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## MOTIVATION TO LEARN ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN BRAZIL – GIVING VOICE TO A GROUP OF STUDENTS AT A PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL

Raquel Bambirra\*

Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica de Minas Gerais  
Departamento de Linguagem e Tecnologia  
Belo Horizonte, MG, Brasil

**Abstract:** *This study investigated to what extent a group of Brazilian secondary public school students find themselves motivated to learn English at school. Motivation was conceptualized as participation, in terms of the students' attitudes towards their English classes. With the use of a logbook created for data collection in this research, the students expressed their motivational levels at the beginning and end of each class, during a school semester. The students' impressions were analyzed at individual (TURNER; PATRICK, 2008) and group (WENGER, 2009) levels. The results indicated that these students were usually motivated to attend these classes but the classroom experiences played an important role in motivating them even more. Also, the study acknowledged motivation as an ever-changing experiential construct deeply influencing the foreign language learning classroom, and at the same time, being deeply influenced by internal and external factors to the individuals and the language classroom as well.*

**Keywords:** *Motivation. Participation. English learning. Public school.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The objective of this article is to present and discuss motivational levels presented by a group of students at a regular secondary school in Brazil, before and after their English classes, over a school semester. Motivation is conceptualized and discussed as participation and the unit of analysis is observable behavior, activity. In other words, the students' attitudes towards the English course and their level of engagement to the learning activity performed by the group will be the observable behavior to account for motivation. At the individual level, participation will be assessed by students' volatility, i. e., the changes in interest to attend and engage the investigated English classes over a school semester. At the group level, it will be discussed by the amount of students engaged in the community practice each day, along the semester.

This article is organized in this way: first, some information on what may influence Brazilian adolescents' motivation to learn English nowadays will be given. After that, the theory orienting the data analysis will be presented. Then, the method used to collect and analyze the data will be explained. And finally, the results will be presented and discussed, leading to the final considerations drawn.

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\* E-mail: [raquelbambirra@gmail.com](mailto:raquelbambirra@gmail.com)

Due to economic and political circumstances, the United States had a great cultural influence over Brazil in the 20<sup>th</sup> C (HIRST, 2013). For this reason, English has been considered a language of prestige ever since. Analyzing the massive presence of words in English in Brazilian songs, T-shirts, names of places in general and products, Paiva (1999) shows how much ideology permeates language and reproduces power relations. The researcher concludes that learning English is a Brazilian middle class aspiration because it is seen as a way to ascend the social pyramid, since Brazilians usually associate English with status, power, and technological development.

The British Council has recently published a report on learning English in Brazil (DATA POPULAR INSTITUTE, 2014), based on extensive research involving the whole society. The study was conducted in three phases which sought to understand Brazilians' aims and expectations to learn English. In the first one, it analyzed data previously collected by the Data Popular Institute, the Brazilian Geography and Statistics Institute (IBGE) and the Ministry of Labor. In the second phase, interviews with Human Resources professionals, specialists and government agencies were conducted and analyzed. In the final phase, a survey of 720 middle and lower-upper class Brazilians aged 18-55 was done covering the whole country.

The conclusions of this report confirm Paiva's discussion (1999), but it seems Brazilians deal with their aspiration for learning English in a more critical way nowadays. The report shows they associate the need to learn the language mainly with going to the university and getting or maintaining better paid jobs. However, Brazilians believe that they do not learn English at regular schools and also that it is too expensive to pay for English private courses – now considered their best option to learn the language (DATA POPULAR INSTITUTE, 2014).

Traditionally, English is regularly taught in most private and in many public schools. However, it is not an official governmental demand - some schools offer Spanish instead. The educational politics involving the students' entrance to the university system is oriented by their ranking at a national exam: ENEM – Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio<sup>1</sup>. This exam encompasses 180 multiple choice items plus a written assignment which is usually an argumentative text about current important global issues. Only five out of the 180 items are dedicated to assess reading skills in a foreign language, be it English or Spanish, according to the candidates' choice. The items are based on authentic texts published in the foreign language but their instructions and response options are all given in Portuguese.

When it comes to discussing motivation in the context of a group of students at a technological federal public secondary school in Brazil, it seems relevant to consider this local reality, together with a global one: the economic globalization phenomenon.

According to Harvey (2009), the technologies of information and communication (TIC) make real time communication possible, facilitating the proliferation of capitalist social relations and, at the same time, influencing individual values and social processes. Tavares (2015) explains that world globalization generates hegemonic capitalism, free

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<sup>1</sup> ENEM is a Brazilian national exam administered by the federal government through INEP – Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira. Website: <<http://enem.inep.gov.br/>>.

market economy and neoliberal politics, and these conditions foster the interdependence among people, groups and countries. Each day more and more social practices are being carried out on the virtual universe, due to the massive appropriation of digital technology (GIDDENS, 2003; CASTELLS, 2009).

Tavares (2015) has conducted extensive research on the employability of the students who graduate from the same federal technological school where the data discussed in this article were collected. The researcher discussed the current demands of the job market in the southeast of Brazil, and pondered about these students' academic formation focusing on the curriculum actually taught at this school. The researcher's thesis (TAVARES, 2010) concluded that there is a current need for improving the teaching of English at this school, specially investing on the improvement of oral skills, and helping these students increase their levels of digital literacy so that they can be successfully qualified technicians in Brazil.

Another research (TAVARES; MARCHETTI, 2012), conducted at the same institution, showed a progressive and significant change in the profile of the students who enter this school every year, due to their appropriation of new digital technologies. Oliveira (2012) extended the authors' research, corroborated many of their findings and made evident that this appropriation, besides being dissimilar to that of their teachers', can deeply and directly influence learning and classroom practices.

According to Oliveira (2012), this appropriation is differentiated quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, if the amount of usage is considered; and qualitatively, when the focus is on the ways they use these technologies, especially the internet, to reach their aims. The way these students interact, organizing themselves in virtual nets, sometimes much more complex than physical ones, stands out.

Oliveira (2012) also discovered that, in spite of being considered by common sense as experts in dealing with digital technology, these students have a very low digital literacy level, in general. They use their cell phones and computers basically to socialize – check emails and participate in social networking. They can't make the most out of text editors, they do not know how to prepare adequate slideshow presentations, they cannot use a spreadsheet properly, and neither the resources of the most common search engines to do quality research. This kind of knowledge should be at the core of any initiative of integrating digital technology into learning at schools, as it can boost both the students' academic and professional lives.

In a study conducted in Indonesia, a developing country where English is a foreign language, having students at a regular public school as informants, Lamb (2004) was able to conclude that their orientations to learn the FL were mainly integrative. Some students revealed the need to learn English for doing well at the subject at school, getting a good job, or managing to study abroad in the future. However, the researcher found it very difficult many times to distinguish their motives because, it was not expected that so many of them would show both an instrumental motive and an identity aspiration in describing what it meant to become an English-speaker – joining the global community.

This orientation is integrative not in relation to any L1 English speaking culture in specific but to the global community of speakers of English worldwide. According to the researcher, their identity is somehow rooted locally and, at the same time, linked to global

culture<sup>2</sup>. Despite all the historical reasons already mentioned in this article that explain the Brazilian link to the American culture, it may be that the motivation for learning English in Indonesia nowadays is similar to the one in Brazil. It seems possible to defend that most Brazilians have a global integrative orientation, just like the Indonesian students researched by Lamb, as the main initial motivational drive to learn English.

Therefore, this article seeks to answer the following research questions: (1) How motivated are the participants in this study – Brazilian students at a regular secondary public school – to learn English?; (2) what kind of factors external to the classroom influence their motivation?; (3) To what extent are they motivated by the atmosphere and experiences lived inside the classroom?

Having contextualized this study, its theoretical foundations will now be presented.

## 2. THEORY

Since the end of the 1990s, researchers have been approaching language learning motivation in a more process-oriented way, acknowledging the dynamic and relational character of the construct, its time dependence, the fact that it influences and is, at the same time, organically influenced by contextual factors, both internal and external to the individuals (DÖRNYEI, 2014).

Bambirra (2014) conducted a study in 2009 in Brazil in which Dörnyei's model of process motivation (DÖRNYEI; OTTÓ, 1998, updated by DÖRNYEI, 2001) was operationalized by an adult student of English as a foreign language, mediated by the researcher. This student's experience of motivation management evidenced that emotional content is deeply rooted in learning, and therefore it permeated the whole process, many times making it impossible to isolate and categorize the motivational components of that experience. Identity matters, self-esteem, and some personal beliefs were blended in this student's motivational experience most of the time.

In their effort to explain the ecological and complex character of human experiences, Miccoli and Lima (2012, p. 56) acknowledge and assume that "every experience is drenched in various experiences. In other words, an experience *nestjs* others"<sup>3</sup>. In the same perspective, Dörnyei (2014, p. 520) remarked that motivation "always manifests itself in a dynamic interplay with cognitive and emotional factors". In face of the relationship of motivation, cognition and emotion, the author proposed an approach to conceptualize motivation. Dörnyei believes researchers should focus on "motivational conglomerates of motivational, cognitive and emotional variables that form coherent patterns or amalgams that act as wholes" (*op. cit.*, p. 520), instead of simply identifying motives in isolation, as traditional research on motivation has been doing so far.

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<sup>2</sup> See also Crystal (2003), Ryan (2006), Ushioda (2008), on global identity.

<sup>3</sup> Translated from the original: "Assim, toda experiência é impregnada de várias experiências. Em outras palavras, uma experiência *aninha* outras" (highlighted by the authors).

According to Lantolf and Thorne (2006), motives and goals trigger and support activity and, in the same line of thought, Dörnyei (2014, p. 519) explains that

motivation determines the direction and magnitude of human behavior or, in other words, the choice of a particular action, the persistence with it, and the effort expended on it. This seems to be fairly straightforward: motivation is responsible for *why* people decide to do something, *how long* they are willing to sustain the activity, and *how hard* they are going to pursue it.

Turner and Patrick (2008) also argued for a change in the traditional way motivation has been studied. They believe that researchers should focus on how motivation develops and why it changes in order to contribute more fruitful and useful results to the understanding of motivation.

Motivation manifests itself in and as experience. It changes as individuals interrelate, deeply influencing the context they are immersed in and being deeply influenced by contextual factors at the same time (MICCOLI; LIMA, 2012). Thus, people, context and motivation change all the time and research should seek to show and explain that. In their study, Turner and Patrick (2008, p. 123) argued that “development and change in motivation can be understood only by examining the interplay (transaction) between individuals and context, considered as a single phenomenon.”

**Table 1 – Rogoff’s planes of individual participation**

Planes	Focus	Observable behavior
<b>Personal</b>	how students change through their participation in an activity	. frequency of change of students’ interest in classes over time (volatility) . reasons why it changed
<b>Interpersonal</b>	the ways in which activities and materials are communicated and coordinated among individuals and how they facilitate or hinder certain types of participation	. students’ perceptions or opinions about the teacher, the peers and/or the classes
<b>Community</b>	institutional practices and cultural values	. students’ perceptions or opinions about the external context of the class – the school, infrastructure of the classroom, class start and end times etc.

Every time context changes, people respond to it individually. Motivation can be contextualized in activity, in the ways people respond to contextual factors, in terms of their observable behavior. Turner and Patrick (2008) use the term participation to link

individual and environment – “individuals participate with others in communities” (p. 123), preserving the holistic and organic nature of the experiential conglomerate motivation.

In order to investigate how and why motivation changed over time, Turner and Patrick (2008) investigated a group of teachers working collaboratively to motivate secondary school students in the United States to learn Mathematics during three years. They considered activity as their unit of analysis and used Rogoff’s three planes into which participation unfolds: personal, interpersonal, and community, with the cognitive and the social dimensions infused in each plane. Table 1 summarizes what each plane specifically concerns and how they can be assessed.

According to Turner and Patrick (2008), these three planes are interdependent. They influence one another all the time but each one can be looked at as a unit of analysis, with the others in the background. In an attempt to document and understand motivation from the point of view of a group of students’ experience of learning English as a foreign language in Brazil, this study will focus on the personal and the community planes of their participation. The methodological procedures are explained in the next section.

### 3. METHOD

This qualitative study took place at a federal public school in Minas Gerais, Brazil. It is a traditional and acknowledged institution that offers technological secondary courses, providing the job market with highly qualified professionals. Because of the nature of some school subjects, and in order to give students a more individualized assistance, in courses such as “English”, “Written Production in L1”, “Artistic Expression”, and all laboratory practices, the regular groups with 40 to 45 students are subdivided into two groups and each has a different teacher. It was the case of the group of participants in this study – 16 students, at around 16 years of age, whose proficiency level in English is basic to lower intermediate.

Data collection took place during the first semester of 2015 and comprehended these students’ daily accounts of their moods, expressed before and after each class, plus some comments made on the reasons why they sometimes felt demotivated.

To collect data on the students’ daily moods, a booklet called ‘motivational journal’ and a set of colorful stickers showing happy faces in green (😊), neutral faces in yellow (😐), and unhappy faces in red (😞) was used. On the first page of the booklet, the participants were supposed to enter a pseudonym. All the other pages had the format shown in Figure 1. In every class, they were expected to (1) fill in the date at the top of the page, (2) stick a sticker representative of his/her mood at the beginning of the class in the correspondent circle (first one), and (3) glue a sticker representative of his/her mood at the end of the class in the correspondent circle (the one at the bottom of the page).

Figure 1 – material used for data collection



Every time they used an unhappy face (☹), they were supposed to explain why they felt demotivated by writing key words, phrases or simple sentences, as they wished, in the rectangular area in front of the corresponding circle.

Based mainly on the personal and the community planes of participation proposed by Rogoff, the data will be presented and discussed in the next section.

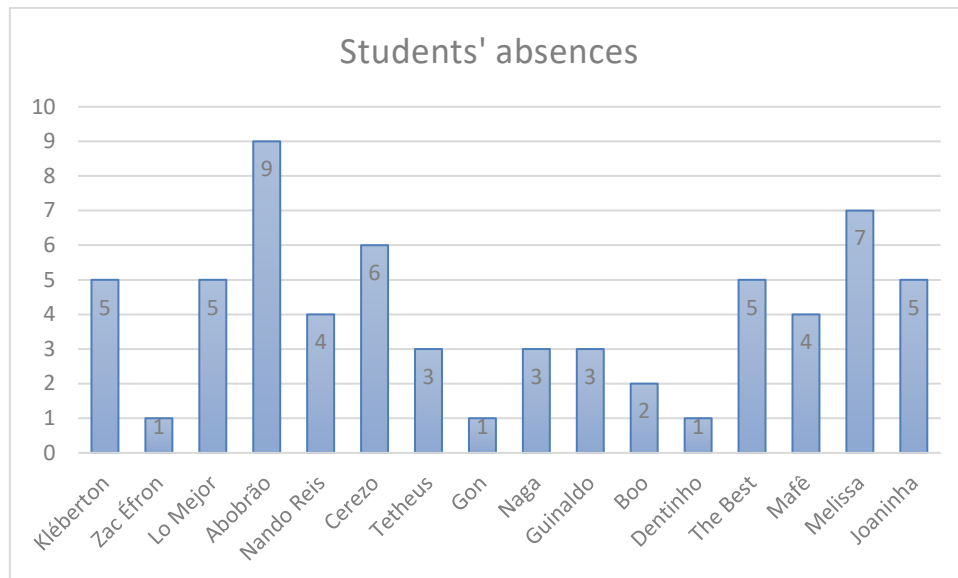
## 4. RESULTS

First of all, the participants' responsiveness to the classroom learning experience will be addressed by checking the students' attendance to classes and presenting two patterns of motivational change from their journals. After that, the reasons why they feel demotivated sometimes, both internal and external to the classroom environment, will be unveiled. Individual cases will be commented on and the participants' voices will be heard. Finally, the motivational scenario of the whole group before class will be compared with the one after class, to try to grasp the general motivational move of the group during data collection.

### 4.1 STUDENT'S RESPONSIVENESS TO THE CLASSROOM LEARNING EXPERIENCE

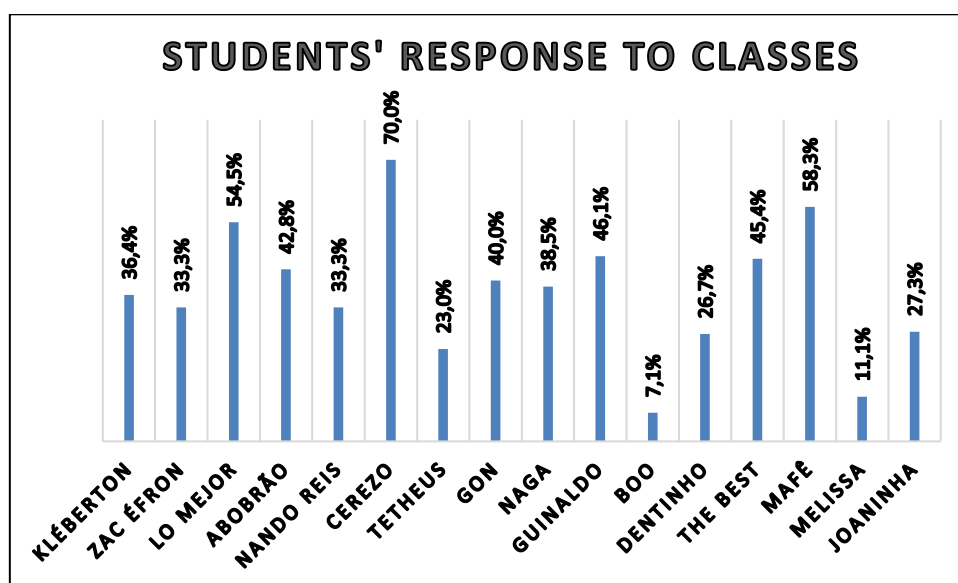
Before looking at the numerical data and discussing motivational variations in the participants' moods, it seems relevant to check their attendance to the analyzed English classes. As can be seen in Figure 2, out of 16 – the total number of classes covered –, each bar shows the number of skipped classes by each student.

Figure 2 – Participants’ absences from the researched classes



It is clear that Abobrão, Melissa and Cerezo are the ones who missed more classes, and considered in isolation, this fact could indicate a lack of motivation for the English classes. Likewise, Zac Éfron, Gon, Dentinho and Boo seem to be the most motivated students. However, when we analyze these students’ motivational changes in response to the attended classes, it becomes clear that presence in class by itself is not a reliable indicator of motivation. It must be taken just as a reference for reading other numerical and individual data, as will be demonstrated.

Figure 3 – Changes in students’ moods due to the classroom experience





Some students are more responsive to what happens in class than others, and this response also varies from time to time (TURNER, 2008). In general terms, Figure 3 shows a difference in mood expressed by the students in their motivational journals with different smiley faces between the moment they arrived and the moment they left the English classes. The percentages were calculated considering the amount of changes expressed by each student in relation to the amount of classes he/she attended. The more mood changes, the higher the percentage, indicating how much the students were influenced by the attended classes.

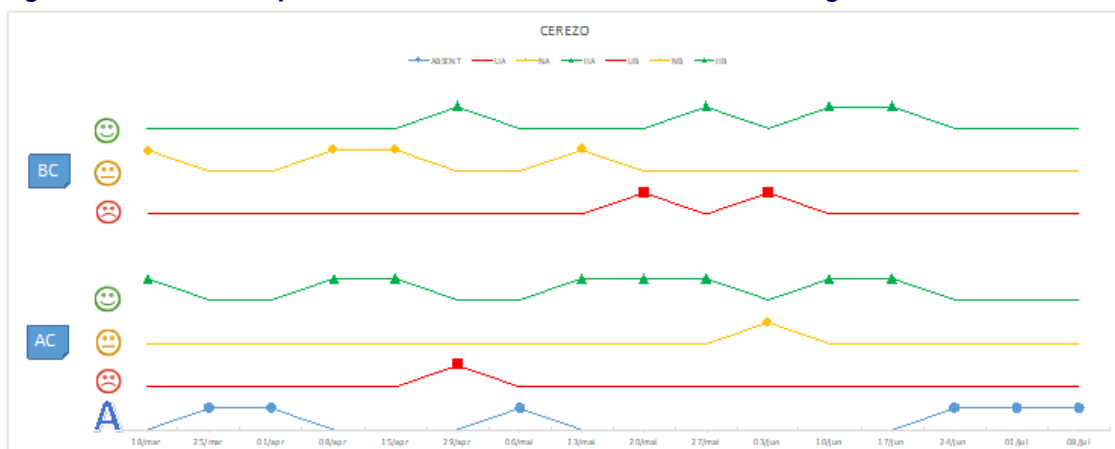
It is interesting to observe that Cerezo was very sensitive to the classes he participated in. On the other hand, Zac Éfron, Gon, Dentinho and Boo, in spite of being present at most classes, showed low sensitivity to them – their initial mood did not suffer much influence by the classroom experiences. This apparent dissonance between the data and their meaning must be unveiled.

In quantitative terms, some students such as Cerezo, Mafê and Lo Mejor, seemed to be more sensitive to the classes. However, it is interesting to have a look at their mood change qualitatively. These students' mood change can be seen in Figures 4, 5 and 6, respectively.

In Figures 4, 5, 6, 9 and 10, for each class day (displayed on the horizontal axis), there are two points indicated on its corresponding vertical invisible line. The point at the top indicates the mood before class (BC) and the one at the bottom (same vertical invisible line), the mood after class (AC). The three first horizontal lines represent the happy mood (😊), the neutral mood (😐) and the unhappy mood (😞) registered before class, and the three second ones represent the moods registered after class. Finally, the points along the last horizontal line, at the very bottom, stand for the student's absences (A).

Figure 4 shows that, in seven out of ten attended classes, Cerezo may have changed his mood in response to what happened inside the classroom. Three times his mood remained unchanged (on the happy mode).

**Figure 4 – Cerezo's expressed moods before and after class throughout the semester**



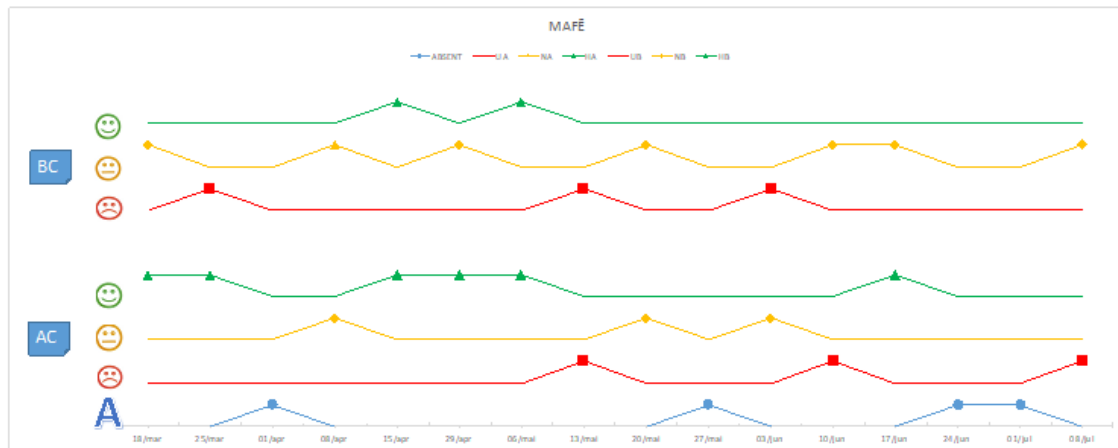
Looking closely at the changed moods, it can be seen that only once did his mood change from happy to unhappy, on April 29. Cerezo's demotivation episode was probably due to task anxiety and will be discussed later.

On the other six occasions, his mood changed for a more positive one, in terms of motivation. Four times it changed from neutral to happy (😊), once from unhappy to happy (😊), and once from unhappy to neutral (😐). Considering these positive changes in mood and attitude along the semester, it seems possible to believe that Cerezo enjoyed his English classes.

Mafê and Lo Mejor, in turn, also showed a positive change towards the English classes, however not so pronounced as Cerezo's. Still, it seems that both were probably motivated by classroom experiences.

Figure 5 shows that Mafê had her mood improved five times, worsen two times, and unchanged for other five times, in 12 attended classes.

**Figure 5 – Mafê's expressed moods before and after class throughout the semester**

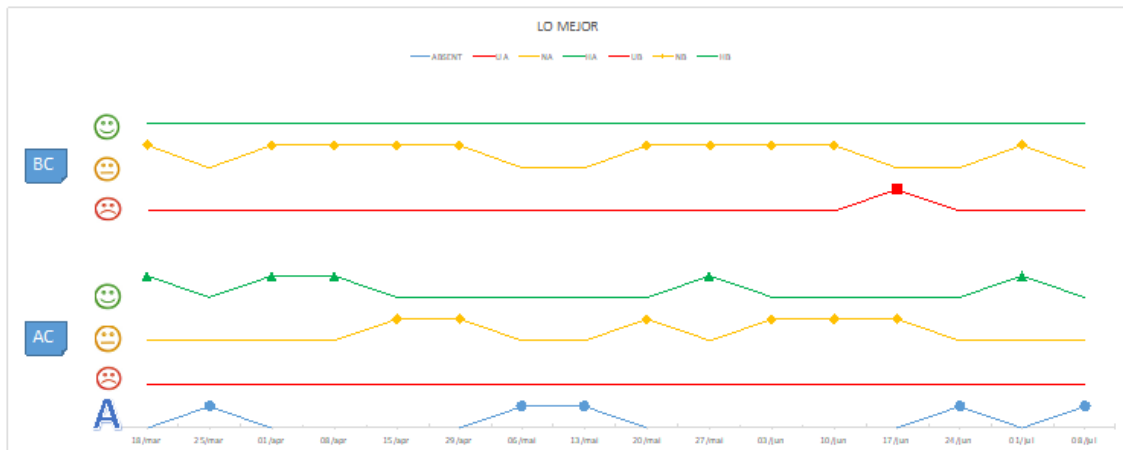


The improvement in her mood is evident because three times it changed from neutral to happy (😊); one time from unhappy to happy (😊); and another one, from unhappy to neutral (😐).

For five times it remained unchanged: twice on the neutral mode (😐), twice on the happy mode (😊) and only once on the unhappy mode (😞) (on May 13). On June 10 her mood changed from neutral to unhappy (😞). Mafê's two demotivation episodes will be discussed later.

In turn, Lo Mejor showed six improvements of mood in 11 days, and five times his mood remained unchanged, on the neutral mode (Figure 6), signaling the classes were probably motivating for him as well.

Figure 6 – Lo Mejor’s expressed moods before and after class throughout the semester



Lo Mejor changed his mood from neutral to happy (😊) five times, from the beginning to the end of the class. And he changed it from unhappy to neutral (😐) once.

#### 4.2 PATTERNS OF CHANGE IN STUDENTS' MOODS

Two patterns in terms of mood change can be discerned: either the students improved or worsened their attitude, maybe meaning they probably got (de)motivated by the English classes or they remained insensitive to them, that is, the classes could not motivate them any further. Figures 7 and 8 illustrate these two patterns.

Figure 7 – Pattern one: overall change in students' moods

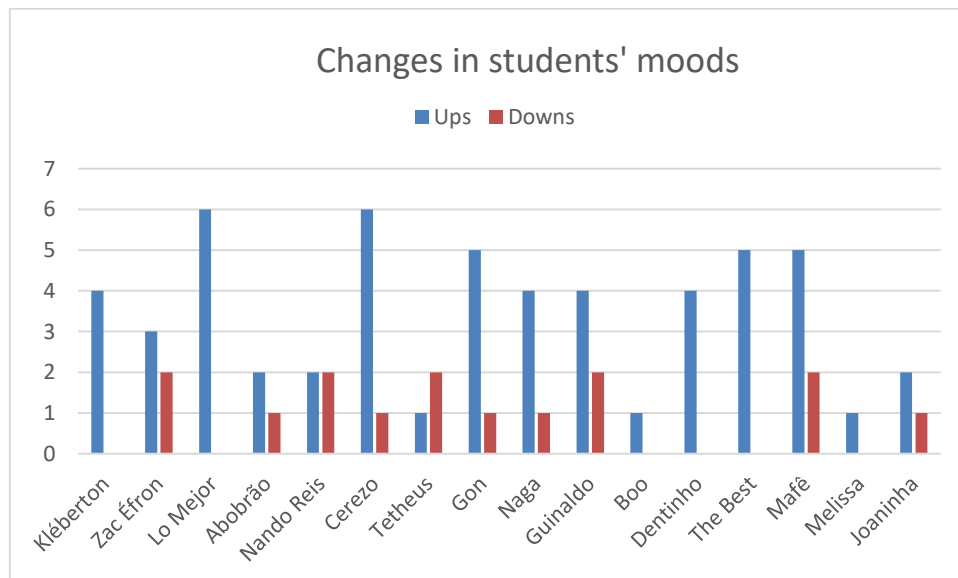
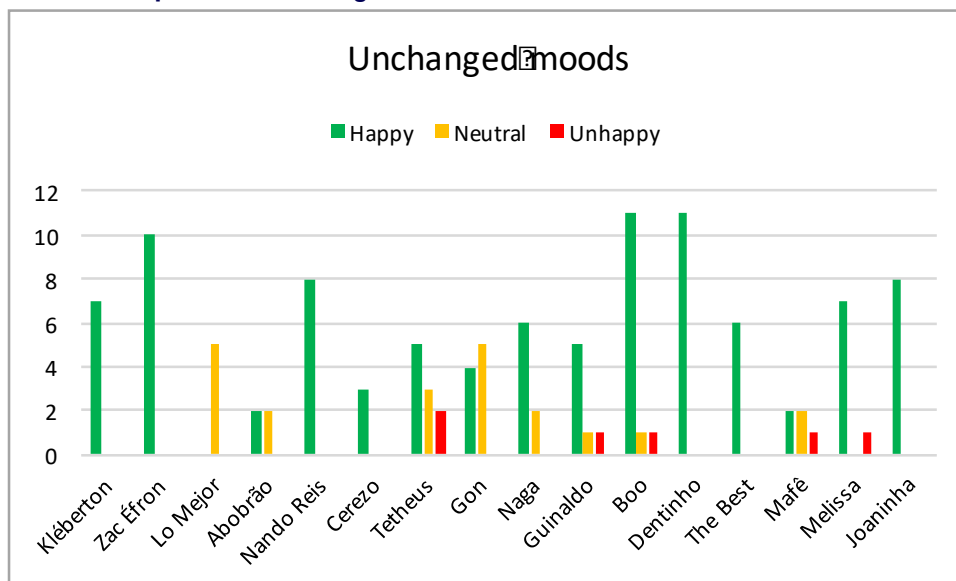


Figure 7 shows, for the whole group, how mood changes happened. On the vertical axis, the amount of changes are indicated. Among the whole group, two was the highest

number of mood change for the worse, meaning that the student left the classroom more (un)satisfied than s/he entered it. These mood changes for the worse happened only with five students (out of 16) during the whole semester.

Figure 8 illustrates the second pattern and shows how many times the students did not experience mood changes from the beginning to the end of each class (indicated on the vertical axis). This second pattern shows low responsiveness from the students to the English classes.

Figure 8 – Second pattern: unchanged moods



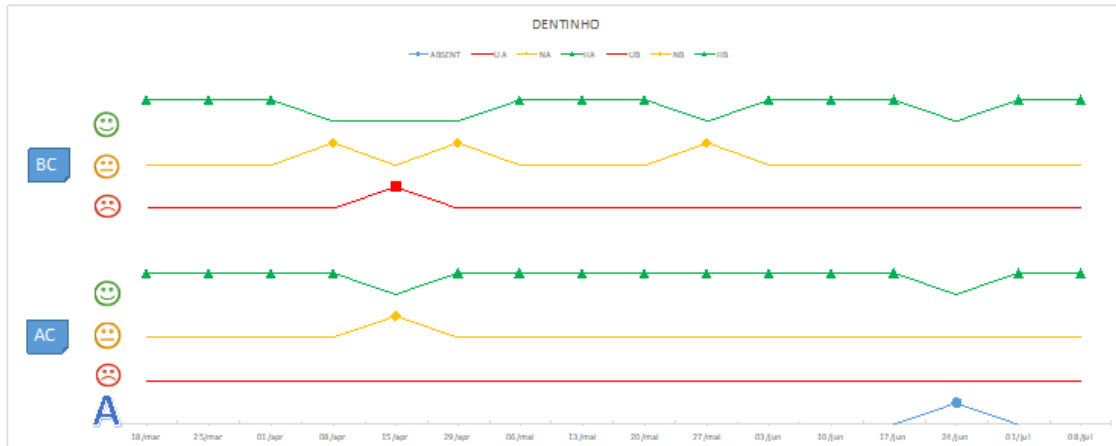
In Figure 8 students Boo and Dentinho, followed closely by Zac Éfron, show the highest numbers of unchanged happy faces in the group. However, this is not enough to indicate that they were motivated by the classroom experience of learning English. Although the faces were happy indicating motivation, there is no way to establish a direct relation between the classroom experience and the chosen moods.

Figure 9 – Boo's expressed moods before and after class throughout the semester



Looking closely, Boo is a good example of a student who did not respond much to the classes. In 14 days of class attendance, his/her mood remained unchanged (although on the happy mode) for 13 days, as can be seen in Figure 9.

Figure 10 – Dentinho’s expressed moods before and after class throughout the semester



Likewise, Dentinho had his mood improved four times and only missed one class but, out of 15 days of attendance, his mood did not change 11 times. Just like Boo, he did not seem much involved with these classes (Figure 10).

### 4.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENT’S MOTIVATION

Many unexpected reasons can deeply influence a student’s motivation to learn English. In this group, there is a case that deserves to be commented about. On the very first day of class, at the beginning, after being introduced to his new teacher, Guinaldo was invited to participate in this research. Having accepted, he was given a motivational journal together with the instructions on how to fill it in. Together with the whole group, he was asked to enter his first register: his mood for that specific English class. Guinaldo selected the happy face (😊) and added the comment: “Beautiful teacher. I’m in love with her!”. The dynamics of the data collection had just been explained so there is no way Guinaldo did not understand that they were expected to enter an explanation only if they selected an unhappy face (😞). So, his remark has a distinct meaning – he really liked his teacher and wanted to register that. This attitude continued to happen to the end of the data collection and it seems possible to conclude that this infatuation was his main motivational drive to learn English that semester. Table 2 shows his comments, before and after each class, together with the moods (represented by smiley faces) he attributed to them.

Table 2 indicates that Guinaldo assessed his moods for the classes through the lenses of his infatuation. It is known that affective content deeply permeates motivational experiences (BAMBIRRA, 2014; DÖRNYEI, 2014) but, many times, Guinaldo seemed to express his feelings towards the teacher instead of his mood towards the class, as if they were one and the same thing.

Table 2 – Guinaldo’s entries in his motivational journal

DATES	COMMENTS AND MOODS	
	Before class	After class
Mar 18	😊 "- Beautiful teacher. I'm in love with her!"	😞 "- Still in love but awful in English."
Mar 25	😊 "- My teacher is beautiful."	😊 "- Even more in love."
Apr 1	😞 "- Beautiful teacher but I am very tired."	😞 "- I am so hungry."
Apr 8	😞 "- I'm in love with my teacher."	😞 "- Still in love but very tired."
Apr 15	😊 "- Still in love with my teacher."	😊 "- In love with my teacher."
Apr 29	😞 "- I arrived late and the gorgeous teacher is nervous."	😞 "- Gorgeous teacher but my book isn't complete and she has checked it..."
May 6	😊 "- Cute teacher!"	😊 "- Beautiful teacher."
May 13	😞 "- Oral task presentation..."	😞 "- Didn't present that well."
May 20	😊 "- Nice class, beautiful teacher."	😊 "- In love with my teacher."
May 27	😊 "- My teacher gets more beautiful each day."	😊 "- It's unbelievable how beautiful she is."
Jun 3	😊 "- The teacher is really cute."	😊 "- Going for a holiday!"
Jun 10	ABSENT	ABSENT
Jun 17	😞 "- God conspires against me on Wednesdays."	😊 "- Head over heels. The teacher is very beautiful!"
Jun 24	ABSENT	ABSENT
Jul 1	ABSENT	ABSENT
Jul 8	😊 "- The teacher is gorgeous!"	😞 "- She doesn't give me any hope."

The classes took place every Wednesday, from 7:00 to 8:40 a. m. Two times Guinaldo mentioned he was feeling tired, once that he had arrived late and another time he vaguely complained that things did not seem to work out as expected (on June 17). In these cases, the context external to the classroom directly influenced his motivation to learn.

On March 18, he expressed the belief that he was having difficulty in learning English. Because this was the first day of class in 2015, it is reasonable to infer that he

brought this belief to this new experience, which is another external contextual factor that influenced his predisposition to learn, and probably his participation in the process.

The factors that directly influenced Guinaldo's classroom learning motivation were: (1) the teacher's mood (she seemed nervous on April 29), (2) being caught without doing his homework (also on April 29), (3) the anxiety felt before giving an oral presentation and (4) the frustration of not having performed as wished (on May 13), and (5) the appreciation of the class on May 20. The predominant component of these experiences is affective, which corroborates the vast research on FL learning experiences done in Brazil since the end of the 90s (MICCOLI, 2014).

Guinaldo was the student who used unhappy faces (☹️) more times in the whole group to describe his mood along the semester. However, as can be seen in Table 2, most of them were not related to the classroom experiences themselves, indicating that the external context had more influence in demotivating him than whatever happened in the classes.

Since the students justified in their journals their motives for choosing the unhappy face to express their mood, these data were also analyzed. Although the amount of unhappy faces used by this group was low (23 occurrences in a total of 377 uses), the students' explanations for having used them can shed light on demotivating circumstances to learning English as a foreign language.

Table 3 presents when the unhappy faces were used, showing factors which influence the students' classroom motivation.

**Table 3 – Incidence of students' unhappy moods (☹️)**

Dates (dd/m)	STUDENTS AND THEIR MOODS																					
	Lo Mejor		Abobráo		Nando Reis		Cerezo		Tetheus		Naga		Boo		Dentinho		The Best		Mafê		Melissa	
	BC	B C	A C	BC	B C	A C	B C	A C	BC	B C	A C	BC	BC	B C	A C	B C	A C					
01/4		X																				
15/4													X	X								
29/4				X		X				X	X							X	X			
13/5			X				X	X						X	X							
20/5					X		X	X	X													
03/6					X									X								
10/6																		X				
17/6	X																					
08/7																		X				
<b>Total</b>	1	2		1	3		4		1	2		1	1	5			2					

In Table 3, BC stands for before class and AC for after class. The unhappy mood registered at the end of a class (AC) suggests that the students left the classroom demotivated. So this incidence was highlighted in the table. Table 4 compiles the participants' own explanations for leaving the classroom demotivated.

**Table 4 – Students' reasons for leaving the classroom demotivated**

Date	Comment/informant
April 29	"- Got very nervous in class", [due to the oral presentation task]. (Cerezo) / " <u>The mother of a friend of mine's</u> <u>has</u> died." (Boo) / "I'm sick." (Melissa)
May 13	"- I <u>gave</u> a bad [oral] presentation." (Abobrão) / "- I can't <u>give</u> a presentation." (Tetheus) / "- My presentation was not a good one." (Mafê)
May 20	"- I can't learn English." (Tetheus)
June 10	"- It's going to take long to go home - there's no bus!" (Mafê)
July 8	Mafê used the unhappy face but did not explain it.

From these comments, it is clear that the external context had an important influence in the learning process inside the classroom. Reasons for not feeling motivated, such as being sick, feeling sorry for somebody's death, and getting disappointed with the bus service, are unavoidable circumstances, and not much can be done about them. But they should never be neglected. On the other hand, some pedagogical intervention should be done to try to help Tetheus learn how to learn English.

It would be also helpful if the teacher devised strategies to make it less stressful to his/her students to deliver oral presentations. Maybe it is high time he/she taught them how to create really supportive slideshows and also provide them with opportunities to informally practice oral presentation skills. Students in Brazil have a high expectation towards developing their oral skills. This can be well illustrated by Cerezo's remarks – although he was happy and motivated for the April 29<sup>th</sup> class 😊, he got so anxious during it due to the oral presentation he would have to deliver that he ended up unhappy, demotivated 😞. Likewise did Guinaldo, Mafê, Tetheus and Abobrão.

Table 5 (next page) shows the reasons why the participants declared themselves not motivated for some English classes before they started.

The reasons given by these students for arriving at the classroom demotivated are not related to the English classes, to the colleagues or to the teacher. Six complained about feeling tired (Lo Mejor, Tetheus, Mafê, Nando Reis, Dentinho and Abobrão) but since this is the first class of the day, some tiredness is understandable. Four students complained they had been stressed (Cerezo, Naga, Tetheus and Mafê), and two felt sick at some point (Melissa and Mafê).



**Table 5 – Students’ reasons for arriving at the classroom demotivated**

Date	Comment/informant
April 1	“- I’m sleepy.” (Abobrão)
April 15	“- So tired...” (Dentinho) / “- My soccer team lost yesterday.” (The Best)
April 29	“- I am really tired.” (Nando Reis) / “- <u>The mother of a friend of mine’s has died.</u> ” (Boo) / “- I’m sick.” (Melissa)
May 13	“- Presentation in English – worried!” (Tetheus) / “- I hate presentation tasks.” (Mafê)
May 20	“- I got to class late.” (Cerezo) / “- I can’t learn English here and don’t have time to go to a private course.” (Tetheus) / “- Tired, bad grades, fed up.” (Naga)
June 3	“- I am under stress.” (Cerezo) / “Headache.” (Mafê)
June 17	“- Tired.” (Lo Mejor)

#### 4.4 THE GROUP MOTIVATIONAL MOVE

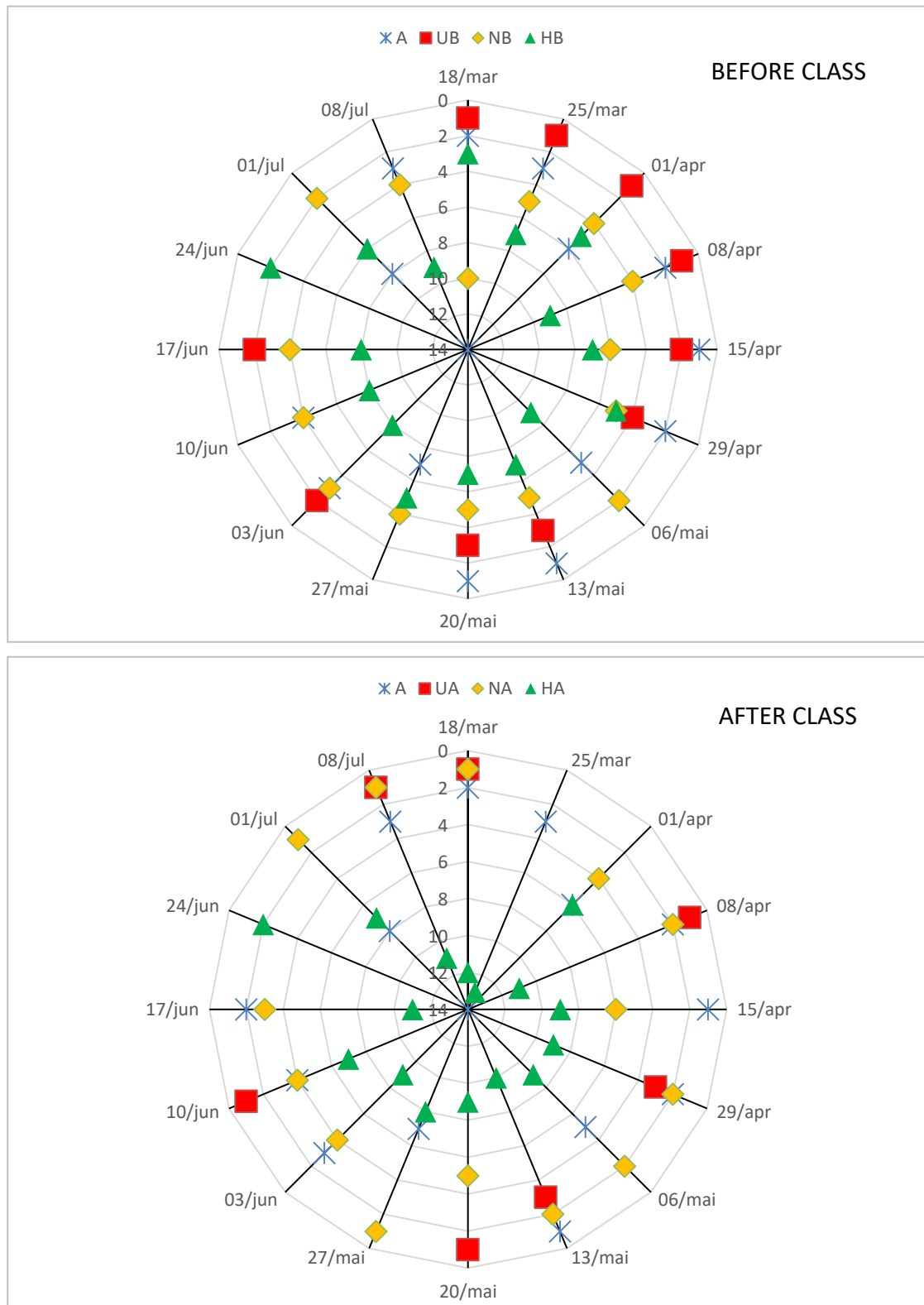
The participants of this study, organized and legitimized as a formal group of students of English, can be seen as a community of practice in Wenger’s (2009) perspective, i.e., a social system of practice that produces learning as a result of the interdependence between its members and the environment, in a relation of participation.

Metaphorically, this participation is thought of in terms of core and peripheral engagement to the community practice. The core is expected to concentrate more production of learning and intense participation, while at the boundaries learning and participation are diluted, sometimes considered irrelevant and fruitless. However, boundaries can contribute insight and innovation due to the meeting of different perspectives and the type of participation there - decentralized, usually less committed to the community expectations, less oriented to the main objective of the practice (WENGER, 2009).

Member participation determines what and how is constructed in terms of learning. In order to make meaning, members alternate positions, moving from the periphery to the center of a practice along the process. According to Coto (2010, p. 45), “the motivation to become a more central participant in a community of practice can provide a powerful incentive for learning”.

Figure 11 (next page) shows two pictures of the overall motivation to participate in the learning practice of this group – before and after class. In both pictures, each radius stands for a class day, as indicated. Each concentric circle corresponds to an even number indicating the amount of students choosing a specific mood daily. Green triangles represent the students’ choices for happy faces (▲=😊), yellow rhombuses for neutral faces (◆=😐), and red rectangles indicate their choices for unhappy faces (■=😞). The symbol ✕ registers the absences.

Figure 11 – The group motivational move



The total amount of students in this group is 16, so the sum of the incidence of each symbol in each radius is always 16, showing the group's daily movements. Considering that the center of the circle in each picture is the place where participation is more intense,

as the amount of students increases from the periphery to the center (see the values of each concentric circle), some considerations can be drawn from Figure 11, based on three indicators of participation: (1) greater or lesser concentration of mood choices, (2) types of mood chosen and (3) place of incidence (periphery or center).

Comparing the incidence of each mood in the two pictures, from now on referred to as BC (before class) and AC (after class), it is possible to verify that BC has more rectangles (■=☹) than AC. The students arrived unhappy 20 times (BC) and left the classroom unhappy only nine times. As previously commented, the reasons why they arrived unhappy have nothing to do with this community practice – learning English. It seems reasonable to infer that the decrease in the number of unhappy moods from BC to AC may have been influenced by the experiences lived in those classes, i. e., in general, these experiences allowed them to leave the classroom more motivated than they entered it.

It is also possible to realize from the two pictures (Figure 11) that there are more rhombuses (◆=😊) in BC than in AC. 62 times they arrived at the classroom in a neutral mood but left it the same way 40 times, signaling that apathy level has diminished with time. It stands out that, on the first day of class, 10 out of 14 students showed this mood. As learning is imbued with emotion, it seems possible to say that these students expressed themselves in this way because they did not know what to expect from the new teacher and the English classes.

From BC to AC, the incidence of rhombuses not only diminished, but got more distributed to the periphery. This information, taken together with the number of rectangles having diminished from BC to AC, clearly indicates that participation levels increased.

Finally, it is evident that from BC to AC the triangles (▲=😊) became more concentrated close to the core of the circles, indicating that more students engaged in the community practice with time, increasing participation. 108 times the happy face was used to indicate the students arrived to these classes motivated for them, and 145 times they used happy faces to indicate they were leaving the classroom feeling motivated.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This article discussed motivation from data reflecting the point of view of a group of students of English at a public secondary school in Brazil. Motivation was conceptualized as participation and activity was the unit of analysis. At first, to analyze individual motivation in interrelation with the context, two levels of individual participation proposed by Rogoff (TURNER, 2008) were used to inform the analysis – the personal and the community. Later, in order to unveil motivation at group level, Wenger's (2009) metaphor of peripheral and core participation in a learning community, understood as a community of practice, was used.

Most participants in this study seemed to be motivated to attend their English classes. It was possible to document this increasing interest, expressed by their moods, reflected in the way they participated (mood concentration) and in its intensity (core or

peripheral engagement to the community practice). It was also possible to infer that the atmosphere and/or the experiences they lived in these classes and outside of it, during the semester, were able to motivate them to learn and participate.

Many are the reasons to be more or less motivated. Reasons may derive from the immediate context of the classroom or from the context each student lives outside the classroom, and it is impossible to foresee these reasons. As a complex dynamic system, the foreign language classroom encompasses people and events interacting with the environment in unpredictable ways. Anyway, it was possible to realize that the factors influencing motivation to learn English can be enough to determine students' responsiveness to classroom experiences, impacting on their learning outcomes and the way they participate.

Concluding, participation largely varied on a daily basis, which confirms motivation as an ever-changing experiential construct deeply influencing the foreign language learning classroom and, at the same time, being deeply influenced by factors internal and external to the individuals. Among a huge set of factors, emotional and (meta)cognitive contents are the most predominant internal ones.

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**Título:** *Motivação para aprender inglês como língua estrangeira no Brasil - dando voz a um grupo de estudantes de ensino médio de uma escola pública*

**Autora:** *Raquel Bambirra*

**Resumo:** *Este estudo investigou o nível de motivação de um grupo de estudantes do Ensino Médio de uma escola pública do Brasil para aprender inglês na escola. Motivação foi compreendida enquanto participação, com base nas atitudes dos estudantes em relação às aulas. Com o uso de um livreto criado para a coleta de dados desta pesquisa, os estudantes avaliaram seus níveis motivacionais no início e ao final de cada aula, durante um semestre letivo. Suas impressões foram analisadas em nível individual (TURNER; PATRICK, 2008) e grupal (WENGER, 2009). Os resultados indicaram que esses estudantes se encontravam geralmente motivados a assistir às aulas de inglês, mas as experiências ali vivenciadas tiveram um papel importante em motivá-los ainda mais. O estudo mostrou que a motivação é um componente experiencial dinâmico, influenciado por fatores internos e externos aos indivíduos e à própria sala de aula, em inter-relação profunda com o contexto de aprendizagem.*

**Palavras-chave:** *Motivação. Participação. Aprendizagem de inglês. Escola pública.*

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**Resumen:** *Este estudio ha investigado el nivel de motivación de un grupo de estudiantes de Enseñanza Media de una escuela pública de Brasil para aprender inglés en la escuela. Motivación fue comprendida mientras participación, basada en actitudes de los estudiantes en relación a las clases. Con el uso de un libreto creado para la colección de datos de investigación, los estudiantes evaluaron sus niveles motivacionales en el inicio y al final de cada clase, durante un semestre lectivo. Sus impresiones fueron analizadas en nivel individual (TURNER, PATRICK, 2008) y grupal (WENGER, 2009). Los resultados indicaron que esos estudiantes se encontraban generalmente motivados para asistir las clases de inglés, pero las experiencias allí vivenciadas tuvieron un papel importante en motivarlos aún más. El estudio mostró que la motivación es un componente experiencial dinámico, influenciado por factores internos y externos a los individuos y la propia sala de aula, en inter-relación profunda con el contexto de aprendizaje.*

**Palabras-clave:** *Motivação. Participação. Aprendizaje de inglés. Escuela pública*



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