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THE EFFECT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND, PERSONAL EFFORT AND MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY.

Trabajo Fin de Máster.

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THE EFFECT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND, PERSONAL EFFORT AND MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Abstract: The aim of the current study was to investigate whether socio-economic background, individual effort, or motivation had more influence in English Proficiency; whether there was a relation between individual effort and family background, and, whether there was a relation between motivation and family background. For this purpose, a questionnaire was passed to students of 4th year of Compulsory Secondary Education at three different high schools in Navarre. The questionnaire was divided in three different sections: personal data, individual work and motivation. The results of the questionnaires were compared with students' grades in English using SPSS. Evidence was found that motivation influenced students' proficiency. Results also indicated that motivation was higher in students who listened to music in English, watched movies or TV shows in English at home and read in English outside the classroom. Based on these findings, it is recommended that educators introduce resources from the media in order to raise students' interest and motivation.

Keywords: socio-economic background, personal effort, language input, motivation, English proficiency.

1. Introduction

Students with the same amount of years of instructed learning tend to reach varying degrees of proficiency, a difference which seems worth investigating. Research indicates students' socio-economic background, individual effort and motivation influence academic outcome.

Many papers have demonstrated the relationship between students' background and their school achievement. Research on this topic has shown significant and persistent class differences in students' school achievement (Requena, Salazar & Radl, 2012).

Likewise, research on motivation has shown it to be one of the key factors in ESL proficiency (Dörnyei, 1998): more motivated students will get higher grades. And although there has been little research on the influence of students' personal effort, we considered interesting to analyze it to see if there was a relation between the amount of effort that students exerted and their family background, as some papers have shown (Kuehn & Landeras, 2012), or if on the contrary, it can be attributed exclusively to students' responsibility.

To begin with, we will analyze what research has said on the topic. Then, we will explain the method we have followed and the measures we have used. Afterwards we will present the results together with the discussion. Finally, we will give some pedagogical recommendations

in order to improve students' English proficiency, and some suggestions for further research on the topic.

2. Literature Review

School systems appeared in the Modern age, that is, in the XIXth century. At that time, enlightened philosophers believed that people could comprehend and control the universe through reason and empirical investigations. As a result, those enlightened thinkers wanted to create a better and more rational world (Ritzer, 2011). These philosophers believed in the power of education to transform society into a better world. But, from the beginning, school systems were class-based. Compulsory education was divided into a double network; worker class children had access to a primary education that only allowed them to join the work force, whereas high class children had access to a primary education that would lead them to secondary and high education (Perez-Agote, 2012). Consequently, school systems reproduced social inequalities from the very beginning, cutting short all the pedagogical optimism of the time.

After the Second World War, comprehensive schools were introduced. Their purpose was to avoid the division that class-based schooling had created, and to establish equal education opportunities for students. This system was based on meritocracy, students' personal achievement and effort were supposed to be more important than their social origin. Comprehensive school systems were supposed to reduce social inequality. On the one hand, those systems compelled schools to give a homogeneous education to all the population for a longer time, and on the other, they postponed the time in which students had to decide which track to follow, thus reducing families' influence in students' educational decisions as the older students were, the more autonomous they would be (Fernández Enguita & Levin, 1997 as quoted in Martínez García, 2007). Still, some authors believed that comprehensive school systems didn't have any real impact in reducing social inequality (Merino, Sala & Troiano, 2012).

Moreover, research on the topic stated that schools still reproduced socioeconomic, gender and ethnic inequalities (Feitó, 2003; Bernardi & Requena, 2010; Martínez García, 2007; Fernández Enguita, Mena Martínez & Riviere Gómez, 2010). For example, Feitó (2003) stated that although working class schooling had increased in Spain in the 80s and 90s, inequality remained stable. He analyzed the data from the census of the years 1981 and 1991

and saw that only 14% of manual labourers' children finished higher education, compared to 70% of professional workers' children.

Bernardi and Requena (2010) analyzed the Spanish Labour Force survey data of the years 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, and concluded that social class influenced students' probability to complete Compulsory Education, as well as their probability for choosing the vocational training track. They also found that social class influenced students' probability for retaking the last school year of Compulsory Education (CSE) after having failed.

As we can see in Table I (taken from Bernardi & Requena, 2010) service class (professional, senior administrative, and senior managerial employees) children had the highest rates of CSE completion (75.7%), whereas unskilled workers children rates were much lower (38.1%). Differences could also be seen when retaking a school year after failing it at CSE. While 90.7% of service class children retook the year, only 69.7% of unskilled workers' children did. It could be assumed, then, that class of origin influences both education achievement and decisions.

Table I. Distribution of educational performance and schooling decisions by class of origin.

	Process I Completion of CSE on time				Process 2a Moving on if CSE on time			Process 2b Retaking if failure at CSE		
	Yes	No	Total	N	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	Total
Class of origin										
Service class	75.7	24.3	100	1372	95.8	4.2	100	90.7	9.3	100
Non manual workers	59.1	40.9	100	831	94.9	5.1	100	87.4	12.6	100
Employers	59.8	40.2	100	520	94.2	5.8	100	79.9	20.1	100
Urban self-employed	51.8	48.2	100	655	90.0	10.0	100	75.1	24.9	100
Agricultural self-employed	56.0	44.0	100	200	92.8	7.2	100	77.3	22.7	100
Skilled workers	48.2	51.8	100	1073	87.2	12.8	100	80.2	19.8	100
Unskilled workers	38.1	61.9	100	1737	84.4	15.6	100	69.7	30.3	100
Unemployed	31.5	68.5	100	241	69.7	30.3	100	59.0	41.0	100
Inactive	44.9	55.1	100	550	88.7	11.3	100	67.3	32.7	100

Causes for dropping out of school were investigated recently by Fernandez Enguita, Mena Martínez and Riviere Gómez (2010). They concluded that one of the main reasons for dropping out of school was students' social class of origin because among students with similar grades, the decision of dropping out was more frequent among working class children than among middle class children.

Table II. School failure signs depending on parents' occupation.

	PARENTS' HIGHER OCCUPATION			
	WHITE COLLAR/ QUALIFIED	WHITE COLLAR/ NO QUALIFIED	MANUAL/ QUALIFIED	MANUAL/ NO QUALIFIED
Has retaken a school year	18,4	30,1	37,6	36,2
Doesn't aspire to Upper Secondary Education	6,9	12,8	23,5	23,1
Scoring below a standard deviation	10,4	16,6	27,6	28,8
High risk of school failure	22,7	35,6	46,3	44,8

Source: PISA 2003.

Table III. School failure signs depending on parents' level of studies.

	PARENTS' HIGHER LEVEL OF STUDIES						
	None	Primary	Secondary	Vocational Training	Upper Secondar	Univ. (3)	Univ. (5)
Has retaken a school year	48,2	37,8	25,5	24,1	29,5	27,7	16,3
Doesn't aspire to Upper Secondary Education	39,8	23,8	13,3	13,0	13,1	8,2	5,1
Scoring below a standard deviation	43,0	26,7	15,8	17,3	17,8	14,5	9,7
High risk of school failure	62,9	46,2	31,8	31,0	35,5	33,1	20,2

Source: PISA 2003

As Tables II & III from Fernandez Enguita, Mena Martinez & Riviere Gómez, (2010) show, there is a connection between parents' occupation and their children school failure rates. The amount of children who had retaken some school year was nearly double (36,2% vs. 18,4%) for unskilled workers' children than for white collar workers' children. The same happened with parents' education. So taking into account all these data, we can assume that social class significantly influences students' achievement in school.

However, could those results be extrapolated to English achievement? Gradman and Hanania (1991) investigated the influence of several language learning factors in ESL proficiency. Among several variables, those who proved to contribute most to English learning were exposure to the language through extensive reading outside class, exposure to native teachers, the use of English as the language of instruction and participation in intensive English

programs. All these variables represented a higher amount of language input. In these authors´ studies, socio-cultural background variables didn't seem to have a strong influence.

Nevertheless, it should be taken into account that Gradman and Hanania (1991) conducted their study at the University of Indiana, and consequently we could assume the participants in their study would probably have had similar social background. It could be concluded, thus, that social class seems to have a bigger influence in Compulsory Education than at University.

Even though it could be conjectured that students who exert more personal effort (by reading in English at home, or by simply studying more) will get a better achievement grade in English, theoretical and empirical research on the topic has been scarce due to the difficulty of measuring effort (Kuehn & Landeras, 2012). Nevertheless, some papers have shown the importance of the family in students' amount of effort, for example Kuehn and Landeras (2012) found that "an improvement in parental education from not having completed compulsory education to holding a university degree is associated to around 15% more effort by the student (approximately 1 hour and 20 minutes of additional weekly homework)" (21). Hewitt (2006) conducted an empirical study with 42 kids in Andalusia on the influence of parental encouragement in ESL performance. She took into account two variables: parental knowledge of English and the amount of times they helped their children in English homework. She concluded that both variables influenced children written and listening performance in ESL. Consequently, the amount of effort that a student performs seems to be also influenced by family background.

Research on motivation (Dörnyei, 1998) has shown it to be one of the key factors in ESL proficiency. Gardner (2007) conducted an empirical research with Spanish students, and concluded that "the more highly motivated students have higher grades than the less motivated ones" (16). Liuolienè and Metiuniené (2006, as quoted in García Sanchez & Cruz Vargas, 2013) observed that the more highly motivated students were more autonomous in their learning and worked more independently than the less motivated ones.

One study by Bernaus, Wilson and Gardner (2009) concluded that teachers' motivation plays an important role in the process of language learning. Motivated teachers will use more motivating strategies in class, and that will influence directly students' motivation and achievement. Uribe, Gutiérrez and Madrid (2008, as quoted in García Sanchez & Cruz Vargas 2013) showed that Spanish students had positive attitudes towards learning a foreign

language. Those attitudes seemed to be affected by gender, English grades, private classes, social class and the year in which students had started to learn English. Again, the influence of students' social class and family background appeared.

Considering that all the research described points out to the importance of family background, individual effort measures and motivation for EFL learning, it seems worth exploring which of these factors has more influence in English achievement. Consequently, the main objective of this paper is to try to answer these four questions:

- Which of the following three variables has more influence in English Proficiency; socio-economic background; individual effort; or motivation?

- Is there a relation between individual effort and family background?

- Is there any connection between motivation and family background?

- Is there a connection between individual effort and motivation?

3. Method

3.1. Context.

In the year 1979 the General Law of Education (LGE) introduced comprehensive schools in Spain. It established that education was compulsory from the age of 6 until the age of 14. Twenty years later, the General Organic Law of the Education System (LOGSE) expanded compulsory education to the age of 16.

This is the system currently in force in Spain. Until the age of 12, students study Primary Education. Afterwards they begin Compulsory Second Education (CSE). Students finish their CSE degree at the age of 16. When finishing CSE, those students who want to continue studying can choose between two different tracks; they can either go to vocational training school or go to upper secondary education, which will lead them to University.

The present study took place in three different Public High Schools of Pamplona-Iruña, Navarre. Navarre is divided into three different parts according to the language spoken in each; the Basque speaking area, the mixed region and the Spanish speaking area. Spanish is the official language in the whole region, whereas Basque is only co official in the Basque

speaking area. This division has an effect on education. Several teaching models can be found according to the language of instruction. In the Basque speaking area, where students are supposed to know both languages, A model (classes conducted in Spanish with Basque as a subject); D model (classes conducted in Basque with Spanish as subject); and B model (classes conducted in both language) are currently in force. In the mixed region, where students have the right to be educated in Basque if they ask it for, A model, D model and G model (classes conducted in Spanish without Basque as a subject) are currently in force. Finally, in the Spanish speaking area, only models A and G are economically supported by the government.

Pamplona-Iruña is located in the mixed region. Our high schools teach Compulsory Secondary Education and Upper Secondary Education. High School 1 and High School 2 are located in the same neighbourhood, whereas High School 3 is located in a second neighbourhood. While High School 1 instructs in Basque (D model), High School 2 and 3 do it in Spanish (A model).

3.2. Participants.

The participants of the study were students from the 4rd year of Compulsory Education. Students were between 15 and 17 years old which means some of them were retaking the school year.

	Participants
High School 1	61 students
High School 2	63 students
High School 3	35 students
Total.	159 students

3.3. Instruments.

A questionnaire (Appendix I) was created to study our research questions. The questionnaire was anonymous, and it was divided into three sections; personal data, personal effort and motivation.

In order to study students' socioeconomic background, the modified version of the questionnaire used in Gil Flores (2011) was employed. The variables taken into account were

18 and included information about parents' nationality, level of studies, occupation and habits. To classify parents' occupation, the classification used by the Spanish National Institute of Statistics (INE) was used (for more information see Appendix II).

For analyzing students' personal effort, seven variables were taken into account in the questionnaire. First of all, students were asked for the amount of time they spent studying English at home on their own or through private lessons. Apart from that, it was also considered important knowing how much English input they received outside the classroom. Although watching movies, reading magazines or travelling abroad could be regarded as leisure rather than as studying, they also serve as input.

Finally, to analyze students' motivation, a modified version of Gardner's AMTB questionnaire (used with Croatian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese and Romanian students) was used. In order to make the questionnaire shorter, all the items related to Instrumental Orientation and Parental Encouragement were selected, but only some of the items that define Motivation.

In Gardner´s test, there were four items included in Instrumental Orientation, which stressed the utilitarian value of learning English. Parental Encouragement was analyzed through eight items and it referred to the extent students felt their parents support them with English. Finally, Motivation was made up of motivational intensity; desire to learn English, and attitudes toward learning English. As we said, not all the items of this last variable, Motivation, were selected. Only four items from each of the three aspects included in Motivation were chosen – from each aspect two positively keyed and two negatively keyed - trying to respect the original proportions. Motivational Intensity measured students' motivation through their assignments, future plans to learn English and so on. Desire to learn English took into account the students' desire to learn English. And finally, Attitudes towards learning English stressed students' feeling toward the language; some items expressed positive feelings and other negative feelings.

3.4. Procedure.

The questionnaires were worded in the L1 of the students, so in Basque and Spanish. We wanted students to clearly understand the meaning of each question. Firstly, the objectives of the project were explained to the students and then they were given the questionnaire.

Students filled the questionnaire individually. Both the teacher and I were in the classroom in order to clarify any doubt the students might have.

3.5. Data and data analysis.

The data were obtained from the questionnaires and were analysed using SPSS. The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to observe the relationship among the different variables and students' grades in English. Significance level was set at the 0.05 level (indicated by * in the results section) and at the 0.01 level (indicated by ** in the results section). Correlations in light purple indicate an inverse correlation set at a 0.01 level (**). Correlations in strong purple indicate a direct correlation set at a 0.01 level (**). Correlations in light orange indicate an inverse correlation set at a 0.05 level (*). Finally, correlations in strong orange indicate a direct correlation set at a 0.05 level (*).

4. The Results & Discussion

4.1. Correlation between socio-economic, personal effort and motivation variables and students' grades in English.

Table IV. Pearson correlation coefficient of those variables that proved to be significantly correlated with students' grades in English ordered from most significant to least significant within the three set of variables.

Variables	V26: Grades	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Socio-economic variables:		
V15: Reading (parents)	-,224**	,006
V13: Books	,191*	,020
V3: Father's level of studies	,165*	,044
Personal effort variables:		
V20: Music	-,232**	,004
V25: Private lessons	-,196*	,016
V21: Movies	-,182*	,025
V23: Reading	-,164*	,045
Motivational variables:		

V39: My parents think I should devote more time to studying English.	-,393**	,000
V27: I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear.	,390**	,000
V37: I plan to learn as much English as possible.	,341**	,000
V30: I keep up to date with English by working on it almost every day.	,265**	,001
V45: My parents have stressed the importance English will have for me when I leave the university.	,226**	,006
V36: I wish I were fluent in English.	,206*	,012
V34: I haven't any great wish to learn more than the basics of English.	-,207*	,011
V40: My parents encourage me to practice my English as much as possible.	,189*	,021

As it can be seen in Table IV not many socio-economic variables showed significant correlations with students' grades. Only one of the variables proved to be significant at the 0.01 level: having parents who are fond of reading (V15). This is not surprising as students whose parents read regularly will more likely read themselves, and it has been widely demonstrated that children who read perform better in the school (Cullinan, 1998). Not many other socio-economic variables proved to be significant. It could then be concluded that in general students' family background doesn't affect their performance in the English classroom, even though father's level of studies seemed to be somehow related. This could support the idea that as formal education spreads, educational inequalities decrease.

Among the variables taking into account students' personal effort and individual work, one was significant at the 0.01 level; listening to music in English outside the classroom (V20). Other variables had lower but still significant correlations: watching movies in English (V21); reading in English (V23); and attending private lessons (V25). All of these variables represented a higher English input outside the classroom. The amount of time students spent studying English at home didn't correlate with their grades. We could then conclude that

homework doesn't have a distinctive effect in students' qualifications. Still, we should be careful with this interpretation as the lack of correlation could also be attributed to a limitation of the study because when asking students how much time they spent learning English at home, the question was rated in this way: 1 hour (1); 2 hours (2); 3 hours (3); 4 hours (4) and Other (5). It turned out that students who answered with a 5 were all students who studied less than an hour. Therefore, this could produce a misleading correlation in the Pearson coefficient as a higher value, which should indicate a higher amount of time, in fact indicated less time so caution should be exerted about any conclusion based on this particular correlation. In further research works, to keep the proportion in line, this question should be rated in the following way: less than 1 hour (0); 1 hour (1); 2 hours (2); 3 hours (3); 4 hours or more (4). Nevertheless, it could be still be sustained that students who received a higher input of English outside the classroom got higher grades.

Finally, the current findings indicated that there were meaningful links between students' motivation and their English proficiency. Many motivation variables significantly predicted higher grades in English. Students who perceived English as important, and showed a greater interested in its learning scored better in the classroom. As it can be seen in Table IV, some of the motivation items scored negatively and others positively. As we explained previously, some of the items expressed positive feelings and others negative feelings. And our results confirmed the direction of the statement. In those cases in which the item was positively keyed, as in variable 36, the results showed there was a direct correlation: the higher the grade was, the stronger the feeling was. On the contrary, when the item was negatively keyed, the result showed an inverse correlation: the higher the grade was, the weaker the negative feeling was, as in variable 34. This reinforced our findings because every time the item was positively keyed the feeling was stronger in students with higher grades, and every time the item was negatively keyed the feeling was weaker in students with higher grades. These results, once more, showed that more motivated students got higher grades.

Taking into account our results, it could be concluded that among socio-economic, personal effort and motivation, the last seems to influence the most English proficiency. Although the influence of the amount of input that students receive outside the classroom (through music, movies or private classes) should not be undervalued. It is interesting to note that if our conclusion is correct, teachers can play an important role in their students' English proficiency. Teachers can barely influence their students' socio-economic background, but they can clearly influence their motivation and, thus, their grades. This opens up tons of

possibilities for teachers in order to stimulate their students' desire to learn English, and it moves us away from socio-economic determinism.

4.2. Correlation between socio-economic variables and motivation.

Only one socio-economic variable proved to be related with motivation: students' mother's occupation (V4).

Table V. Pearson coefficient correlation for those motivational variables that proved to be significantly correlated with students' mothers' occupation.

Variables	V4: Mother's Occupation	
	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
V47: Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English.	-,257**	,001
V44: My parents feel that it is very important for me to learn English.	-,236**	,003
V28: English is a very important part of the school programme.	-,235**	,003
V43: My parents feel that I should continue studying English all my life.	-,218**	,007
V41: My parents are very interested in everything I do in my English classes.	-,212**	,008
V40: My parents encourage me to practice my English as much as possible.	-,204*	,011
V46: My parents try to help me to learn English.	,-177*	,029
V30: I keep up to date with English by working on it almost every day.	,158*	,049

Most of the variables that showed a correlation were related to parental encouragement. Hence, it can be concluded that mother's occupation influenced students perception of English, and specially, parental encouragement. It can be seen in Table V that the Pearson

coefficient correlation was negative in all the variables except for variable 30. This happened because of the way in which occupations had been classified in the questionnaire (see Appendix II).

In general, mothers whose jobs required more qualification tended to encourage their children more to learn English. At the same time, their children also tended to perceive English as an important subject. The fact that father's occupation did not correlate with parental encouragement could reflect that nowadays mothers are still more involved in their children education. It can be seen that parental involvement is important for children to be motivated, because it also influences the way in which students perceive English.

As it can be seen in the graph below, to the question "English is a very important part of the school programme" directors and managers´ (1) children scored high (4,6667). Children, whose mothers were manual workers (7), worked in elementary occupations (9) or were "not paid" domestic workers (10) scored below 4, with the exception of equipment and facilities operators' children (8) that scored 5. This sharp peak could be explained by looking at the amount of students of our sample whose mothers worked as equipment operator, just one.

Medias marginales estimadas de P4
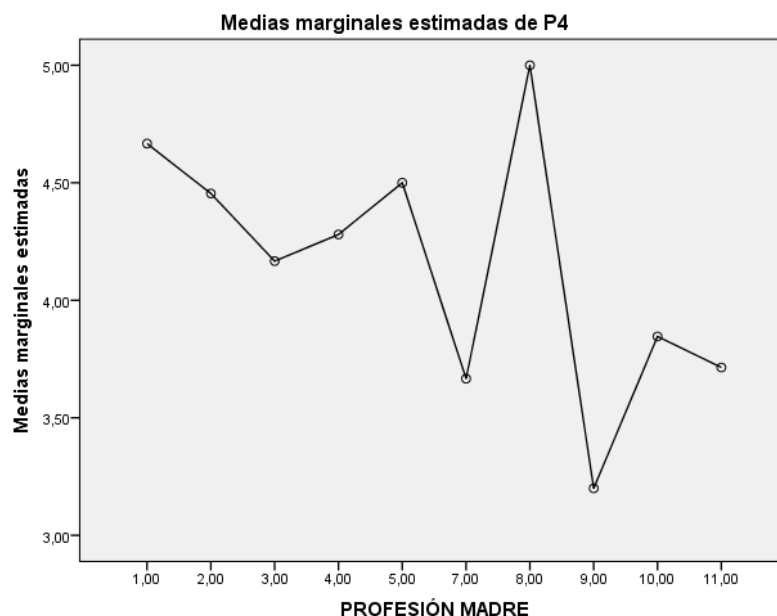
4.3. Correlation between personal effort and motivation.

Certain personal effort variables significantly predicted many motivational variables too. Listening to music in English correlated with 11 of the 24 motivational variables; watching

movies in English correlated with 8 of the 24 motivational variables; watching TV shows in English correlated with 14 of the 24 motivational variables; and reading in English outside the classroom correlated with 10 of the 24 motivational variables. The table below shows the significant inverse correlations set at a 0.01 level (**) and at a 0.05 level (*), and the significant direct correlations set at a 0.01 level (**) and at a 0.05 level (*).

Table VI. Significant correlations of motivation variables with personal effort variables.

Motivation	Music	Movies	TV show	Reading
V27: I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear.	**	**	**	**
V28: English is a very important part of the school programme.	*		**	*
V29: I would like to learn as much English as possible.	**		**	**
V31: Learning English is a waste of time.	**			
V32: To be honest, I really have no desire to learn English.	**	**	**	
V34: I haven't any great wish to learn more than the basics of English.	**		*	**
V36: I wish I were fluent in English.	**	*	**	*
V37: I plan to learn as much English as possible.	**	**	**	**
V38: I think that learning English is dull.			*	
V39: My parents think I should devote more time to studying English.				*
V43: My parents feel that I should continue studying English all my life.	**		**	
V44: My parents feel that it is very important for me to learn English.			**	
V46: My parents try to help me to learn English.		*		
V47: Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English.		**	*	
V48: Studying English language is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.			*	**
V49: Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.	*	**	**	*

V50: Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.	*	**	**	**

Students who received a higher input of English through media showed a greater interest in learning as much English as they could. They also showed a greater instrumental orientation, especially in the case of students who watched movies and TV shows. As it can be seen in Table VI (for more detailed information see Appendix III), and just like in the other correlations' results, some of the motivation items scored negatively and others positively. The questionnaire rated the answers of those questions in this way: very often (1), often (2), sometimes (3), little (4), never (5). And the motivation scale covered from 1 to 5. That is why when the item was positively keyed the correlation was inverse and when the item was negatively keyed, the correlation was direct.

Our findings could be explained by the fact that the American and British film and music industry, and the culture related to it, is very appealing for teenagers. Learning a language is not just learning a system of symbols, it also means learning a culture. And the English speaking countries' culture is nowadays widely displayed in the media (music, movies, magazines and so on). Hence, the culture and the ways of living American and English media show motivates students to learn the language of the culture they are seeing or listening through the screen. In the same way, as the media show language in its context, it could be said that students who watch TV shows or read in English are more capable of realizing the instrumental value of the language. And when students know something will be useful for them, they will be more motivated to learn it. Thus, the use of media resources could be very useful in order to increase students' motivation inside the classroom. Still, it cannot be established if motivation was higher, because they listened to music in English, watched movies and TV shows and read in English at home; or alternatively, as a consequence of their higher motivation , they listened to music, watched movies and TV shows and read in English at home. Nevertheless, as we will see in the next section, research has shown that overall, the use of new technologies in the EFL classroom increases students´ motivation.

To sum up, and answering our research questions, it could be concluded that among students' socio-economic background, personal effort and motivation, the last one influences the most English proficiency. According to our results, no significant correlations have been found between students' personal effort variables and family background variables. On the contrary,

there was a relation between motivation and family background (mother's occupation influenced motivation). As well as multiple correlations between motivation and the amount of input that students received outside the classroom.

If our findings are right, we would like to stress the great possibility that teachers have to make a difference. If motivation is that important, and if more motivated students will get better grades whatever their socio-economic situation is, teachers will have the chance to influence their students' achievement if they know how to motivate them. Bernaus, Wilson and Gardner (2009) already stated that teachers' motivation and the use of motivating strategies will be determinant for motivating students and for their English proficiency and our findings strongly support their hypothesis.

5.1. Pedagogical Recommendations

As we have concluded, it seems that motivation influences the most students' English proficiency. And it appeared that listening to music and watching movies and TV shows in English influences students´ motivation. Consequently, it could be interesting to use those kinds of materials inside the classroom. Watching movies and videos or listening to songs not only has a motivating effect on students but also it is the only means from which students can receive a significant exposure to English outside the classroom in EFL contexts. Movies or music can help students' English learning because they help to bring the real use of the language into the classroom (Genc Ilter, 2009).

Many papers have shown how the use of new technologies in the EFL classroom can be motivating. Madrid, Ortega, Jiménez, Pérez, Hidalgo, Fernández, Pérez, García, Gomis, Verdejo, and Robinson (1993) conducted a research to observe the sources of EFL students' motivation. For this purpose, they passed a questionnaire to 13, 15, 16, 17 and 18 years old EFL students. Classroom methodology was one of the variables studied. The questionnaires showed that "*participants present a clear inclination towards all the activities implying a more active usage of language*" (1993, 30) and that most of the times, watching videos was one of the activities that students liked the most.

One of the biases in EFL teaching is the lack of "real" communicative situations in which students would be able to see the actual use of the language. Teachers could counteract it by introducing different videos, songs, movie segments (or full movies), radio programs, etc. Kelsen (2009) argued that English popular culture could be motivating. She conducted a

research using YouTube as a supplementary material in EFL classes, and showed that it helped to motivate students. Teachers should be careful when choosing these materials, as they should be relevant to the lesson. For example, if students read a text in the classroom about some historical topic, then, the teacher could select a video about that same topic, thus complementing the text. Or if a specific grammar point is being worked, the teacher could select some movie fragments in which characters put that particular structure in use.

There are already some blogs created by teachers that try to teach students different grammar structures through different movie segments. I found it particularly interesting. Following these activities, students will be able to see the language in use while they improve their listening skills. Teachers could also complement these activities with different speaking or writing activities by i.e. making students reflect about what is going on in the scenes.

Full movies could also be very good materials for arising students motivation and awareness of the language. To start with, movies should not be only used for entertainment. Teachers should try to make the most of each movie conducting different and varied activities. For example, theme-based discussions could be a very interesting and complete activity; "a theme-based discussion allows students to explore relevant issues raised from a variety of perspectives, develop critical thinking skills, elicit responses, converse freely on many of the aspects of the film they have viewed, while freeing them from overly restrictive learning habits that focus exclusively on grammar and vocabulary" (King, 2002, 512).

Integrating authentic materials in a meaningful way inside the classroom could raise students' motivation and make students realize that languages are alive, that they actually serve for communicating. These materials will allow students to see the language in use.

5.2. Limitations and future directions

One limitation of the current study is the use of students' grades in English as the criteria for English proficiency. A test could be passed to all the students in future studies to test students' level of English with the same measure. The students in our sample had been evaluated by different teachers in different high schools. This means that teachers could have followed different evaluation criteria when evaluating their students and therefore, these differences could have resulted in misleading results.

Another limitation was not choosing high schools with very different socio-economic contexts. Although the high schools that we have chosen differ from each other, it could be

argued that they are quite similar for a study of this kind. If we want the analysis of the influence of students' socio-economic background in their English proficiency to be reliable we should have taken a bigger sample from a broader range of high schools, comparing high schools from more neighbourhoods, but also private or state-subsidised high schools.

The results of this study should be cautiously interpreted, as only correlational conclusions may be reached. The Pearson coefficient correlation shows there is a relation between two variables or more, but it doesn't establish a cause-effect relation. Hence, future studies could analyse the result with more complex and accurate statistical methods.

6. Conclusions

Overall, our research indicates once more the great influence of motivation in EFL contexts. More motivated students will score better. In addition, our findings show that there is a strong relation between students' motivation and media resources. The culture portrayed in American or English media motivates students to learn English. Something teachers should take into account in order to increase students' motivation inside the classroom, as their role as teachers would be fundamental in influencing students' motivation and thus their grades.

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Appendix I. Questionnaire.

Datos personales

1. Edad: _____

2. Sexo: hombre ☐   mujer   ☐

3. Nacionalidad del padre: _____

4. Nacionalidad de la madre: _____

5. Nivel de estudios del padre:

      a) Sin estudios   ☐

      b) Primarios   ☐

      c) Secundarios   ☐

      d) Bachillerato y/o Formación Profesional   ☐

      e) Universitarios   ☐

      f) Otros   ☐

6. Nivel de estudios de la madre:

      a) Sin estudios   ☐

      b) Primarios   ☐

      c) Secundarios   ☐

      d) Bachillerato y/o Formación Profesional   ☐

      e) Universitarios   ☐

      f) Otros   ☐

7. Profesión del padre: _____

8. Profesión de la madre: _____

9. Número de miembros en el hogar (tú incluido/a): _____

Vivienda familiar

10. ¿Tienes los siguientes objetos en casa?

-   Ordenador   Sí   ☐   No   ☐
-   Internet   Sí   ☐   No   ☐
-   TV Digital, por cable/satélite   Sí   ☐   No ☐
-   Mesa de estudio   Sí   ☐   No   ☐

- Material de consulta y apoyo escolar (enciclopedias, diccionarios…) Sí ☐ No ☐

11. Números de libros en el hogar:

0-10 libros ☐   11-25 libros ☐   26-100 libros ☐   101-200 libros ☐   Más de 200 libros ☐

Hábitos familiares

12. Tus padres leen el periódico habitualmente Sí ☐   No ☐

13. ¿Son aficionados a la lectura?   Sí ☐ No ☐

14. ¿Asisten a actividades culturales? (cine, teatro, conciertos…) Sí ☐ No ☐

15. ¿Participan en alguna actividad cultural?   Sí ☐   No ☐

16. ¿Saben inglés? Mucho ☐ Algo ☐ Poco ☐ Nada ☐

Estudio

17. ¿Cuánto tiempo dedicas al estudio del inglés a lo largo de la semana?

1 hora ☐ 2 horas ☐   3 horas ☐ 4 horas o más ☐ Otro:_____

18. ¿Escuchas música en inglés?

Muy a menudo ☐ A menudo ☐ A veces ☐ Poco ☐ Nunca ☐

19. ¿Ves películas en inglés?

Muy a menudo ☐ A menudo ☐ A veces ☐ Poco ☐ Nunca ☐

Si ves películas en inglés, ¿usas subtítulos? En inglés ☐ En castellano ☐ No ☐

20. ¿Ves series o programas de televisión en inglés?

Muy a menudo ☐ A menudo ☐ A veces ☐ Poco ☐ Nunca ☐

Si ves series en inglés, ¿usas subtítulos? En inglés ☐ En castellano ☐ No ☐

21. ¿Lees en inglés? (libros, revistas, periódico…)

Muy a menudo ☐ A menudo ☐ A veces ☐ Poco ☐ Nunca ☐

22. ¿Has estado alguna vez en un país de habla inglesa?   Sí ☐ No ☐

Si has respondido afirmativamente, ¿por cuánto tiempo?

1 semana ☐ 2 semanas ☐   1 mes ☐   2 meses ☐   Otros: _____

¿Cuántas veces?

1 vez ☐   2 veces ☐   3 veces ☐ 4 veces o más ☐

¿Hiciste uso de la lengua inglesa?   Sí ☐ No ☐

23. ¿Acudes a clases de inglés fuera del horario escolar?   Sí ☐ No ☐

Si has respondido afirmativamente, ¿cuántas horas a la semana?

1 hora ☐   2 horas ☐   3 horas ☐   4 horas o más ☐

24. ¿Qué nota has obtenido este último trimestre en la materia de inglés?

Suspenso ☐   5 ☐   6 ☐   7 ☐   8 ☐   9 ☐   10 ☐

Motivación

Marca del 1 al 5 atendiendo a cuan identificado/a te sientes con la oración (1 si no te sientes nada identificado/a; 5 si te sientes muy identificado/a).

Pregunta	1	2	3	4	5
1. Siempre intento entender todo el inglés que leo y escucho.					
2. Mis padres piensan que debería dedicar más tiempo al estudio del inglés.					
3. Aprender inglés es importante porque otras personas me respetarán más si sé inglés.					
4. El inglés es una asignatura muy importante.					
5. Cuanto más inglés aprenda, mejor.					
6. Llevo el estudio del inglés al día.					
7. Mis padres me animan a que practique el inglés lo máximo posible.					
8. Mis padres se interesan mucho por todo lo que hago en la clase de inglés.					
9. El aprendizaje del inglés es importante ya que me permitirá conseguir un mejor trabajo.					
10. Aprender inglés es una pérdida de tiempo.					
11. Mis padres me animan a que pregunte al profesor en caso de tener algún problema con el inglés.					
12. Sinceramente, no me interesa aprender inglés.					
13. Cuando el profesor/a de inglés me entrega la tarea corregida, no la reviso.					
14. Solo me interesa obtener unos conocimientos básicos de la lengua inglesa.					
15. Estudiar inglés es importante porque ello hará que sea una persona más instruida.					
16. Mis padres creen que debería seguir estudiando inglés a lo largo de mi toda vida.					
17. Suelo dejar la elaboración de la tarea de inglés para el final.					
18. Mis padres creen que es muy importante que estudie inglés.					

19. Estudiar inglés es importante porque me será necesario en mi profesión.					
20. Me gustaría poder hablar inglés de manera fluida.					
21. Mis padres han recalcado la importancia que tendrá el inglés para mí cuando deje el instituto.					
22. Planeo estudiar todo el inglés que me sea posible.					
23. Mis padres intentan ayudarme con el estudio del inglés.					
24. Pienso que estudiar inglés es inútil.					

Appendix II. INE Classification.

Occupations
1. Directors and managers.
2. Scientific and intellectual professionals and technicians.
3. Technicians; lower grade professionals.
4. Accountants, administrative and other office workers.
5. Service workers: Catering, personal care, protection and sellers.
6. Skilled workers in the farming, livestock, forest and fishing sectors.
7. Manual workers and skilled workers in the industry.
8. Equipment and facilities operators and assembly operators.
9. Elementary occupations.
10. Domestic workers (not paid)
11. Unemployed

Appendix III. Pearson coefficient correlations of motivation variables that proved to be significantly correlated with personal effort variables.

Motivation	Listening to music		Watching movies		Watching TV Shows		Reading	
	Pearson c.	Sign.	Pearson c.	Sign.	Pearson c.	Sign.	Pearson c.	Sign.
V27: I make a point of trying to understand all the English I see and hear.	-,378**	,000	-,279**	,000	-,329**	,000	-,258**	,001
V28: English is a very important part of the school programme.	-,188*	,019			-,285**	,000	-,192*	,016
V29: I would like to learn as much English as possible.	-,294**	,000			-,261**	,001	-,261**	,001
V31: Learning English is a waste of time.	,276**	,000						
V32: To be honest, I really have no desire to learn English.	,266**	,001	,210**	,008	,299**	,000		
V34: I haven't any great wish to learn more than the basics of English.	,208**	,010			,203*	,012	,224**	,004

V36: I wish I were fluent in English.	-,292**	,000	-,203*	,012	-,239**	,003	-,206*	,011
V37: I plan to learn as much English as possible.	-,462**	,000	-,331**	,000	-,397**	,000	-,328**	,000
V38: I think that learning English is dull.					,188*	,021		
V39: My parents think I should devote more time to studying English.							,165*	,040
V43: My parents feel that I should continue studying English all my life.	-,210**	,009			-,239**	,003		
V44: My parents feel that it is very important for me to learn English.					-,249**	,002		
V46: My parents try to help me to learn English.			,183*	,023				
V47: Studying English is important because other people will respect me more if I know English.			-,226**	,004	-,179*	,026		

V48: Studying English language is important because it will be useful in getting a good job.					-,175*	,030	-,232**	,004
V49: Studying English is important because it will make me more educated.	-,173*	,032	-,225**	,005	-,239**	,003	-,165*	,042
V50: Studying English is important because I will need it for my career.	-,176*	,029	-,280**	,000	-,287**	,000	-,243**	,002