorf's notable aspects are the alignment of the curriculum

with the stages of *child development* and *cognitive awakening* (Mitchell, 2006) and its objective to “enable each individual to *develop his or her potential*” (Rawson, 2011:7).

From a Waldorf perspective, learning refers to “the active exploration of reality” (Schieren, 2012:70). Thus, “[o]ne of the maxims of Waldorf is to relate as much subject matter as practicable, within the context of the lesson, to the human being” (Masters, 2009:90). In Waldorf Kindergarten, teachers promote the development of “pre-literacy, pre-numeracy and pre-science learning that will ensure that when the appropriate time comes to engage in more formalised learning” (O’Connor and Angus, 2012:3). Later, during schooling years, each school subject is taught in an imaginative and practical way as possible (Schieren, 2012).

A Waldorf teacher “is always a narrator” (Steinmann, 2012:16). Thus, storytelling is one of the major artistic activities and learning tools in Waldorf education (Easton, 1997). Specifically, in the teaching of a foreign language, Rudolf Steiner was a “very early proponent of methods in some ways similar to the “direct”, the “audio-lingual” and the “natural” approaches developed in later decades by language educators” (Navacués, 1993:28). Steiner placed great emphasis on the lyrical side of language (Matikainen, 2014). Foreign language teachers should, according to Steiner, take sentences from real life, as well as focus on good pronunciation through more lyrical language exercises that include themselves the nature of linguistic aspects (Matikainen, 2014). These teachers also take into account that “understanding does not grow from literal translation but from rephrasing what has been read” (Steiner, 2000 in Wiechert 2013:24). In addition to narration, the poetic and dramatic dimensions are emphasized at all levels of language learning in Waldorf schools (Templeton, 2010). Thus, learning a foreign language orally “strengthens the pupil’s ability to listen to another person, to follow and grasp the other person’s spoken and unspoken intensions, since it enhances sensitivity to language at all levels and not merely the semantic level” (Rawson, 2001:132).

In these schools, children are generally introduced to two foreign languages from Class 1 by allowing them “to enter emotionally into the stream of listening to and experiencing the language” (Röh, 2013:10). In the first three years, teachers speak directly to the pupils, frame and support the spoken word with facial expressions and well-rounded gestures (Kiersch, 2006). This method gives special importance to sounds without intellectual explanations or translations in order to promote the joy of speaking, which is cultivated through spoken language (Peterson, 2013).

A transformation of this approach occurs at the age of 9 or 10 years old because pupils “begin to experience the language more consciously” (Röh, 2013). In Steiner’s words, “[t]he change in the children’s self-awareness grows stronger at the age of nine” and “they understand much better” what the teacher says about the difference between the human being and the world” (2000:101). Thus, children in Class 4 begin to consciously explore grammatical structures through verses they know well, gradually reaching a new level of self-awareness (Röh, 2013). They also begin to “make their own grammar notebooks from the material presented by the teacher” (Navacués, 1993:29). Only after the class teacher has explored the main sentence types, the language teacher starts teaching the ‘present form’ of the foreign language (Von Winterfeldt, 2010). For this process, it is crucial to relate previous knowledge to new concepts as well as establish active cooperation between the class teacher and the language teacher. Waldorf teachers meet regularly once a week for pedagogical conferences (Masters, 2009).

Children in Waldorf schools encounter foreign languages through relationships (e.g., words and objects), rhythm and movement. Jaffke (2005) argues that familiarizing children with new sounds, intonation, rhythms and ways of expression enriches their language awareness, which contributes to the development of the mother tongue. The teacher supports children in the development of conversational skills through singing and poetic language and familiarizes them with paralinguistic elements such as intonation (Jaffke, 2005). As Peterson (2013) states, Waldorf foreign language teachers practice speaking by giving space for sounds and “creating a language aura that envelops the children without intellectual explanations, without translating” (p. 28). From this perspective, teachers give children the opportunity to enjoy language through movements, ideas, stories, dramatization, and dialogues, among others. In other words, language, literacy and movement must be seen as one context and cannot be dissociated from each other (Zimmer, 2010). In order to speak a foreign language children need to feel joyfulness, because “this joy is a necessary precondition for speaking” (Petersen, 2013:29). In order to meet older pupils’ needs, reading is taught with a particular approach. Reading texts are chosen with the aim of having students read them and then re-tell what they have read in their own words, incorporating comments and discussion (Kiersch, 2006). Steiner (1919 in Kiersch, 2006) gives special attention to the following recommendations in terms of methodology: formulating pupils’ own thoughts in the foreign language, conducting conversations in the mother tongue and then recalling them in the foreign language, guiding pupils into conversations to which the teacher does not contribute,

using what was learnt in other moments (discussions), keeping the teaching of grammar separate from reading, preserving the rules of grammar, promoting movements and active participation in language use.

The Waldorf approach may offer pedagogical tools to increase and maintain student motivation. This article presents an analysis of optimal classroom experiences which were reported by a group of 18 Waldorf foreign language teachers. In order to understand these experiences, I have connected them with a theoretical framework on student motivation. The next section starts with an overview of the group of participants and the procedure of gathering their narratives of optimal classroom experiences.

4. UNDERSTANDING STUDENT MOTIVATION FROM TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES

During a week-long international workshop for teachers of German as a foreign language, a group of 18 volunteers from different countries (including New Zealand, Brazil, and Finland) completed and submitted a demographic information sheet and a narrative task on optimal classroom experiences. In all, six of the participating teachers were new to the profession (reported 5 years or less experience), 11 had between 8 and 46 years of experience, and one participant did not report this information. There were 4 male and 14 female participants, and their ages ranged from 27 to 63. All reported teaching experience in primary school. The participating teachers had a week (during their participation in the workshop in Berlin, 2014) to answer their demographic information and write down their narratives.

A previous study on optimal classroom experiences provided insights for the design of the instrument used in this study. Tardy and Snyder (2004) identified the peak experiences of 10 teachers of English as a foreign language. By analysing open-ended interviews, they found that these experiences occurred at times of high interest and involvement in their work. When this interest and involvement was not present, they did not experience flow. Their study provided insights for the design of the instrument used in this exploratory study. As in their research project, this analysis was limited to one data source collected at a single point in time. The narrative task was designed in order to permit the teachers to describe an optimal classroom moment in which both teachers and their learners were highly engaged in an activity. The instruction of the narrative included the general characteristics of the state of being in flow and an example of an optimal experience taken from Tardy and Snyder (2004).

For the analysis and reflection of the narratives, each one was read, reread and organized in an electronic database. A cluster of 53 initial codes emerged from these narratives. After identifying the initial codes, they were regrouped into 24 emerging codes, which were combined into themes and discussed within a theoretical framework on student motivation.

After grouping the codes emerging from the narratives, I identified the following categories: (1) *The learner and his/her environment for learning*, and (2) *The learner and his/her relationship with the foreign language*. Table 1 draws the set of categories and subcategories related to student motivation and presents them without particular hierarchy.

Table 1: Categories and subcategories related to student motivation

Categories	Subcategories
The learner and his/her learning environment	Relatedness/Autonomy
	Contemplation
	Curiosity
	Received/offered feedback
The learner and his/her relationship with the foreign language	Language complexity
	Tolerance towards language
	Sensorial activation

In the following section each category will be explained by including excerpts of the narratives in relationship to the five theories of motivation mentioned in the second section of this paper.

4.1 The learner and his/her learning environment

The first category named *the learner and his/her learning environment* illustrates the relation between the individual and the social dimensions for learning. Four subcategories were identified: Relatedness/Autonomy, Contemplation, Curiosity and Received/Offered Feedback.

Relatedness/Autonomy confirms the importance of feeling both a part of the group and autonomous when learning. The following excerpts illustrate the connection to the two psychological needs presented in the self-determination theory –namely relatedness and autonomy. The sentences in cursive are directly connected aspects of both psychological needs:

- (a) "My favorite moments as a teacher are the moments *when the learners are involved in an activity that doesn't need the teacher's interference*. It is more interesting for them to see someone else in front of the class..." (Waldorf Teacher #5)
- (b) "... but there were also many good German lessons, *where students experienced freedom*." (Waldorf Teacher #6)
- (c) "... a moment in which I as a teacher can completely pull myself back and *the students take their own initiative and with great joy they can say what they have learned*. The activity develops in a dynamic way and learning happens with joy for both, the teachers and the pupils." (Waldorf Teacher #9)

In the previous excerpts, the teachers' description highlighted the importance of experiencing freedom for learning. This freedom may represent the combination of the self as an individual and the self as a member of the group. This combination of relatedness and autonomy are needed to learn and interact. According to Furrer and Skinner (2003), feelings of belonging or relatedness (1) play an integral role in children's motivational development, (2) may have an energetic function to participate in academic activities, and (3) have been linked to academic outcomes such as engagement, interest in school and self-efficacy. Being involved in activities where learners interact with other individuals who they like and by whom perceive a reciprocal feeling and respect seems to be more fun for them (Furrer and Skinner, 2003). Thus, when learners feel supported emotionally by their teacher, "they are likely to engage more fully in their academic work" (Furrer and Skinner, 2003: 84) and tend to experience self-efficacy in their academic skills (Patrick et al., 2007).

According to the Self-determination Theory (SDT), changes in students' psychological needs (e.g., relatedness) occur depending on the teacher's motivating style (Reeve, 2012). Thus, controlled behaviours are activated through implicit or explicit demands such as rewards, grades, punishments, and performance comparison, and they possess the characteristic of becoming autonomous through a process of identification of the individual's sense of self with a regulation (Black and Deci, 2000). Thus, SDT states that "intentional behaviors can be motivated by either autonomous or controlled forms of regulation" (Tsai et al., 2008). SDT takes into account the degree to which behaviour can be

transformed through autonomy and control (Black and Deci, 2000), and comprises competence (related to self-worth), autonomy (related to perceived control over the behaviour and success) and relatedness (feelings of security and belonging in a social environment).

Reeve (2012) claims there is a need to consider the learners' inner motivational resources because these resources permit them to be and feel capable of engaging themselves. To do so, the author emphasises the student-teacher dialectical framework within SDT. This reciprocal relation between students and teachers facilitates students' self-expression of their interests, opinions, suggestions, and other acts of communication that may add more sources of motivation, as well as outcomes such as engagement. Based on their theoretical review on student motivation, Urdan and Schoenfelder (2006) recommend generating (1) a sense of ownership for learning, (2) an atmosphere of attention, care and affiliation, and (3) a balance between relevance and challenging activities. Their review of research also suggests training teachers on how to create mastery goal structures, autonomy supportive learning environments, and opportunities of success for learners.

The second subcategory *Contemplation* refers to the moments in which the learner can be highly concentrated and motivated to spend time on a task. This subcategory is connected to the theory of flow, not only with an emphasis on being in flow as an individual, but also on being in flow as a member of the group. In order to experience flow, learners' challenges and skills must be aligned (sufficiently high), feedback must be immediate and clear enough, and a sense of control is supported thanks to a goal-directed activity (Csikszentmihalyi and Rathunde, 1993).

Contemplation may also be associated with the achievement goal theory in the sense that the learner may feel an interest in learning instead of competing. This mastery goal in learning may contribute to developing learners' inner interest in learning. The AGT explains the difference between mastery and performance goals. Mastery goals refer to "the desire to learn, that is, to acquire new knowledge and skills", and performance goals refer to "the desire to attain competence in comparison with others" (Dompnier et al., 2015:722). An example of contemplation is:

- (1) "It is also nice for children to *observe the feeling* of gratitude towards the world on St. Nicholas Day, Christmas or *when I tell the story* of creation."
(Waldorf Teacher #3)

In the excerpt above, the topics included in the lesson and how they are explained (e.g., through story telling) may help to provide an atmosphere of contemplation and enjoyment. These spaces may also help to experience the state of flow in the classroom. Flow may be understood as “a satisfied state of consciousness associated with intense concentration, effortless control and deep enjoyment” (Paris and Paris, 2001:94). Engagement, from the theory of flow, can be defined as the combination of heightened concentration (in productive skill-building activities), enjoyment, and interest (Shernoff et al., 2003; Shernoff, 2012). From this perspective, engagement seems to require little explicit instructional support because the nature of the activity itself maintains learners’ interest, concentration and effort. An aspect that may be related to this state of concentration is silence. In this respect, I would like to cite the pedagogical question formulated by Lutzker (2014), “How can we as educators create situations in which the presence and implications of silence can be experienced? (p. 22). As he highlights, the significance of silence is often unrecognized in the field of education.

The third subcategory is *Curiosity*. According to Litman and Jimerson (2004), curiosity is defined as “a desire for new information aroused by novel, complex, or ambiguous stimuli” (p. 147) and presents two compatible perspectives hypothesized as an unpleasant feeling of uncertainty or as a highly pleasurable feeling of interest, this last one being emphasised more in theory and research. Based on their literature review on curiosity, these authors clarify these types of curiosity as a feeling-of-interest (CFI) and as a feeling-of-deprivation (CFD). CFI involves “very positive feelings of interest and joy brought on by the anticipation of learning new information”, whereas CFD involves “some degree of negative affectivity (e.g., tension, frustration, dissatisfaction) related to uncertainty” (Litman, 2005:799).

From my point of view, a feeling-of-interest (CFI) shares much in common with the concept of mastery goals and a feeling-of-deprivation (CFD) with performance goals, both concepts included in the Achievement Goal Theory. An orientation to mastery goals involves a focus on gaining understanding or skills (Ames, 1992). In the same vein, CFI is “stimulated when individuals do not feel as though they are suffering from a lack of knowledge, but rather feel that it would be enjoyable to discover something new” (Litman, 2005:799). Thus, both curiosity and enjoyment were found in the narratives as key aspects for participating. The following excerpts illustrate the connection between curiosity and enjoyment:

- (a) "...This sometimes happens in the first class at the beginning of class, when the rhythm of the class is right ("breathing-breathing"). *The kids are happy and curious and are involved in the teaching of the activity...*" (Waldorf Teacher #8)
- (b) "... I am very happy when *I hear the German songs in the corridor. I know that they are waiting for the class. They are very curious...*" (Waldorf Teacher #14)

Being curious plays an important role in learning. Curiosity is "an aspect of intrinsic motivation that has great potential to enhance student learning (Graham and Helen, 2011:24). However, as Litman (2005) states, "there are countless occasions when individuals realise that they lack information" (p. 808) and "*I don't know, I don't care*" reaction appears, probably because their curiosity was not appreciably stimulated. Teachers should identify their students' interest in learning something new (CFI) and stimulate constantly this feeling, for example, through amusing anecdotes, puzzles, entertaining stories with different ends, among other activities.

Curiosity is related to the concept of contemplation in the sense that both are linked to mastery goals for learning and can be promoted by teachers when they offer spaces to observe more, practise what they know and enhance their skills. This subcategory is also connected to the theory of Flow. Researchers on this theory suggest including the modelling of teacher's enthusiasm, confirmation of students' abilities, combination of support and challenge, and expectations for mastery (see examples of concrete strategies by Shernoff, 2012) and the creation of learning activities that support students' autonomy and provide an appropriate level of challenge for students' skills to increase engagement (Shernoff et al., 2003).

The fourth subcategory *Received/offered feedback* is associated to the self-regulation theory in the sense that learners can be involved in a process of receiving and offering feedback by applying cognitive strategies that require clear orientation and result. The following excerpt illustrates this subcategory:

"...It was peer work in the school yard: a seventh grader explained their portfolios about what he had learned in 7th grade in English class to an eighth grader. *The eighth graders gave feedback. The seventh grade students experienced joy by the recognition by an older student.*" (Waldorf Teacher #10)

An interpretation of this sample could be connected to the process of listening to and speaking with peers as a way to promote social skills and self-regulation. According to Patrick et al. (2007), when learners are motivated to explain what they know or have understood, as well as to listen to others, they are encouraged to use self-regulation strategies.

In order to make possible the application of strategies related to feedback processes as well as to experience enjoyment, it is necessary to generate the appropriate classroom atmosphere. Thus, mutual respect in the classroom refers to the expectations that all contributions and feelings are valued by teachers and learners (Patrick et al., 2007). This type of atmosphere is connected to the social cognitive theory in the sense that what the class member thinks of him/herself is also shaped by what others think of him/herself. Thus, self-efficacy beliefs “contribute to level of motivation, emotional well-being, and performance accomplishments” (Bandura, 2006:171).

Bandura (2006) states that self-efficacy beliefs affect people’s goals, aspirations and emotions, as well as vulnerability to stress and depression. These beliefs also influence how people perceive both challenges and skills (Salanova et al., 2014), and this perception seems to be a prerequisite to experience flow (Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002), in addition to situational and personal conditions that also influence and contribute to this state (Salanova et al., 2014). These judgments may be transformed by mastery experiences, social modelling, and social persuasion; and may determine emotional states, for example, if a person thinks pessimistically or optimistically (Bandura, 2012).

According to Ryan and Patrick (2001), environments where respect is promoted are associated with cognitive engagement and self-regulated learning strategies. In the self-regulation theory, the main role of the teacher is to move students from social sources toward self-regulation processes with a clear emphasis on sophisticated self-regulatory capacities (Schunk and Zimmerman, 1997), and school skills such as judgment, performance and reflection (Reeve, 2013). In the same vein, environments where mastery goals are promoted permit learners to be focused on investing effort, experience feelings of satisfaction, use more sophisticated learning strategies, as well as to perceive their class members as sources of help, information, and support (Reeve and Lee, 2014).

4.2 The learner and his/her relationship with the foreign language

This second category named *the learner and his/her relationship with the foreign language* refers to relationships of interest that the learner establishes with this school subject.

Three subcategories were identified and named as *Language complexity*, *Tolerance towards language*, and *Sensorial activation*.

The first subcategory *Language Complexity* refers to the challenge that learners face when learning a foreign language, and the possibility of developing autonomy and understanding during the process. The following excerpts illustrate the value of permitting learners to take control of the activities and understand complex topics by themselves.

- (a) "... *The students sat together in groups and decided which grammar part they want to revise. The aim is to create a poster, game, or something similar, to explain to the first class the grammar again, and secondly, this gives the opportunity of applying it using a fun game...*" (Waldorf Teacher #12)
- (b) "*I teach 100% in German and the most beautiful moments are those when students can understand something very complicated.*" (Waldorf Teacher #13)

These two examples are connected to the self-regulation theory. Presenting topics or understanding complex classroom activities requires the use of monitoring strategies and autonomous behaviour. According to Zimmerman (2000), monitoring requires self-questioning and self-testing strategies, which contribute to learning and achievement. Understanding a complex topic may also contribute to self-efficacy beliefs and the acceptance of new challenges.

According to the Self-regulation Theory, self-regulation strategies are understood as those that combine knowledge about specific actions to pursue goals, and aim to develop autonomy and control (Paris and Paris, 2001). Human beings need "external stimulation, external feedback to keep attention directed" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:169). We need to learn strategies from appropriate sources. For this reason, learners need to know what strategies help them to achieve understanding and success, as well as the reasons by which it is important to perform and monitor these actions (Paris and Paris, 2001).

The second subcategory *Tolerance towards Language* refers to the importance of developing tolerance between the mother tongue and the foreign language. It does not refer to the quantity of language exposure, but to the acceptance of languages when they are invited to participate with a purpose. The following excerpt represents the possibility to use the mother tongue in a foreign language classroom environment:

“The best example of learning that I got was in the regional studies, and it took place *in the mother tongue* of the students. I had a Jewish child in the class and a rich boy whose father was a staunch communist. We talked about the divided Germany and the Cold War as well as the establishment of Israel”. (Waldorf Teacher #6)

Tolerance towards language may be associated to the self-regulation theory in the sense that strategies such as code switching are required. An interpretation of this subcategory is to consider the value of accepting the other linguistic code without rejecting the mother tongue. The following excerpt is another example of tolerance towards language (as a school subject):

“On that particular day, then, every child had a bath in the sense that it was “on board” – that is it had to ride a valid ticket, no matter what wagon. Calm and silence reigned in the classroom that it was a dream. There was even time and from time to time to sit down to a student and to commit the child concerned for a few moments differently. It was the first time that I could joke with a student a little by saying German is not important, eurythmy is more important. The student was glad that I made my own specialist unimportant. The greatest joy was the fact that there was no any competitive feeling in the atmosphere”. (Waldorf Teacher #11)

In the excerpt above, the teacher gives more importance to eurythmy than the use of linguistic codes. This situation highlights flexibility and tolerance towards language, which may be represented in words or gestures. According to Sobo (2012), all Waldorf schools offer lessons in eurythmy. She defines eurythmy as a movement-based art that can be compared to interpretive or modern dance. In her words, “it consists of gesture vocabulary or set of recommended forms or bodily positions that, when taken up or enacted by a person’s physical body, give expression to inner experiences” (p. 18). This art is connected to the next subcategory labelled Sensorial Activation.

The third subcategory *Sensorial Activation* includes the actions and reactions intended to produce the activation of senses, mainly through games and music. Other classroom activities include singing, role-playing, reciting, mimic, painting, and moving around the classroom. The following excerpt is an example:

(a) “Moments in which they *sing* after some time of practicing and guess the professions independently and perform the movements in question and thereby develop real enjoyment of the activity. They showed enthusiastic *movements* and were connected. They sang with each other without any instructions from the teacher. Students, who are on a very low level of German, remember the pronunciation of each stanza thanks to the *gestures* and the *music*.” (Waldorf Teacher #9)

As Jensen (2005) affirms, educators should purposefully incorporate movement activities into learning. Activating the senses for learning a language requires creativity and strategies in order to combine meaning, body language, and enjoyment.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This paper presents two conclusions. The former refers to the characteristics of student motivation taking into account two relationships: Learner and Context, and Learner and Classroom Subject. Thus, the group of teachers highlighted the learner and his/her environment for learning as well as the relationship between the learner and the foreign language. This conclusion is related to interest theory. According to Tsai and her colleagues (2008), interest theory states that people who have an individual interest in a specific content will “enjoy and value opportunities to reengage with relevant contents” (p. 469). They affirm that although lessons may not always fulfil the learners’ expectations and needs over time, learners with “higher individual interest in a subject are more likely to have positive learning experiences in the respective lessons” (p. 469). This means that the relation between learners and the subject - in this case, a foreign language - may contribute significantly to increasing levels of student motivation. Studies in language learning contexts should take into account the interest in the language as well as the relations that emerge between the learner and the school subject.

The second conclusion refers to the subcategories on how teachers aim to promote motivation. The subcategory *Sensorial Activation* was the most mentioned topic in my informal talks with the group of Waldorf teachers. However, this subcategory was not the most mentioned one in the narrative tasks as was expected. This finding supports the idea of using narratives because the process of reflecting and then writing helps describe specific experiences. By using narratives, it was possible to identify other topics that were not identified in the informal talks. Interestingly, this study concludes that Contemplation and Sensorial activation are relevant concepts for those who consider that both movement

and pause for learning are necessary for student motivation. It means that activation of senses as well as pauses for contemplation may play an important role.

Regarding the concept of motivation, I argue that it is not easy to be defined and analysed, as in the cases of Contemplation and Curiosity. For this reason, it is suggested to explore the observable behaviour of learners under the concept of engagement. Reeve (2012) states that engagement is an indicator of the teachers' effort to motivate their learners, which can be perceptible by monitoring levels of learners' effort, enjoyment, strategic thinking, and contributions. Taking into account that student engagement is a key aspect for learning and better teaching practices, some studies have aimed to apply measures on teachers' beliefs for engaging their learners. One of these measures is the *Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale* by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001). The authors distinguish three facets of effective teaching practices: (1) Efficacy for student engagement, (2) efficacy for instructional strategies, and (3) efficacy for classroom management. In regard to the scale for student engagement, its items are not specifically related to a foreign language context. For this reason, the findings presented in this paper may contribute to the design of a scale of teacher self-efficacy for student engagement in a foreign language classroom, which can be used as a reflection tool or as a mechanism to identify, monitor and promote student motivation.

By interpreting Waldorf teachers' experiences and theories of motivation it is hoped that a contribution was made between the Waldorf approach on the one hand and a theoretical framework on the other. Waldorf approach offers a variety of pedagogical tools to be explored in different contexts in order to determine their viability and effectiveness. Specifically, as highlighted by Jelinek and Sun (2003), "a relatively new twist to the Waldorf expansion is the introduction of its methods into mainstream public school settings" (p. 1). As they conclude, "[t]his heightens its visibility and raises many questions about its viability" (p. 1). In multicultural contexts, Waldorf approach has also been applied. Research can also explore this approach as a therapy for improving language performance. For example, Brater, Hemmer-Schanze and Schmelzer (2007) describe how in an intercultural Waldorf school (see the Freie Interkulturelle Waldorfschule Mannheim-Neckarstadt) this method can be considered as a therapy for learners with language difficulties. Thus, the Waldorf approach may offer pedagogical and therapeutic tools in order to improve language learning and performance. Further research should also be in this direction.

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