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UNIVERSITAT RAMON LLULL

FACULTAT DE PSICOLOGIA, CIÈNCIES DE L'EDUCACIÓ I DE L'ESPORT
BLANQUERNA

ENGINYERIA I ARQUITECTURA LA SALLE

(UNIVERSITAT RAMON LLULL)

(UNIVERSITAT RAMON LLULL)

Màster en Formació del Professorat d'Educació Secundària, Batxillerat, Formació Professional i Ensenyament d'Idiomes

TREBALL FINAL DE MÀSTER

Curs 2019-2020

The students' motives behind their classroom
participation

What are the factors conditioning them?

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Abstract

The classroom participation is one of the fundamental pillars of the learning process, hence the current study seeks to explore and analyse the distinct factors affecting the students' involvement in the class. This study focuses the attention on analysing and understanding the pupils' motives to decide whether or not to take part during activities or discussions. Furthermore, there are two different types of participation in the classroom which are the active and the passive participation, this research analyses the differences between the students' who are actively engaged and the ones who prefer go unnoticed in the classroom. The role of emotions is also discussed in the dissertation since it has been proved that positive emotions benefit the pupils' involvement because they feel much more comfortable and confident when they perceive a positive emotional climate, instead of negative emotional climate. Indeed, the current study is focused on discovering which are the main elements influencing students' participation and the reasons why the students are affected by these factors.

Key words: participation, active students, passive students, factors, emotions

Síntesi

La participació a classe és un dels pilars fonamentals que constitueixen el procés d'aprenentatge, per això el present estudi busca explorar i analitzar els diversos factors que afecten la implicació dels alumnes a classe. Aquest estudi centra la seva atenció en analitzar i entendre els motius del alumnes per decidir si participar o no durant les activitats i els debats. A més a més, hi ha dos tipus diferents de contribució a l'aula, els quals són la participació activa i la participació passiva. Aquesta investigació analitza les diferències entre els alumnes que estan activament implicats i els alumnes que prefereixen passar desapercebuts a l'aula. El paper que juguen les emocions també és tractat en aquesta reflexió, ja que ha estat demostrat el fet que les emocions positives beneficien la participació perquè l'alumne és sent molt més còmode i segur quan percep un clima emocional positiu, en comptes de un clima emocional negatiu. Certament, l'estudi està focalitzat en esbrinar quins són els principals elements influint en la participació dels alumnes i les raons per les quals els alumnes es veuen afectats per aquests factors.

Paraules clau: participació, alumnes actius, alumnes passius, factors, emocions

Síntesis

La participación en el aula es uno de los pilares fundamentales que constituyen el proceso de aprendizaje, por ello el presente estudio busca explorar y analizar los diversos factores que afectan la implicación de los alumnos en clase. Este estudio centra su atención en analizar y entender los motivos de los alumnos para decidir si participar o no en las actividades y debates. Además, hay dos tipos diferentes de contribución en el aula, las cuales son la participación activa y la participación pasiva. Esta investigación analiza las diferencias entre los alumnos que están activamente implicados y los alumnos que prefieren pasar desapercibidos en el aula. El papel que juegan las emociones también es tratado en esta reflexión, ya que ha sido demostrado que las emociones positivas benefician la participación ya que el alumno se siente mucho más cómodo y seguro cuando percibe un clima emocional positivo, en vez de un clima emocional negativo. Ciertamente, el estudio está focalizado en averiguar cuáles son los principales elementos que afectan la participación de los alumnos y las razones por las cuales los alumnos se ven afectados por estos factores.

Palabras clave: participación, alumnos activos, alumnos pasivos, factores, emociones

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is well-known that one of the crucial aspects that constitutes, and influences students' education is their participation in the classroom. Moreover, every schoolroom is formed by different types of students with varied personalities that determine their level of participation. Therefore, the main focus of my study is to analyse the principal motives behind the students' involvement or lack of involvement in classroom discussions, and in particular, their participation during the language lessons.

Even though the concept of participation has been studied for years, I strongly believe that there is still much to discover. Hence, the more we study the factors influencing both positively and negatively participation in the classroom, the easier will be to improve the students' learning process. This issue has been studied for many decades and by many educational academics, but most of them have focused their investigations on studying the factors causing the lack of participation, instead of studying those aspects that motivate and engage the students too. For instance, scholars such as Jean-Marc Dewaele and Livia Dewaele have conducted several investigations to prove the importance of positive emotions when teaching foreign languages in order to create a conducive learning environment. Additionally, it is crucial to discuss the different types of students that teachers may find in class as well as their involvement in the lessons since every student has his or her own participation method.

For several decades, this topic has been studied by many experts and researchers of the educational area, because it has been proven that participation is beneficial for both learners and teachers. That is why, I believe that discovering which are the main factors affecting the students' participation would definitely improve their learning process. Also, it would be helpful for teachers when trying to understand and learn about their students and their needs. Indeed, every teacher wishes to create a conducive and effective learning environment, but in order to do so, it is necessary to create a rapport with the students.

Furthermore, in order to analyse the concept of participation, I am going to carry out a deep study consisting on reading and analysing previous reports, surveys and research papers focused on participation and its component factors. Indeed, the practical research would mainly consist of observing the students' behaviour during the lessons in

order to analyse and detect the different forms of participation. Another method is to interview some of the foreign language teachers as well as those teaching Spanish and Catalan so as to discover which are their thoughts and reflections about the students' contribution during their lessons. Additionally, the pupils would have to complete different questionnaires about the reasons why they do or do not contribute in class, which would let me analyse and comprehend their actions in the classroom. My research will not only focus on studying the students' perspectives but also the teachers' views, for the reason that both of them are participants as well as responsible for the classroom participation.

2. RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

The principal goal of this analysis is to discover the main reasons why students engage or do not engage in class activities and discussions. Therefore, the research question to which I wish to find an answer is: "What are the determining reasons for pupils to participate in class?"

After having pondered over this question, the four main objectives of this study are the following:

- Objective 1: Discuss the positive and negative factors influencing participation in class.
- Objective 2: Discuss the different types of students' participation.
- Objective 3: Analyse the role of emotions teaching English as an additional language.
- Objective 4: Discuss if students' participation changes depending on the language they are learning.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the following section we will discuss and analyse previous studies and research papers which have previously tackled the concept of participation in the classroom. To achieve a deep knowledge of the concept of participation, it is vital to analyse and learn about the previous findings of other education experts. Therefore, the following section

gathers different theories and hypotheses to help the reader discover and understand the functioning of the classroom participation.

3.1. Prior views on participation

One of the crucial aspects of the student's learning process is their contribution and engagement during the lessons. If we search on the internet for the official definition of the concept of *participation*, many dictionaries will describe it as “the fact that you take part or become involved in something (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020)”. Unfortunately, to encourage the students to participate and become involved in the classroom is far more complex than it may seem since it is not just a matter of interest nor laziness, there are several factors influencing the pupils.

Moreover, participation is inherently related to motivation, which means that without interest there is no engagement. Essentially, with no motivation it is very unlikely that we achieve our goals, if a person is not engaged in what he or she is learning, then it does not matter our intellectual abilities nor a good teacher (Dörnyei & Csizer, 1998). Therefore, teachers need to create a conducive learning environment where students feel motivated and comfortable enough to share their ideas and thoughts with the rest of the class. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the students are reluctant to participate, hence it is the teacher's responsibility to “encourage all the students to speak up because speaking is one important way for students to learn more in the learning process (Abdullah, Bakar & Mahbob, 2012, p. 521)”. Today's society is based on communication; we have the need to share and express our thoughts and ideas with other people, that is why encouraging and motivating the students to participate and interact with their classmates is beneficial for them.

Participation not only has an impact on the students' grades but also it affects their personal lives as well as their professional future. Children and teenagers have to improve their communication skills the sooner the better because it will help them both academically and personally, the education academic Musleh discusses the fact that: “through participation, children develop skills, build competencies, form aspirations, gain confidence and attain valuable recourses which consequently contribute to the psychological wellbeing of the local community as well as the wider society (2011, p. 41).” By contributing and sharing their doubts and ideas in class, students develop

abilities such as critical thinking skills or even their speaking, for instance, according to Jones:

All courses can benefit from students sharing their insights. The learners will advance their thinking if they are given opportunities to produce evidence of it in the context of central course concepts. Their thoughts and conclusions deserve "publication" and critical review, to stand or fall on their merit (2008, p. 62).

In conclusion, learning to comprehend the students' behaviour in the classroom will be helpful for teachers to create a conducive learning environment (Abdullah, Bakar & Mahboob, 2011). Therefore, in order to understand the pupils' behaviour, we need to discover which are the factors influencing their participation in class and the reasons for this to happen.

3.2. Factors influencing pupils' participation in class

Every teacher aspires to achieve an effective learning environment, but for the purpose to accomplish this objective, pupils must be engaged and willing to take part. Thus, to achieve an effective learning process, both students and teachers must communicate and interact with each other as be as actively involved in the learning activities (Abdullah, Bakar & Mahbob, 2012). For this reason, the study and discovery of the motives behind students' participation is vital, if we are able to detect where the problem is, then we can search for its solution.

Furthermore, there is tendency to believe that students participate because of academic reasons, which is not entirely true since there is a strong personal factor influencing them. In her study, Fassinger (1996) discovered that in college classrooms, professors and their students agreed on the perspectives regarding the class traits, but in contrast to this, they differed in their views of the emotional climate in class. Therefore, for a teacher to create a positive learning atmosphere, he or she needs to discover and comprehend the learners thoughts and insecurities, for the reason that they are the centre of it, "students play a fundamental role in creating classrooms climates"(Fassinger, 1996, p. 33).

3.2.1. *Negative factors*

Many researchers, after having studied and deeply analysed the pupils' behaviour in class, they have established a series of negative factors affecting the classroom participation. In their study, the scholars Nihat and Özer (2013) asked the participants to write which were the reasons preventing them from participating. The results established four principal reasons adversely affecting students' participation in the classroom: personal reasons, instructor related reasons, course related reasons and classroom environment related reasons.

One of the most important factors preventing students from participating is the personal aspect. Many studies have concurred that if students do not feel comfortable nor confident, they will avoid participating in class: "There are also among those who are not skilled with the language used in the classroom. To not be laugh at by others, they prefer to keep quiet and just listen." (Abdullah, Bakar & Mahbob, 2012, p. 519). Furthermore, it is not only the fear of failing or making mistakes that prevent students to contribute but also their mental and physical state.

Active participation is more unlikely to happen when students are in a bad mood, feeling tired or having family problems (Mustapha & Rahman, 2010). In addition, this factor also encompasses the classmates' traits, even though some academics such as Fassinger (1996) consider and categorize it as an additional factor, Mustapha and Rahman (2010) concluded the classmates' traits was one the most important factors. The pupils who participated in this study, argued that bad behaviour on the part of their classmates did affect the participation of other students. In addition to that, they continued by explaining that having classmates who constantly are speaking and trying to create trouble during the lessons is quite annoying and distracting. Also, due to the fact of not yet knowing their classmates prevents the students from participating (Abdullah, Bakar & Mahbob, 2012), let it be shyness, or mistrust.

Another major aspect that is adversely affecting class participation is the negative teacher's traits as most of the studies concur that poor teaching skills have a huge impact on the students' willingness to participate. The scholars Sad & Özer (2014) argue that another negative aspect is the instructors' failure to build a good rapport with their students, followed by their failure when trying to establish participation rules. If a teacher

is perceived as hostile, the level of participation decreases since a key element when creating a conducive classroom environment is that students must feel comfortable and free to share their ideas with the instructor, without getting criticized by him or her.

Additionally, when students perceive their teacher being verbally aggressive, they are less likely to ask questions or give their opinions (Rocca, 2008-2009). Furthermore, one of the ten commandments for motivating students that Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) established thanks to their empirical study of participation is to “develop a good relationship with the learners.” According to them a good rapport with the student is a must-have in the current student-centred approach of the education system.

The content being taught to the students also plays a huge role regarding class participation, if students consider that content is uninteresting or boring, they are not going to be interested in learning it which may end in students’ acquiring negative attitudes towards the subject. Owing to the fact of the students finding the content too complex and difficult to understand also stops them from contributing in class (Sad & Özer, 2014). Therefore, the course related reasons are also connected to the pupils’ personal reasons since the insecurity and lack of confidence in students may be caused by the challenging content being taught. Mustapha and Rahman (2010) explain that “The students faced difficulties in understanding class content that was difficult, and they lost focus when it was uninteresting (p. 4)”.

The last factor that has been examined and considered as one of the main causes of the lack of participation in the classroom is the environmental factor. One of the most mentioned aspects causing the lack of contribution during the lessons, is the size of the classroom. Although some students contend that the size does not disturb them, the major part of the pupils consider that the smaller the class the better, because they do not feel ashamed when asking questions to the teacher as he or she will be physically closer to them (Abdullah, Bakar & Mahbob, 2012). Furthermore, technical aspects such as the lightning, air conditioning or the heating are also mentioned, because students may get distracted or stressed depending on the class illumination and temperature (Mustapha & Rahman).

3.2.2. *Positive Factors*

Most of the studies focus on the negative aspects affecting classroom participation, since these factors need to be solved, and the more we study them the better. However, there are also positive aspects that encourage the students to contribute, and that will be shortly discussed too.

Contrary to the previous ranking, positive teachers' traits are proved to have the highest impact when promoting students' engagement in class. According to Abdullah, Bakar & Mahbob's (2012) study on the students' reasons to speak up in class, pupils feel more comfortable and less afraid to contribute in class when their teacher is friendly, approachable and does not constantly criticize the students' answers and attitudes. Moreover, instructors who are flexible, open-minded and have a sense of humour are very appreciated by the students because they make learning and participating fun and exciting (Mustapha & Rahman, 2010).

In the second place, there are the personal traits along with the classmates' traits. Although the students' personality plays a significant role, it does not have such a big impact as the relationship between them and their classmates. Hence, it has been proved that when students are cooperative and supportive of one another, the classroom climate is much more positive and comfortable which helps the students to let their worries go, ask questions, or raise comments (Fassinger, 1996). Thanks to the fact of having friends in class, the students feel less fearful and more confident and relaxed, since they are not afraid of having their classmates laughing or negatively evaluating them (Mustapha & Rahman, 2010).

Furthermore, it has been observed that pupils' participation increases when students perceived the class content as engaging. There is no denying that depending on the subject some students will be more active than others, either because of their intellectual abilities or their personal preferences. According to Mustapha and Rahman (2010), the students' unwilling attitudes towards the content being taught may change if the activities are interesting and funny. Similarly, the results of these two scholars' investigation show that pupils will participate more if they have previously studied and learned the topic, likewise when the subject is controversial.

Finally, the environmental factor can increase the students' engagement and contribution too. Comfort in the classroom is essential for both teachers and students, for the reason that being comfortable in the school room makes it easier for students to participate and for teachers to control class discussions and activities. In small classrooms, pupils' participation increases because they do not have to yell to be heard, thus "students feel not ashamed to ask and instructors are able to focus more on students (Abdullah, Bakar and Mahbob, 2012, p. 520)". Besides the importance of the classroom size, learners also consider that working in smaller groups rather than in bigger groups makes participation and interaction less difficult since students consider that people become friendlier when the group class is small.

Evidently, there is no denying that the pupils' participation changes since it is affected by the different factors mentioned above. The pupils will contribute more or less frequently depending on the extent to which all these factors affect them, hence some students may consider the teachers' traits the principal factor, whereas other students may be more conditioned by the environmental one.

3.3. The different types of learners and their participation in class

There are no instructions that help teachers to discover and decipher the different learners' behaviours and necessities. Indeed, each student is a world of their own, that is why finding out their reasons to decide whether participating or not, is particularly difficult. Moreover, most of the studies are focused on the teachers' perceptions of the students' participation, but exploring the students' feelings and insights is also crucial, because these two aspects correspond to the students' own experiences and perceptions on classroom participation (Mustapha and Rahman, 2010).

Learners are diverse and difficult to classify, especially in two groups: the active and the passive students. The former category encompasses those students who show confidence, ask questions, share their opinions and take part in class discussions. The latter is formed by those pupils that instead of raising their voice to participate in the classroom activities, they prefer to go unnoticed, write notes and only listen to the lecturer (Abdullah, Bakar and Mahbob, 2011). Moreover, in another study that Abdullah, Bakar and Mahbob carried out in 2012, they concluded that learners who are responsible, curious and enjoy activities such as reading, they tend to actively take part in class. On

the contrary, passive students struggle to focus in class and they do not show interest either in learning or the topic being studied, they prefer to ask another classmate over the teacher. Indeed, these traits cause them to be less confident and unwilling to take part during the lessons, discussions and group work activities.

Likewise, inside the two overall categories mentioned before, there has been found four specific classroom communication patterns. In 2001, the scholar Liu established four types of students' classroom participation: total integration, conditional participation, marginal interaction and silent observation. The first category, total integration, includes those active and extroverted students that represent what can be called as the appropriate and ideal type of participation; their contributions are usually spontaneous and natural. The conditional participation is formed by shy learners whose participation is limited, but they are persistent on doing so, in other words, they take part when they feel confident about their contributions, and after having participated, they carefully reflect about it. Then, there is the marginal interaction which encompasses inactive and introverted students who prefer listening to the teacher rather than participating, these learners occasionally speak up, and if they participate, it is because they have internally practiced before doing so. And lastly, the silent observation formed by those students who are extremely introverted and avoid participating in class, according to Liu's study these participants have just given up on oral participation, and their learning strategies rely on notetaking or tape recording.

Additionally, the four previous categories of student's forms of participation can be related to McCrae and John's article "An Introduction to the Five-Factor Model and Its Application (1991)". In this text, the two academics introduce the five basic dimensions of the human's personality: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience. Throughout the years, educational researchers have used McCrae and John's investigation to analyse if there exists a connection between the pupil's personality and their academic achievements. For instance, the researchers Caspi, Beyth-Marom and Saporta (2006) found out that students who actively participate during the lessons are higher in extraversion as well as in openness to experience, contrary to those who do not wish to participate that are higher on neuroticism. Therefore, students with an open and extroverted personality represent Liu's category of total integration, whereas pupils who are neurotic, shy and quiet exemplify the silent observation.

Undeniably, the different forms of participation changes depending on the students' character and necessities, but then again there is another factor that has also been studied, and that is the gender. The academics Murphy, Eduljee, Parkam and Croteau (2018) discussed the existing differences between female and male students regarding their classroom participation. Opposite to the female students who are keen on active teaching methods, males prefer passive teaching methods such as lectures, handwritten notes rather than visuals (PowerPoints, computers, etc.). Regarding the classroom group activities, female students are more predisposed to get involved than male students:

For males, the top two activities that counted as participation in the classroom included actively participating in organised classroom activities (89.7%) and volunteering to answer professors' questions/listening (84.6%). For females, the top two activities included: volunteering to answer professors' questions (94,1%) and asking the professor questions (91.1%) (Murphu, Eduljee, Parkam & Croteau, 2018, p. 313).

However, both males and females concur on preferring to volunteer in order to answer the teachers' questions, rather than be selected by the teacher to answer the questions (Murphy, Eduljee, Parkam & Croteau, 2018).

In conclusion, there is a wide variety of students' behaviours and the different forms of participation that exist in the classrooms. Achieving an understanding will help the teachers to create a participative environment that according to Abdullah, Bakar & Mahbob(2012): "...means not only a lot of question and talking from the students, but it also means an environment where every student learned in a manner which best suits him or her(p. 69)." The sooner the teacher learns to comprehend the students' forms of participation, the easier will be to create a conducive learning environment in which learners feel comfortable and free to participate.

3.4. The role of the emotions when teaching and learning a foreign language

The concept of participation is intrinsically connected to emotions since the learning process is also an emotional process. That is why, we cannot discuss about classroom participation without analysing the huge role that emotions play in the foreign languages' lessons, more in particular, the English lessons. Although, the students'

contribution in class is important no matter the subject being taught, during the English lessons' is essential as the students are stepping out of their comfort zone in learning to express their thoughts and feelings in another language.

Certainly, the students' level of engagement and interest will evolve differently depending on their emotions towards the language they are learning. As it has been previously stated, one of the principal factors influencing participation is the emotional climate of the classroom, students become more active when they have a positive relationship with the teacher and classmates. Feeling comfortable in class motivates the students to overcome the obstacles they may find throughout the process of studying difficult content (Schonert-Reichl, 2017). What is more, teachers' emotions also affect the classroom environment: "Conversely, when teachers poorly manage the social and emotional demands of teaching, students demonstrate lower performance and on-task behaviour (Schonert-Reichl, 2017, p. 139)". Therefore, managing and working with emotions is crucial not only for the learner but also for the teacher. Unfortunately, students have trouble to communicate their thoughts in English due to the fact of not having the same speech level as they have in their L1, which causes them to perceive English colder and less appropriate for the expression of the emotions (Dewaele, 2005).

Certainly, humans are emotional beings and we have the constant necessity to share our emotions with each other. Besides, sharing our feelings we unconsciously pass them on to the others, this communicative process has been defined as "emotional contagion". Regarding the educational area, this process links teachers and students happiness, as a result of their investigation, Dewaele and Moskowitz (2019) concluded students are more invested in learning and participating if they feel that their teachers are satisfied with what they have accomplished in life, including the decision to choose teaching as their profession. Moreover, Dewaele and Moskowitz (2019) argue that teachers' emotions are perceived by the students through their non-verbal communication, in other words, their body language as well as their facial expressions: nodding, smiling, voice tone or gestures. Therefore, seen that there exists such a strong connection between the emotions of teachers and students "teachers could and should actively strike to make teaching a positive experience both for their own sake and for their students (Dewaele & Moskowitz, 2019, p. 11).

Furthermore, English learners do not only experience positive emotions, but also negative emotions such as anxiety. J.C Dewaele and L. Dewaele (2017) divided the emotions that students experience when learning a foreign language into two general concepts: Foreign Language Enjoyment (FLE) and Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety (FLCA). Even more, it has been proved that students who truly enjoy learning the foreign language have lower levels of FLCA, which means that those students who have a positive attitude towards the language being learnt feel less anxious (J.C Dewaele & L. Dewaele, 2017).

Teachers should focus on creating fun and dynamic activities that motivate the students. The lessons should be unpredictable and challenging for the purpose to avoid tiring activities which students might find repetitive and boring : “We conclude that effective teachers fuel learners’ enthusiasm and enjoyment and do not spent too much time worrying about their FLCA (J.C. Dewaele, Witney, Saito & L. Dewaele, 2017, p. 18)”. Indeed, encouraging the students to have fun and let themselves go when learning the language may help them to forget negative feelings such as anxiety. The FLCA comes primarily from their command of the language, meaning that the students who are less advanced in the language are the ones experiencing anxiety the most (J.C. Dewaele & L. Dewaele, 2017). Whereas, FLE depends on the students’ personality, the teachers’ traits together with the characteristics of the language, FLCA is mainly caused by the classmates’ judgments (J.C. Dewaele & L. Dewaele, 2017).

The most positive emotion encouraging students to participate is the feeling of being motivated and inspired. The learners need to see that there is a reason for them to participate, in other words, they must find their own personal motive, this motivation can be related to academic reasons or personal reasons. The student will become more actively engaged during the lessons, if he or she perceives that participation will positively affect his or her grades (Fassinger, 1996). Indeed, one of the principal students’ objectives is to pass the subject, that is why is so relevant to make them notice that their participation can also help both the students who aim to pass the subject and those who wish to achieve an excellent mark. In order to help the pupils to discover which are their personal motives, instructors can use the “possible selves” paradigm (Markus & Nurius, 1986). According to the educational researchers MacIntyre and Gregersen:

Trough imagined possible selves must be a present reality for the individual, and frame future goals through creating vivid self-images. By elaborating possible selves, integrated goals and plans for achieving them are set that include ways to translate into actions (2012, pp. 201).

Given these points, it is clear to see that emotions play a pivotal role in the students' learning process, but also in their contribution during the lessons. During the language lessons, pupils are stepping out of their comfort zone which makes them feel unsure and less confident, that is why the use and transmission of positive emotions is so significant. Furthermore, teachers play a fundamental part when creating a positive classroom environment, since depending on how the students perceive the instructor their participation will increase or decrease, meaning that emotions can actually be contagious. And what is more, pupils need to enjoy learning the language instead of feeling anxious when doing so, their learning process will be much more effective if their attitude towards the language is positive.

4. METHODOLOGY

The current study methodology is based on an interpretative approach and its main objective consists of the research and collection of data. With the objective of collecting the information, two principal methods will be used: the quantitative method and the qualitative method. Apart from collecting both quantitative and qualitative data via questionnaires and interviews, an additional key approach will be the observation of the learners' behaviours and interactions during the language lessons.

4.1. Instruments

With the objective of collecting the sufficient data to achieve a deep knowledge and understanding of the students' participation, the research will be divided into three types of information gathering instruments: observation grids, questionnaires and interviews.

4.1.1. Observation grids

The investigation will include two different observations grids. The first observation grid (see annex I) will be designed in order to evaluate the students' overall participation during the English lessons, whereas the second observation grid (see annex II) will analyse the students' contribution during the Catalan and Spanish lessons.

Therefore, the two observation grids will let me examine and compare in what manner the students' mood and participation changes when the language they are learning is not their native tongue.

4.1.2. Questionnaires

Three different questionnaires have been designed for the participants to take. The first survey addresses the distinct factors that may be influencing the students' participation, two versions of it have been designed; one version for the students to take (see annex III) and the other one designed for the language teachers to complete (see annex IV). Also, these questionnaires are divided into two parts, the first one focuses on the negative factors, whereas the second one addresses the positive factors influencing the learners' participation. The second survey designed for the students to complete, it seeks to discover the role of emotions during the foreign language acquisition and if the language that the students are learning has an impact on their participation (see annex V). Lastly, the third survey aims to find out in what manner the students' personality encourages or prevents them from participating during the lessons and the types of participation which can be found in the class (see annex VI). It must be mentioned that the questionnaires are written in Catalan so that everyone is able to complete it, for the reason that the students of 1st of ESO as well as the Catalan and Spanish teachers do not have the enough level of English to properly understand and complete the questionnaires.

4.1.3. Interviews

With the objective of collecting the qualitative data, three different interviews have been designed: one for the English teacher (see annex VII), one version for the Spanish and Catalan teachers (seen annex VIII) and the other one to interview three students (see annex IX). The teachers' interview will discuss their perceptions of the pupils' forms and levels of participation during their lessons, and the three different learners will be interviewed to discover their thoughts about their own participation. Therefore, by interviewing not only the teachers, but also the students, I will be able to discover the views of both sides. In exception of the interview with the English teacher which will be performed in English, the rest of them will be in Catalan since the other participants do not have the sufficient English proficiency to conduct the interviews in this language.

4.2. Participants

The participants that will take part in the data-gathering process are the students' coursing 1st of ESO and their respective language teachers:

- The course of 1st of ESO is divided into three groups formed by 25 students each, and the English level among the students is the elementary (A1-A1+). It is important to mention that in each class there is a small number of students who have a good command of the English language and the vast majority of the learners have the English level expected from the 1st of ESO student, nevertheless there are some pupils who struggle with the language. Each class has the exact amount of three hours per week of the subjects of English, Catalan and Spanish.
- Three students from each group will be interviewed. These participants will be the class representative of each group.
- Three language teachers will take part in the data collection. These participants are the respective language teachers of the 1st of ESO students who also take part in the investigation. Each teacher participating in the study teaches a different language: one English teacher, one Catalan teacher and one Spanish teacher.

4.3. Procedure

To begin with, I will start by observing two sessions of each subject with the objective of analysing the students' participation during the lessons. The observation grid will be filled by me during the sessions, in order to avoid having the students distracted by my presence, I will be seated in the back of the classroom in complete silence.

The surveys will be administered at the end of the second trimester (2019-2020) during three of the English lessons and they will be completely anonymous. In first place, I will administer the surveys to the students, and after that, I will orally explain the instructions to complement it with the written guidelines in the surveys, in this manner the students will have a clear idea of how to answer the documents. Following the explanation, the learners will be asked if they have any questions about the forms. Once clarified all the doubts, the students will have the last ten minutes of the session to answer the surveys.

The next and final step will be the interviews. All the interviews will be recorded and then transcribed by me; each one will last about 15 minutes. Before starting with the interviews, I will give the participants one document for them to sign which asserts that

they accept and give me permission to record their interviews. Regarding the students who are minors, their parents will be the ones signing the document. The participants will be able to choose which day they prefer to be interviewed, the teachers will be asked at what time they prefer to carry out the interview, and the interview to the three students will take place during one of the breaks. The first educator to be interviewed will be the English teacher, then I will interview the Spanish teacher and lastly the Catalan teacher. After having interviewed the instructors, the next and last step will be interviewing the three students.

4.4. Context

The investigation will be conducted in one public high school located in the city of Barcelona. This centre encompasses all levels from ESO to Bacallaureate as well as Vocational Training. Additionally, in this secondary school I should have had completed my 210h practicum as part of my postgraduate studies *Màster en Formació del Professorat d'ESO i Batxillerat, Formació Professional I Ensenyament d'Idiomes: Anglès*.

5. DISCUSSION

Unfortunately, I was not able to conduct the investigation due to the closure of schools caused by the fast spread of the virus COVID-19 all over the world. On the 14th of Mai the Spanish Government decreed the alarm state, hence several measures were taken to stop the spread of the virus, one of these measures was the closure of all the education centres and the end of face-to-face classes. Therefore, it was impossible for me to continue conducting my practicum nor the collection of data that I was supposed to include in this dissertation. The Spanish citizens were forced to stay at home which made inviable the data gathering, for the reason that most of the materials were specifically designed to be carried out face to face, for instance, I was not able to fill out the observation grids since I could not observe any of the programmed sessions. During the quarantine it was practically impossible to contact the teachers and students, which made inviable the gathering of data, inter alia, due to the lack of responses.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Certainly, every class is formed by different students with different mindsets and ideals, thus each one of them has a distinct form of participation which is defined by the students' personalities. The classroom participation increases or decreases depending on the pupils' level of engagement which is determined by a group of factors that affect every student in a different manner. Additionally, the emotional climate in which the students are working influences their contribution in the classroom since the emotions that the students feel dictate their actions.

Furthermore, three of the four principal objectives have been covered thanks to the theoretical framework. The objectives 1, 2 and 3 have been covered by virtue of the several research papers as well as the academics essays included and mentioned in the theoretical framework. Nonetheless, the objective 4 has not been accomplished due to the fact that I could not collect the relevant data to explore and assert this point.

This research proposal delves into the factors affecting classroom participation as well as the impact that the use of the foreign language has on the students' involvement during the lessons. Throughout the years, many academics have studied and asserted different theories regarding the students' motives to decide whether or not to take part in class. Therefore, this study collects and examines the theories which discuss the factors affecting classroom participation that have been discovered throughout the years. Furthermore, it will help teachers not only to understand the reasons why students do not wish to participate, but also the principal motives that encourages them to contribute. Indeed, this study can be used as a guide for teachers because it will help them to be aware of what they should or should not do to improve the students' participation as well as the learning environment.

Among the key points of the study, it is essential to mention the four principal factors influencing the students' participation. The four main factors can be described as the reasons for students to participate and they are classified into four main categories: personal reasons, instructors related reasons, course related reasons and classroom environment related reasons. Another highlight of the research is the two types of students' participation: the active participation and the passive participation (Abdullah, Bakar and Mahbob, 2011). The former category encompasses those students who enjoy participating in the classroom, while the latter includes those pupils who prefer to remain quiet. Additionally, the analysis and discussion of the different types of students that we

may find in a class is also crucial, because it helps the reader to understand the distinct pupils' perspectives, hence the understanding that each learner has a different form of participation depending on his or her personality is vital. Also, it must be highlighted the role of emotions in foreign language teaching as well as learning, for the reason that it has been proved that during the foreign language lessons, the students experience emotions such as anxiety or enjoyment depending on their command of the language (J.C. Dewaele & L. Dewaele, 2017). Likewise, positive emotions will improve the acquisition of the language as well as the classroom environment, because the students will get involved during the lessons as they will feel much more comfortable when asking questions or sharing their thoughts with their classmates and the teacher.

With the objective of continue completing the research of the students' participation in the classroom, there are certain aspects that should be studied in more depth. I believe that it would be relevant to study how the friendship between students affects their participation in the classroom, for the reason that one of the principal factors that affects the students are their classmates' traits. The fear of being judged by their classmates when participating prevents the pupils to take part during the lessons, thus future studies should focus on analysing the significant impact that friendships have on the students' participation. Additionally, further studies should also analyse the role of the teacher and in what manner the pupils' participation changes depending on the teaching method being used, hence prospective studies should not only explore the different teachers' personalities, but also the distinct teaching approaches and its efficacy. It is known that the teachers' attitudes and reactions clearly affect the students' participation, hence it would be interesting to study the distinct teachers' behaviours and the various effects of their actions.

In conclusion, the students are emotional beings who are always conditioned by distinct factors which are not only academic but also personal factors. Every teacher wishes to create a conducive learning environment, nevertheless in order to create that we must discover which are the elements preventing the students from taking part during the lessons. Indeed, the more we study the classroom participation, the easier will be to create a positive environment which will improve not only the emotional climate but also the bond between the teachers and their students, for the reason that both sides will feel that their opinions and perspectives are welcomed in class.

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8. ANNEXES

ANNEX I – Observation grid 1

Observation Grid

Course:

Date:

The students' participation during the English lessons	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
The students volunteer to answer the teacher questions.			
The students wait until the teacher selects them to answer the questions.			
The students are actively taking part in discussions with other students during the lessons.			
The students' behaviours change depending on the teacher's attitudes and mood.			
The students share their thoughts and doubts with the teacher.			
There is a group of active students who are always participating.			
There is a group of passive students who never participate.			
There is a group of students who sometimes participate but prefer to remain quiet.			
Active participation during group activities.			

Comments

ANNEX II – Observation grid 2

Observation Grid

Course:

Date:

Levels of the students' participation during the Catalan and Spanish lessons	Regularly	Occasionally	Never
The students volunteer to answer the teacher questions.			
The students wait until the teacher selects them to answer the questions.			
The students are actively taking part in discussions with other students during the lessons.			
The students' behaviours change depending on the teacher's attitudes and mood.			
The students share their thoughts and doubts with the teacher.			
There is a group of active students who are always participating.			
There is a group of passive students who never participate.			
There is a group of students who sometimes participate but prefer to remain quiet.			
Active participation during group activities.			

Comments

ANNEX III – Students' questionnaire 1

Qüestionaris dels alumnes – Primera part

Curs:

Data:

Instruccions:

El qüestionari que realitzaràs a continuació és completament anònim. A partir de la teva pròpia experiència i opinió sobre els diferents factors que afecten de manera negativa la teva participació a classe, et demanem que completis el següent qüestionari. Marca amb una X el número que tu consideris que s'apropa més al teu punt de vista.

1. Gens
2. Molt poc
3. Prou
4. Bastant
5. Moltíssim

Qüestionari: Factors que afecten negativament la teva participació	1	2	3	4	5
Influència de la personalitat i estat d'ànim.					
Influència del professor (proximitat, actitud, etc.).					
Influència dels companys de classe.					
Influència de la assignatura i el seu contingut (nivell de dificultat, contingut interessant i rellevant).					
Influència del entorn físic (condicions de l'aula, número de companys de classe, organització de les taules, etc.).					

Comentaris personals

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- Students' questionnaire

Qüestionaris dels alumnes – Segona part

Curs:

Data:

Instruccions:

El qüestionari que realitzaràs a continuació és completament anònim. A partir de la teva pròpia experiència i opinió sobre els diferents factors que afecten de manera positiva la teva participació a classe, et demanem que completis el següent qüestionari. Marca amb una X el número que tu consideris que s'apropa més al teu punt de vista.

1. Gens
2. Molt poc
3. Prou
4. Bastant
5. Moltíssim

Qüestionari: Factors que afecten positivament la teva participació	1	2	3	4	5
Influència de la personalitat i estat d'ànim.					
Influència del professor (proximitat, actitud, etc.).					
Influència dels companys de classe.					
Influència de la assignatura i el seu contingut (nivell de dificultat, contingut interessant i rellevant).					
Influència del entorn físic (condicions de l'aula, número de companys de classe, grups, etc.).					

Comentaris personals

ANNEX IV – Teachers' questionnaire

Qüestionari dels professors/res – Primera part

Instruccions:

Data:

Des del teu punt de vista sobre els diferents factors que afecten de forma negativa la participació dels estudiants durant les lliçons de la teva assignatura, et demanem que completis el següent qüestionari. Marca amb una X el número que tu consideris que s'apropa més al teu punt de vista.

1. Gens
2. Molt poc
3. Prou
4. Bastant
5. Moltíssim

Factors que afecten negativament la participació dels alumnes	1	2	3	4	5
Influència de la personalitat i estat d'ànim.					
Influència del professor sobre els alumnes.					
Influència dels companys de classe.					
Influència de la assignatura i el seu contingut (nivell de dificultat, contingut interessant i rellevant).					
Influència del entorn físic (condicions de l'aula, número de companys de classe, grups, etc.).					

Comentaris personals

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Qüestionari dels professors/res – Segona part

Instruccions:

Data:

Des del teu punt de vista sobre els diferents factors que afecten de forma positiva la participació dels estudiants durant les lliçons de la teva assignatura, et demanem que completis el següent qüestionari. Marca amb una X el número que tu consideris que s'apropa més al teu punt de vista.

1. Gens
2. Molt poc
3. Prou
4. Bastant
5. Moltíssim

Factors que afecten positivament la participació dels alumnes	1	2	3	4	5
Influència de la personalitat i estat d'ànim.					
Influència del professor sobre els alumnes.					
Influència dels companys de classe.					
Influència de la assignatura i el seu contingut (nivell de dificultat, contingut interessant i rellevant).					
Influència del entorn físic (condicions de l'aula, número de companys de classe, grups, etc.).					

Comentaris personals

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ANNEX V- Students' questionnaires 2

Qüestionari dels alumnes

Data:

Instruccions:

Curs:

El qüestionari que realitzaràs a continuació és completament anònim. Tenint en compte la teva pròpia experiència i percepcions durant les lliçons d'anglès i l'aprenentatge de l'idioma, et demanem que completis el següent qüestionari.

1. Mai
2. A vegades
3. Sempre

Qüestionari: Experiència sobre la participació durant l'assignatura d'anglès.	1	2	3
Em produeix ansietat participar durant les lliçons d'anglès.			
Em produeix ansietat preguntar o intervenir durant les lliçons pel fet d'haver de parlar en anglès.			
Prefereixo utilitzar el català quan participo durant les lliçons, ja que m'és més difícil expressar-me en anglès.			
Prefereixo no participar i així evitar parlar en anglès per por al que els companys/es de classe puguin pensar o dir.			
Prefereixo no preguntar o intervenir en anglès per por a la resposta o repressió del professor/a.			
Al intervenir i parlar en anglès, em sento més jutjat/da per part dels companys/es que per part del professor/a.			
Em sento més o menys còmode depenent de la meva relació i opinió sobre el professor/a d'anglès.			
Em sento més còmode al participar durant les lliçons de català o castellà que en les d'anglès.			
Considero que el meu nivell d'anglès augmenta o disminueix el meu gaudi de l'assignatura.			

Comentaris personals

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ANNEX VI - Students' questionnaire 3

Qüestionari dels alumnes

Curs:

Data:

Instruccions:

El qüestionari que realitzaràs a continuació és completament anònim. Et demanem que de cada pregunta elegeixis la opció que més s'assembli al teu pensament. Només has d'escollir una única opció.

1. Quina de les següents opcions et motiva a participar durant les lliçons?
 - a. Contingut interessant, actual i amb el qual et sentis identifica/da.
 - b. Professor/a comprensiu, amable, divertit, etc.
 - c. Compartir la teva opinió personal amb la classe.
 - d. Suport i bona relació amb els companys.
2. Per quina raó no participes a classe?
 - a. Timidesa
 - b. Inseguretat
 - c. Desmotivació
 - d. Por a l'ofensa
3. Quina de les dues opcions descriu millor el teu comportament durant les classes?
 - a. Romandre en silenci, prendre apunts, escoltar al professor/a i demanar dubtes al company/a.
 - b. Intervenir espontàniament, preguntar dubtes i compartir criteris amb la classe.
4. Escull la opció amb la que et sentis més identificat/da.
 - a. Participació espontània i natural: no et fa vergonya, ni tampoc et produeix inseguretat el fet d'intervenir a classe.
 - b. Participació dependent de la situació o context: predilecció per preguntar un dubte al company/a abans que alçar la veu i preguntar-ho al professor.
 - c. Participació necessària: predilecció per escoltar i prendre apunts abans que intervenir oralment, tot i que si és necessari es participa.
 - d. No participació: defugi d'haver de participar oralment, prendre apunts, etc.

ANNEX VII – Interview to the English teacher

The following interview seeks to discover the English teacher’s views on the students’ participation during the English lessons.

Name of the interviewee:

Date:

1. In your opinion. What are the principal reasons for the students to decide whether or not to participate during the English lessons?
2. Do you consider that the majority of students participate actively or passively?
3. According to you. What role does the students’ self-esteem play when participating in the classroom?
4. Do you believe that the students’ participation increases when the classes are smaller groups? And if so, what are the reasons for this to happen?
5. Do you consider that the students’ participation increases with more or less frequency depending on their level of English?
6. Do you believe that the students participate less during the English lessons because it is more difficult for them to express their opinions and views in the foreign language?
7. Several studies assert the theory that positive emotions in the classroom benefit the foreign language acquisition as well as the students’ participation. Do you agree with this theory? If so, why?
8. Do you believe that the students experience the feelings of anxiety and nervousness when having to take part in class because it is neither of their first languages?

Additional Comments

ANNEX VIII - Interview to the Catalan and Spanish teachers

The following interview seeks to discover the Catalan and the Spanish teacher views on the students' participation during their lessons.

Nom del entrevistat/da:

Data:

1. Quins motius creu que determinen la participació dels alumnes?
2. Considera que la majoria dels estudiants participen activament o passivament?
3. Des del seu punt de vista. Quin rol juga l'autoestima dels alumnes al participar durant les lliçons?
4. Considera que la participació dels alumnes augmenta quan les classes són en grups més reduïts? I si és així, quines són les raons per les quals passa això?
5. Considera que els alumnes participen amb més o menys freqüència depenent del contingut que s'estigui ensenyant o per por al ser jutjats?
6. Durant les seves classes, s'adona de si els alumnes volen expressar oralment les seves opinions i punts de vista?
7. Considera que la relació entre els alumnes afavoreix o desfavoreix la participació a classe?
8. Considera que els alumnes es senten més còmodes i segurs quan han de participar durant les seves lliçons pel fet de que és una de les seves llengües natives?

Additional Comments

ANNEX IX - Interview to the students

The following interview seeks to discover the students' views on their participation in the classroom.

Nom del entrevistat/da:

Data:

Curs:

1. Consideres que participes amb més freqüència durant les lliçons de català i castellà que durant les lliçons d'anglès ? Si és així, quins són els motius ?
2. Prefereixes evitar participar durant les classes d'anglès pel fet d'haver d'utilitzar la llengua anglesa?
3. Perceps la llengua anglesa com més distant i freda a l'hora d'expressar i compartir opinions?
4. Experimentes ansietat o nerviosisme quan has d'intervenir parlant en anglès? Si és així, em podries explicar quines són les raons?
5. Quins factors diries que t'afecten més a l'hora de decidir si participar o no durant les lliçons? Un exemple podria ser la relació amb el professor, el contingut de l'assignatura, timidesa, etc.
6. Com descriuries la teva personalitat?
7. Prefereixes participar en activitats en grup o individuals?
8. Consideres que participes més o menys dependent de la personalitat i actitud del professor/a?

Additional Comments