

Authentic Materials: A Motivational Tool for the EFL Classroom?

Mark Graham Sample

Foreign Languages Education Center, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, 89
Wangsan-ri, Mohyeon-myeon, Choin-gu, Yongin-si, Gyeonggi-do, South Korea

E-mail: sample5353@gmail.com

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Abstract

This research paper set out to explore if the use of authentic materials in the classroom increases young ‘English as a Foreign Language’ (EFL) learners’ motivation. The 10 week investigation used a qualitative approach with 15 participants studying in two separate classes each week. The control class used contrived materials from a standard EFL textbook and the experimental class used authentic materials such as movie extracts, restaurant menus and maps. A significant amount of data was collected through a number of methods which included; recording classroom interaction, student diaries, student interviews and a questionnaire.

The investigation found that the participants’ motivation only increased when exposed to certain authentic materials, and that others caused de-motivation with ‘text difficulty’ observed as a key reason for this. The data revealed the varied nature of the materials used in the experimental class increased motivation in comparison to the control class, which noted repetitiveness as a cause of student dissatisfaction. Additionally, the authentic materials often incorporated activities that the participants liked and this helped raise motivation. Finally, there was evidence that students’ motivation was tied into particular activity types rather than whether they were authentic or contrived based.

Keywords: Authentic materials, Contrived materials, EFL Classroom motivation

1. Introduction

The use of authentic materials in EFL learning has an extended history with Henry Sweet being one of the first linguists to regularly implement them in his textbooks. Sweet claimed, ‘the great advantage of natural, idiomatic texts over artificial ‘methods’ or ‘series’ is that they do justice to every feature of the language’ (1899, p. 177). He endorsed them on the grounds that they were natural and contained real language in comparison to the diluted version found in contrived materials. Sweet’s opinion is advocated by many today as it fits current popular teaching approaches; nevertheless, others like Widdowson (1996; 1998; 2003) argue contrived texts which reflect authentic ones over time as the student’s ability improves as more pedagogically acceptable. Widdowson noted issues such as the breadth of vocabulary, and the student’s lack of contextual and cultural knowledge as reasons for the need to utilize manipulated materials.

1.1 Focus on Motivation

The author’s investigation does not set out to explore the linguistic benefits linked to student achievement from the use of authentic materials, but rather to explore whether there are motivational advantages. The importance of motivation in EFL learning is that high motivation and engagement in learning have consistently been linked to reduced dropout rates and increased levels of student success (Dev 1997; Wood 1995). Dornyei emphasizes this through his personal experience, ‘that 99 per cent of language learners who really want to learn a foreign language (i.e. who are really motivated) will be able to master a reasonable working knowledge of it as a minimum, regardless of their language aptitude’ (2001, p.2). If Dornyei is correct, it is fundamentally important that student motivation receives strong consideration in the design and implementation of the tasks and activities that make up an EFL course. This leads back to authentic materials and the suggestion that they are not only useful resources for developing linguistic ability as represented by Sweet and approaches like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), but also as a means to raise motivation. Gilmore states that many linguists claim, ‘authentic materials are inherently more interesting than contrived ones because of their intent to communicate a message rather than highlight target language’ (2007, p.106). However, he does also acknowledge the opposing view of others that, ‘difficulties associated with authentic texts (because of the vocabulary used or the cultural knowledge presumed), de-motivate learners’ (p.107). The author’s experience as an EFL teacher in Seoul, South Korea is that the use of carefully selected authentic materials alongside contrived materials enriches the learning environment. They provide students with an element of surprise and the opportunity to experience some ‘real’ examples of English in action, which helps freshen up the classroom and in turn encourage motivation. Conversely, the author has encountered issues, such as text difficulty, which have left students confused or overwhelmed by the content and resulted in what the author identified as de-motivation.

1.2 The Investigation

The aim is to establish through a qualitative approach if there is a link between authentic materials and increased student motivation. It is important to reiterate that the author is not assessing if authentic materials produce improved results in terms of developing students’

linguistic achievement. The three main research questions this investigation will focus on are:

- Are students motivated through exposure to authentic materials?
- Which authentic activities and tasks do students find motivating?
- What difficulties do students face when using authentic materials and does this cause de-motivation?

2. Methodology

2.1 Qualitative Approach

The investigation exercised a qualitative approach with four different data collection methods:

1. **Questionnaire:** On the first day of the course the students completed a ‘My English History Questionnaire’. This was used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants. Information such as time spent studying English and the types of classroom activities they like/dislike were observed. The participants were allowed to complete the questionnaire in Korean and it was later translated by a Korean colleague.

2. **Learner diaries:** The participants kept a learner diary, which was completed as homework. They were asked to record their impressions of classroom events, such as materials, teacher and their fellow students. Students were told to write 5 sentences per entry and the diaries were collected at the beginning of each lesson. The diaries were completed in Korean and then translated into English. Due to the quantity of data, only significant points relevant to my research were selected for analysis and these were placed into recurring themes.

3. **Student interviews:** After reviewing the ‘My English History Questionnaires’ the author selected three students to be interviewed. These interviews took place in the second and tenth weeks of the course. The interviews happened in the classroom at the end of the lesson and were in English. They were transcribed in full.

4. **Recording classroom discourse:** Classroom interaction was recorded in both the contrived and authentic materials lessons. This occurred during the second and tenth week of the course. Due to the quantity of the data the author selected excerpts from the beginning, middle and end of the classes that were transcribed for analysis.

2.2 Participants

The 15 participants in this study attend a public elementary school in an affluent area of Seoul, South Korea. The author was the only other participant and my role was as the teacher of the entire course. The class was made up of seven grade 3 (9 years old) and eight grade 4 (10 years old) students. This age group was chosen because this study intends to reveal whether young EFL learners are motivated by authentic materials. The author taught all of the participants in their regular school English classes so they were familiar with his teaching style, except for one new arrival at the school. The participants all had prior experience

studying English; however, the class was mixed ability. This meant the author could select three students of different aptitudes based on the questionnaire feedback to use for student interviews. The participants were giving pseudo-names to protect their identity. Three students dropped out of the course at various points; fortunately, none of these were the students used for interviews.

2.3 Materials

The course used authentic materials in an experimental class and contrived materials in a control class. The contrived materials came from Rivers and Toyoyama's (2003) 'English Time 4' textbook. This textbook was selected because it is targeted at grade 4 learners of EFL and the texts and activities were highly contrived in nature. As noted there were seven grade 3 students in the class. Due to the school being in an affluent area, all seven of these students received additional English tuition at private academies, which meant their ability was high enough to use a grade 4 textbook. In the experimental class the author used my own authentic materials, which were selected based on his definition of 'authenticity' (see 2.1). To control the variables the topic titles and content were closely related in both classes. This was achieved by following the language structures and vocabulary found in the textbook as the basis for finding authentic materials. Furthermore, consideration to needs analysis and text difficulty was given by using the knowledge the author had attained teaching the participants over the previous two years and also from the feedback in the questionnaire (appendix 1). The questionnaire was issued to the students on the first day and collected after completion. The students were provided with notebooks which they took home to write their 'learner diaries'. A basic voice recorder was used to record the 'student interviews' and for 'recording classroom discourse'.

2.4 Procedure

A free class was opened for students under the title of 'English Conversation' and took place twice a week for 40 minutes each time over a 10 week period. Prior to enrolment the participants and parents were informed that only reasonable absenteeism would be accepted. In a control class the students studied contrived materials and in an experimental class they studied authentic materials. By using the same students in both classes the author was able to limit the variables. Additionally, the author alternated between teaching the control class first one week and the experimental class first the next week to keep the investigation fair. On the first day the students completed the 'My English History Questionnaire' in Korean detailing their history studying English. From the feedback the author selected three students each at different levels who were used for 'student interviews' at the beginning and the end of the course in English. Entire control and experimental lessons were recorded in the second and tenth weeks of the course. Additionally, the students' homework was to keep a diary in Korean detailing their feelings and experiences of each class. The parents provided consent forms and were asked to emphasize to their children the importance of taking the course seriously. The parents and students were aware the classes and interviews were being recorded; however, to avoid influencing the data, the full detail of the investigation was not revealed. They were vaguely told that the study set out to explore the influence of different

teaching materials on EFL learning.

3. Data Analysis and Discussion

3.1 Questionnaire

In this section the author will present the results and analyse the data from the 15 student questionnaires that were administered on the first day of the course. The anonymous 'My English History Questionnaire' revealed the participants' background, previous learning experiences and established the learning skills and activities they like and dislike.

3.1.1 Data Analysis and Discussion

The data shows a female to male ratio of 2:1, with an average age of 10.66 years. All of the students were born in South Korea, but one has spent time living abroad in America for one year. Most of the participants could be described as having instrumental motivation, as young learners studying English for academic purposes outside the target language country. This could suggest that the participants are likely to react less positively to authentic materials than second language learners in the target language country with integrative motivation. The student who has spent time abroad may have elements of integrative motivation based on her experiences in America. The respondents had spent between 6-9 years learning English and reported studying with a teacher on an average of 4.7 hours a week. This reflects the affluence of the area, as the Korean national curriculum offers 2 hours per week, which means nearly all of the students are receiving extra private tuition. Additionally, this raises the amount of instances respondents may have encountered authentic materials. The amount of time spent studying English with a teacher showed a range from 2-8 hours with only one participant stating 2 hours. The vast majority of the participants stated that they enjoy studying English, which is to be expected as the course was optional. Furthermore, 12 of the students responded that they anticipate using English in the future which ties into needs analysis and the likelihood that motivation is higher on this course than in compulsory school English lessons. Parental pressure could be explained as a possible reason for the 2 students being present who stated that they do not like English, as Korean society puts significant importance on EFL learning. Thus, even the 3 students who do not anticipate using English when they are older will be aware of the requirement placed on learning the language; however, this will not be as great a motivating factor as a high school student applying to a university, for example. The respondents highlighted listening and speaking as their favorite learning skills, which may reflect the dominance of CLT methods used in Korean EFL learning. Conversely, reading and writing are relatively untouched in the national curriculum until grade 5, and this may explain participants' reasoning for placing these as their least favored skills. The types of activities which were heavily favored included movies and playing games, which are known to raise motivation, particularly with young learners. The most disliked activities were grammar, which is seen by many students as a difficult and boring, and working alone, as young learners tend to favor group activities where they can collaborate and feel a sense of security. The results are highlighted in the table below:

<u>Gender</u>	
Female	10
Male	5
<u>Age</u>	
Range	10-11
Mean	10.66
<u>Nationality</u>	
South Korea	15
<u>Lived abroad</u>	
Yes	1
No	14
<u>Country</u>	
	America
<u>Time spent abroad</u>	
	1 year
<u>Years spent studying English</u>	
Range	6-9 years
Mean	7.4 years
<u>Hours spent studying English each week with a teacher</u>	
Range	2-8 hours
Mean	4.7 hours
<u>Favored classroom skills</u>	
Listening	45%
Speaking	28%
Reading	19%
Writing	8%
<u>Enjoy studying English</u>	

Yes	13
No	2
<u>Favored classroom activities</u>	
Watching movies	6
Games	4
Speaking with other students	2
Listening activities	1
Reading activities	1
Writing activities	1
<u>Disliked classroom activities</u>	
Grammar	6
Working alone	3
Speaking with the teacher	2
Speaking with other students	2
Writing activities	1
Reading activities	1
<u>Use English in the future?</u>	
Yes	12
No	3

From a critical perspective the questionnaire was in English as there was nobody available to translate it prior to the class. Higher level students and the author assisted respondents who had issues understanding the requirements and the participants were allowed to write their answers in Korean; however, some of the students potentially may not have understood several of the questions. The completed questionnaires were translated by a Korean co-worker. Finally, the nature of administering questionnaires to children means the credibility of the feedback cannot be considered totally reliable. Nevertheless, the results provided an insight into the participants' background and helped initiate other areas of the investigation.

3.2 Learner Diaries

This section will analyse the feedback from the student diaries which were used as one method to discreetly document the participants' opinions and experiences. On the first day of the course the students were given a notebook and told this was to be used to record their diary. They were informed this was compulsory homework and that it would be checked at the beginning of each class. The students were shown a PowerPoint detailing how they should complete their diary. They were provided two examples in Korean, one with positive feedback and the other negative. The diaries were translated from Korean to English by a Korean co-worker before analysis.

3.2.1 Data Analysis and Discussion

Due to the quantity of data, only significant points relevant to my research were selected for analysis. The following 5-step procedure recommended by Bailey (1983; 1990) and Bailey & Ochsner (1983) was used to select the significant points relevant to my research:

1. Diaries begin with a full account of the diarists' personal learning history.
2. Diarists are encouraged to be as candid as possible in their diary entries.
3. The initial database of all the respondents' diary entries are revised for public consumption. Six themes that will help answer the investigation's research questions are created.
4. The comments from the control and experimental group are separated. Patterns and recurring ideas in the diary entries are identified and placed into their relevant themes.
5. The data is interpreted and discussed.

Steps 3-5 are subjective and biased by the researcher's interpretations, but the procedure is required for practical reasons.

Expecting participants, especially children to produce diaries that would perfectly match the author's research interests was ambitious. For instance, Halbach (2000) found during his research that diaries were often of poor quality, overly brief and lacking in detail, and that compliance rates were less than 50%. The rate was much higher in this investigation (81%); however, there were certainly quality issues. Perhaps unsurprisingly, in general the diaries which matched expectations came from higher level students. For instance, despite asking for 5 sentences, in reality the lengths of the diary entries varied greatly from student to student. This is represented by two very different accounts below:

- 21 TG Today was good. I learned how to order food in a restaurant. Now I can order food in America. It's interesting to find out about the foods in America and also how much they cost. I didn't know what cents were, but now I know that 100 cents = 1 dollar. This is very useful for me. It's great! It was also funny pretending to be a customer and waiter with Sally. I want to do this class again.

34 LG It was too difficult so not fun.

The comments from the control and experimental classes were separated, and then once the author had selected the data for academic consumption, he placed the responses under different themes. The themes were selected on the basis that they were the most practical boundaries that assisted in answering my research questions. Segregation was complicated by the fact that some comments could have been placed under more than one theme. To overcome this the author put these comments under the theme he felt the writer was focusing on most. The author chose six thematic areas which were titled: ‘aspects that motivated students (activities, materials)’, ‘aspects that de-motivated students (activities, materials)’, ‘student emotions’, ‘teacher’, ‘classmates’ and ‘external concerns’. In the table below the author has documented the number of comments that were found for each theme within their categories of experimental and control:

<u>Theme</u>	<u>Experimental</u>	<u>Control</u>
Aspects that motivated students	33	20
Aspects that de-motivated students	16	22
Student emotions	8	5
Teacher	13	10
Classmates	18	9
External concerns	9	12

Nearly two thirds of the comments linked to aspects of motivation were highlighted in the experimental class with one example shown here:

15 RK It was a great class. The Lion King is a good movie. I wish we could have watched more. It was fun guessing the animal name and making a sentence.

Furthermore, there were more comments referring to aspects of de-motivation in the control class such as this comment below:

122 RS I hope we can finish this textbook fast and do things that are more interesting.

This represents the first piece of evidence to show that authentic materials were more motivating in this investigation. The remaining themes all revealed more comments for the

experimental class except for external concerns. There is a need to look more closely at the particular comments within each theme to establish if there are any recurring patterns that explain these results.

The aspects that motivated students theme linked to the experimental class showed that some students were more motivated by materials that they saw as relevant to them. There were 6 clear comments and one is noted below:

10 MT Today was not boring. I learned helpful information about musical instruments. This is useful because I want to be a piano player when I grow older.

The comment ties closely into Peacock's (1997) claim that students like authentic materials because they find them 'real'. It might be expected that comments in the theme of 'aspects that de-motivated' students in the control class would contain complaints that the textbook is not relevant, which reflects Pulverness' (1999) observation that EFL textbooks are designed for 'international contexts'; however, this was not the case. The author would suggest this is because the students are accustomed to using EFL textbooks in other English classes they attend. Rather than commenting about relevance, the general pattern fitted Wang and Sachs' (2011) observations that the texts were repetitive and boring. Fifteen comments observed this with one shown here:

123 TM The textbook is very similar. We read words then make a sentence. Same, same, same! It makes me tired!

There were six comments in the aspects that de-motivated students in the experimental class linked to the materials being too difficult and only one stating they were too easy. An example of the issues students faced is noted below:

37 ST We had to fill in the blanks but it was really difficult. There were lots of new words that I don't know.

Kienbaum et al. (1986) and Gonzalez (1990) both had difficulties in their studies identifying if it was the activity or specifically authentic materials that were motivating students. This can be observed by the 10 comments in the motivation theme referring to video clips and is supported by movies being chosen as the favorite activity in the 'My English History Questionnaire'. An example is highlighted here:

1 LG The Mr. Bean movie was so funny. I laughed a lot

Video clips were only used in the experimental class; nevertheless, the frequency and the nature of the comments suggest it was this particular activity type that was the motivating factor, rather than the fact they were authentic. Further evidence can be found from writing activities that were frequently highlighted as de-motivating when used in both the control and

experimental classes. The questionnaire feedback also showed this as the least favored learning skill. In both the examples for the experimental class and the control class the comments focus on the learning skill with no mention of the activity.

38 GM I hate writing. We had to write so much today. It wasn't fun.

124 RS It's very hard for me to write in English so I don't like it when we do.
The activities we studied today were not fun.

This could reflect the concept that students prefer activities that involve passive skills such as watching movies rather than activities that involve active skills like writing, which require more effort on the part of the learner.

A number of comments reflect the learning context in the classroom. This is in relation to the amount of comments made in the 'student emotions', 'the teacher' and 'classmates' themes. Dynamic Systems Theory (Ushioda 2008) highlighted the complexity of the learning environment in the sense that the setting and IDs are always dynamic. This helps explain how social aspects have a significant influence on the learning context. For instance, the responses linked to 'classmates' highlighted the different types of activities that were being used in each of the classes and also evidence of increased tension in the control class. Due to the nature of the textbook a lot of the contrived activities focused on teacher-student interaction, whereas the experimental class provided the opportunity for more pair or group based activities. The students' comments from the experimental class appear to show that they preferred the latter, as out of 18 comments, 12 were positive. There is an example below:

79 MT I like it when I can work together with my friends. I like you teacher,
but it's good to practice English with my friends and it's always fun.

In contrast only nine comments were made in the control class and notably five of these had negative connotations that highlighted classroom conflict. This suggests social aspects may have been having a negative effect on the learning context in the control class with this example a representation:

160 ST Somebody stole my pen. It made me angry so I didn't study well.

The data above also highlights the importance that relationships (student-student and teacher-student) in the classroom have on the learning process. The teacher's personality and teaching style affects the learning process, which includes motivation. As noted most of the students have experience studying with the author over the past two years and they were familiar with his techniques. More than two-thirds of the comments from the 'teacher' themes in both classes had strong positive connotations with the author being the participants' teacher. This comment reflects the observation:

58 ST It is always fun studying with Mark teacher. He helps us a lot.

Nevertheless, despite the students being highly positive towards their teacher, they did appear to prefer student-student interaction over teacher-student interaction. Despite highlighting some classroom conflict in the control class, like in the experimental class the remaining four comments were all positive in relation to being allowed to interact with their friends.

External factors were the final key issue noticeable in the diaries. An example is shown here:

94 RK I have a test tomorrow so it was hard to concentrate.

External factors often go unreported in research despite the fact they can have a major effect on learning and motivation. The example highlights how the student could not concentrate on the class and probably felt anxiety about the upcoming test which would have affected motivation. In total there were 21 comments within the ‘external factors’ theme and it is an element that requires further investigation into the consequences it has on EFL learning.

3.3 Student Interviews

This section will observe the data from the student interviews. The participants were selected based on the feedback from the ‘My English History Questionnaire’ and the teacher’s observation during the first lesson. Three students were selected, two of these reflected the overall class ability, and one was the participant who had spent a year living in America and had the highest level of English ability in the class. The interviews took place immediately after the lesson in the second and tenth weeks of the course. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in full. To avoid repeating what has been covered previously only elements that clearly offer new evidence or reinforcement for existing findings are highlighted.

3.3.1 Data Analysis and Discussion

The learner diaries revealed more comments in the motivating theme linked to the experimental class, which provided initial evidence that the students’ preferred authentic materials. However, this is not so evident from the interview data with the general findings highlighting that the participants liked and disliked certain aspects of both classes. For instance, all three participants complained about the difficulty of the worksheets used in the experimental class, but they all reported liking the video clips.

Chavez (1998) reported that more advanced students like working with authentic materials and Martinez (2002) found they were too difficult for lower levels. The student with the lowest ability of the three participants provided strong evidence to support this case. In both the first and second interview she highlighted that she liked the textbook because the experimental class was too difficult. Below is one example:

5 I [Teacher shows worksheets] Which one is difficult?

6 LG [Student points at the Seoul Zoo writing worksheet] but all hard

7 I Why?

8 LG Don't understand this. Many word so hard.

As a participant in this research the author observed some recurring difficulties that the students encountered whilst dealing with authentic materials. Firstly, when using worksheets the students were often confused with the varied layout and would show signs of stressfulness when encountering vocabulary they did not understand. Additionally and unsurprisingly, students had great difficulty answering comprehension questions following videos that did not include Korean subtitles as opposed to those that did. When asked, the students stated that the speakers on the videos spoke too fast.

In the second interview, the student who has lived abroad acknowledged having some difficulties with the authentic worksheets, such as dealing with difficult vocabulary, which could suggest even her level was not suitable for authentic materials. She believed the textbook was better for EFL learning; however, she stated from a motivational perspective that authentic materials can be more exciting. This reflects Gilmore's (2007) findings that students like them because they are challenging. The evidence is below:

15 I So which one is the most fun?

16 M [Student points to the worksheets] Because there is new word so we
T

17 can excite for the new word.

The respondent who reflected the class ability gave evidence to show it is the type of activity used rather than whether it is contrived or authentic that has the biggest influence on motivation. The participant stated that she likes writing and does not like reading and this was her reason for liking one activity and disliking another, as shown here:

3 This one why? [Student points to the Seoul Zoo writing worksheet]

4 K Because I like writing. I like animals.
M

5 I Okay Which was boring?

6 K This one [Reading activity in textbook]
M

7 I Why?

8 K I don't like reading. Many words and not fun.
M

All three interviews appear to highlight that there is no evidence of a 'time effect' linked to authentic materials in this investigation. The opinions of the interviewees appear consistent from the first interview to the second. For instance, the student who lived abroad highlights issues with text difficulty in both interviews and also how she enjoyed watching movies. In fact, it was only the control class that showed evidence of a 'time effect' as the students got used to the textbook. For example, in the first interview the student who lived abroad commented that:

42 I What is the most difficult?

43 M This part was the most difficult
T

44 [Student points to textbook forming sentences activity]

45 M Because it was kind of hard to make the sentences. Kind of confusing.
T

However, by the end of the course the participant showed evidence that she had adjusted to the textbooks' fixed layout and structure by claiming it was easier than working with the authentic materials, as shown here:

4 I So you preferred the textbook?

5 M Yeah
T

6 I Why do you prefer the textbook?

7 M Because textbook has the definition and there's word and picture. So
T

8 T If we don't know the word we see the picture. We know easily

Chavez's (1998) found that students liked materials that helped them achieve their goals, rather than those they found easy. The author's evidence suggests that this is not quite as attributable to young learners who do not have the same clear goals as older students. This is particularly the case with lower level students and is highlighted in my data by both students

who never lived abroad giving the reason of “it’s easy” for liking an activity. Below there is an example:

17 I Okay last question. What’s the favorite thing you’ve done?

18 LG [Student points to the textbook] This.

19 I Why?

20 LG Easy. Worksheets very hard.

Finally, it should be noted that the interviews were conducted in English as the author was the interviewer and there was no Korean/English speaker available to translate. This clearly had a damaging effect on the data as the participants had issues fully understanding my questions and also expressing their opinions. As a result, the quantity and quality of data was limited, and this is reflected by the length of the interviews. For instance, the student who lived abroad provided more data than the other two participants. Nevertheless, it was still possible to carry out analysis on the available data to help answer my research questions.

3.4 Student Interviews

This final section will analyse the data taken from the classroom recordings. Entire control and experimental classes were recorded in the second and tenth weeks. Due to the quantity of data, excerpts from the beginning, middle and end of class were transcribed. Once again, only data that provides new findings or substantiates existing analysis is covered.

3.4.1 Data Analysis and Discussion

The data from the contrived lessons shows a ‘time effect’. In the first class the teacher’s turns dominate the interaction. Notably, these are not long turns in the sense that the teacher is lecturing to the students, but short with lots of interrogatives, as the teacher attempts to encourage student participation. This is evident in excerpt 1 where every teacher turn except one contains a question. Nevertheless, the interrogatives prove unsuccessful at encouraging the majority of the class to participate, as except for two occasions or when the students speak as a class, it is only the student who has lived abroad that answers. By excerpt 3 there is more participation; nevertheless, it takes the students longer to answer and assistance from the teacher is required. This is observed through the number of pauses and hesitation devices used by the student and interruptions from the teacher. An extract is shown below:

106 S he (.) had er oh four pieces of apple pie
107 T we need
108 to make a question though
109 S oh er
110 T (.) how

- 111 SS how e[rr]
112 S [oh] I know
113 how many apple pie did they have?
114 T how many (1) pie[ces]=
115 S [ooh]
116 Pieces
117 T =how many pieces of apple pie did they have? one
118 more time

It may be argued that this occurred as it was only the first class and the students were nervous; however, as stated the students were highly familiar with me and their classmates.

Further support for a ‘time effect’ is shown by the tenth week data, that shows the students were well attuned to the textbook and were able to make their answers much faster and with less teacher assistance. The extract below flows much clearer as the student understands the requirement of the task. His only error is forgetting to change ‘walking’ into the past tense ‘walked’, which he corrects quickly after a little help.

- 344 S what were you doing when the er panda walking er
345 T walking
346 past
347 S oh yeah (.) walked by
348 T great what were you doing when
349 the panda walked by? (1) answer
350 S er (2) I was (1) I was
351 taking a (1) nap
352 T I was taking a nap (.) good job next

The student diaries and interviews gave the impression that the participants liked the lesson where they watched the video clip from the Lion King movie. The extract below shows this was not entirely true for the entire lesson as the students highlighted their dissatisfaction at the accompanying activity. Early in this excerpt the teacher was forced to motivate the students by offering a game if they finished the activity. The scream of “yesss” shows their delight and the reason a student gives for not enjoying the activity was that it was “too long” as seen here:

- 612 T what’s the last word?
613 SS played
614 T good (.) I played with my friends

there is evidence of some of the difficulties the author had as a teacher using them. The facts are found in excerpt 1 from the tenth week experimental class. The goal of the activity involves watching the Lion King video clip and when the teacher stops the video the students should make a past tense sentence about the animal in the clip. As is the nature of authentic materials, there was a recurrence in the animals and their actions which made the task repetitive and limited the vocabulary and grammar practice possible. This was an issue that occurred throughout the course as authentic materials are obviously not designed for ESL learning. It was a very time consuming task unearthing materials that fitted the classroom objectives and as the Lion King example shows even those that were chosen suffered certain flaws with regards to covering all the learning points.

4. Conclusion

Three key research questions (see 1.2) were posed and by following Larsen-Freeman and Cameron's (2008) advice to look for 'particular generalizability' it is possible to make conclusions.

To answer the first research question, the author believes the data has shown that the participants were motivated through exposure to authentic materials; however, not by all. The student diaries particularly highlighted this as there were 13 more comments linked to aspects of motivation for the experimental class than in the control class.

In relation to the second question, the questionnaire, student diaries and interviews showed authentic activities such as video clips and using restaurant menus in class raised motivation. There are two suggestions to explain this; the first is that they are real and provide the students interesting encounters with the target language; and secondly, they provide diversity to the classroom which the students desire as an escape from repetition.

Next, the third question highlights the connection between difficulties using authentic materials and de-motivation. It is not surprising that difficulty was the main cause of de-motivation in this investigation. Comparison between the control and experimental class showed that the participants had greater difficulty dealing with the worksheets that accompanied the authentic materials than the contrived textbook. The interview with the student that lived abroad highlighted that it was not just obvious factors such as increased vocabulary or varied language structures that was causing the issue, but it was also the variation from one authentic worksheet to the next. The participant stated in the first interview that the textbook was confusing and causing her difficulty; however, by the second interview she stated that she preferred the textbook for reasons linked to its layout and structure. This proves an interesting observation as the students appeared to become de-motivated by the repetitiveness of the contrived textbook; however, they respected its practicality for learning, which was probably reinforced by the difficulties they encountered with some of the authentic worksheets. It is important to note that the participants were willing to deal with the difficulty issue when they were particularly motivated by an activity. For instance, the students highlighted that whilst watching video clips they had issues with aspects such as difficult vocabulary and the speed of the speakers, but the feedback remained positive.

This exposes the issue that it was the activity that was motivating the participants and not because the materials were authentic. Additional support comes by the fact that the questionnaire results revealed the participants favorite learning skill was 'listening' and their favorite activity was 'watching movies'. Unfortunately the contrived material did not include any video clips so there is no way to categorically prove this observation within this study's data. Nevertheless, it highlights that the students preferred activities involving passive skills, which were more common in the experimental class. Additionally, the instances where de-motivation occurred in the experimental class were when the activity was active in nature, such as writing.

In summary, the investigation observed that all of the students showed motivation through exposure to some of the authentic materials; however, the nature of the activity appeared to influence motivation significantly. Additionally, text difficulty appeared to affect the motivation of the lowest level learners. Finally, one added finding was the importance of social goals in the classroom. The student interviews revealed the influence the teacher, students and external factors can have on the pedagogical environment.

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