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RESEARCH REPORT

**THE USE OF DIDACTIC ACTIVITIES WITH AN ENVIRONMENTAL FOCUS TO
MOTIVATE STUDENTS TOWARD ENGLISH LEARNING**

INFORME DE INVESTIGACIÓN

**EL USO DE ACTIVIDADES DIDÁCTICAS CON ENFOQUE AMBIENTAL PARA
MOTIVAR A LOS ESTUDIANTES HACIA EL APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLÉS**

PREVIO AL GRADO ACADÉMICO DE:

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LINE OF INVESTIGATION:

INNOVATIVE DIDACTIC STRATEGIES AND METHODOLOGIES

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School Director Thesis Director Final approval and acceptance of this dissertation is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the dissertation to the Graduate College. I hereby certify that I have read this dissertation prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the dissertation requirement.

MSc. José Suarez Lezcano

STATEMENT BY THE AUTHOR

I, Sehisca Plata, affirm that the investigation in the present report research is totally unique, authentic, and personal. The content of this research is a limited legal and academic responsibility of the author and PUCE Esmeralda

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CERTIFICADO DEL DIRECTOR

Yo, MSc. José Suarez Lezcano, en calidad de director de esta tesis, certifico haber revisado que el trabajo cumple los requisitos de calidad, originalidad y presentación exigibles y que se han incorporado las sugerencias del Tribunal al trabajo de grado.

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DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to my mother who encouraged me with her support. Also, to my advisor MSc. José Suarez whose wisdom and guidance were fundamental in this process. Finally, I dedicate this to myself for having been persevering at all times.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

My academic degree has come to an end but it cannot end without me having first expressed my gratitude to those who have been fundamental pillars in this process, a process that has been full of countless emotions and learning, of which I feel lucky to have experienced.

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyze the potential benefits of didactic activities with an environmental focus to increase students' motivation level when integrated into the English learning. A mixed approach research was carried out with descriptive scope and non-experimental design, with a population made up of seventh-grade students and English teachers of that basic year, a sample of 32 students and 1 teacher. The methods used were analysis and synthesis, hermeneutics, and descriptive statistics, while the techniques were the survey, interview, and documentary review. The results revealed that the majority of students have learned in classes about environmental topics; Furthermore, topics such as "animals in danger of extinction", "how to make a vegetable patch" and "recycling" draw their attention. However, although a large part of the students consider that learning about these environmental topics is important, there is still a small percentage that does not think the same way. Also, the activities that interest them most are dramatizing, making a stand, and creating a story; and they prefer to develop them in groups or pairs. Additionally, it was evident that the teacher has incorporated didactic activities with an environmental focus in her classes, illustrating the integration of this type of activities from her experience, stating that they not only enhance language learning but also foster a sense of responsibility and environmental awareness among students, emphasizing practicality in lesson planning; likewise, she suggests other activities such as group discussions, debates and crafts with recycled materials. Finally, based on the students' preferences, three didactic activities were designed considering the activities and themes that the students liked the most. It is concluded that the integration of activities with an environmental focus in learning English can not only increase students' motivation in English learning but also foster a sense of responsibility and environmental awareness, especially activities that involve dramatizing, making a stand, and creating a story.

Keywords: Didactic activities; Learning English; Environmental focus; Environmental topics, Motivation

RESUMEN

Esta investigación pretendió analizar los beneficios potenciales de las actividades didácticas con un enfoque ambiental para aumentar el nivel de motivación de los alumnos al integrarse en el aprendizaje del inglés, se realizó una investigación de enfoque mixto con alcance descriptivo y diseño no experimental, con una población conformada por estudiantes de séptimo grado y profesores de inglés de ese año básico, una muestra de 32 estudiantes y 1 profesor. Los métodos utilizados fueron el análisis y síntesis, el hermenéutico y la estadística descriptiva, mientras que las técnicas fueron la encuesta, la entrevista y la revisión documental. Los resultados revelaron que la mayoría de los alumnos han aprendido en clase sobre temas medioambientales; además, temas como "animales en peligro de extinción", "cómo hacer un huerto" y "reciclaje" llaman su atención. Sin embargo, aunque una gran parte de los alumnos considera que aprender sobre estos temas medioambientales es importante, todavía hay un pequeño porcentaje que no piensa de la misma manera. Además, las actividades que más les interesan son dramatizar, hacer un stand y crear una historia; y prefieren desarrollarlas en grupos o parejas. Adicionalmente, se evidenció que la profesora de inglés ha incorporado actividades didácticas con enfoque ambiental en sus clases, ilustrando la integración de este tipo de actividades desde su experiencia, afirmando que no sólo mejoran el aprendizaje del idioma sino que fomentan el sentido de responsabilidad y conciencia ambiental en los estudiantes, enfatizando la practicidad en la planeación de las clases; asimismo, sugiere otras actividades como discusiones grupales, debates y manualidades con materiales reciclados. Finalmente, basándonos en las preferencias de los alumnos, se diseñaron tres actividades didácticas teniendo en cuenta las actividades y temas que más gustaron a los alumnos. Se concluye que la integración de actividades con enfoque ambiental en el aprendizaje del inglés no sólo puede lograr incrementar la motivación de los estudiantes en el aprendizaje del inglés, sino que también fomentar un sentido de responsabilidad y conciencia medioambiental, especialmente actividades que involucren dramatizar, hacer un stand y crear de una historia.

Palabras Clave: Actividades didácticas; Aprendizaje del inglés; Enfoque ambiental; Temas ambientales; Motivación

INTRODUCTION

Theme Presentation

This work focused on the use of didactic activities with an environmental focus to motivate students toward learning English. Since, it was estimated that the use of these activities allowed students to create new experiences, develop linguistic skills in a fun and interactive way, motivating them to participate in classes, practice in the target language, and obtain a greater understanding of the importance of protecting the environment. Therefore, it was considered that the implementation of these activities would increase students' motivation towards the language and develop environmental awareness.

This was a proposal for educational integration, whose importance lay in the motivation of students towards learning English through didactic activities, which gave students the opportunity to actively participate in practical scenarios, which led to the development of linguistic skills of English, formation of environmental values, and development of respectful attitudes in relation to the environment. This proposal not only sought to make learning more attractive and meaningful to motivate students but also to contribute to a greater objective such as training people with culture, values, and education.

Although the proposal focused on motivating students to learn English through didactic activities with an environmental focus, it also encouraged teachers to get rid of traditional methodologies that limited the English teaching-learning process. All of this, with the intention of achieving a comprehensive education that is linguistically motivating and varied, training students interested in learning English and at the same time environmentally conscious and proactive people.

Problem Statement

The teaching-learning process of English as a foreign language can be complex in the absence of appropriate didactic activities, together with a poor pedagogical focus, generate a multifaceted problem that obstructs the achievement of language learning objectives. The predominant problem was identified as arising from teachers who had no intrinsic desire to teach, leaving them blatantly disinterested in their students' academic activities. As a result, there were

few opportunities and places where students could interact with the English language in a dynamic way. This insufficiency in instruction was compounded by an uninformed use of narrowly focused instructional activities.

As a consequence, students faced an unstimulating learning environment that failed to develop habits, attitudes, and skills essential for language acquisition. This systemic deficiency not only diminished the overall enjoyment of English classes but also fostered a pessimistic perception of language acquisition. This negative perspective manifested itself in poor academic performance, which led to failures in the English subject. The cumulative effect was a widespread sense of demotivation among students, underlined by the lasting imposition of a traditional, linear, and inefficient teaching-learning paradigm.

This problem had far-reaching implications, as it contributed significantly to the cultivation of negative attitudes and perceptions in students regarding the English language learning process. From there the following question arises: How could the use of didactic activities with an environmental focus motivate students for English learning?

Justification

This research was based on the prevailing need to address the existing deficiencies in the English language teaching process, specifically in educational environments where students' motivation is diminished. The choice of didactic activities with an environmental focus as a pedagogical intervention arose from the identification of a series of problems rooted in the traditional teaching of this language. The central problem lay in the lack of a dynamic and motivating pedagogical approach, which led to a general disinterest of students in learning English. The absence of innovative teaching activities contributed to an unstimulating learning environment, where language acquisition was perceived as monotonous and lacking practical relevance. Furthermore, the lack of proactive interaction with the language and the lack of connection with meaningful aspects of everyday life limited the development of essential language skills.

This research sought to address these challenges by suggesting the use of an educational approach that incorporated teaching activities with a clear emphasis on environmental topics. The

justification for this choice was the need to demonstrate that the use of didactic activities with an environmental focus could motivate students towards English learning, encourage active participation, and provide a relevant context for language learning. By integrating environmental themes, the aim was not only to improve linguistic skills but also to cultivate environmental values and attitudes of respect towards the environment.

This research project not only addressed the urgent need to motivate students towards English learning but also responded to the growing importance of instilling environmental awareness in future generations. Therefore, this project was based on the premise that the combination of didactic activities and an environmental approach would not only revitalize the English learning process but would also contribute to the comprehensive formation of a conscious, motivated, and environmentally friendly atmosphere.

Objectives

General Objective

To analyze the potential benefits of didactic activities with an environmental focus to increase students' motivation level when integrated into the English learning.

Specific Objectives

- 1.- To know the students' points of view about the environmental topic and how to learn about it better.
- 2.- To identify the teachers' perspectives toward the use of didactic activities with an environmental focus.
- 3.- To design didactic activities with an environmental focus.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Scientific Theoretical Foundation

1.1.1 Neuroscience

Neuroscience suggests that the more sensory pathways the learner activates when obtaining information, the more neural networks are created, which will cause the information that has been processed to be retrieved more easily, as it is stored in different ways. The same author points out that the use of multiple ways, that is, the use of different media such as images, drawings, music, dramatization, expositions, and demonstrations in the presentation of new contents, activate relationships at the neuronal level. For this reason, when teaching a new language, it is beneficial to use different didactic activities since they activate the greatest number of sensory pathways, which strengthens knowledge (Zadina, 2008).

1.1.2 The Sociocultural Approach to Language Teaching

The Sociocultural Approach was developed by the Russian psychologist Vygotsky. This psychologist considered that human development and learning arise from social and cultural interaction. That is the ways in which people interact with others and the culture in which they live shape their mental abilities. Participation during social interaction contributes significantly to the learning of a new language since both communication and the environment allow the assimilation and internalization of the new language. The Sociocultural Approach, in its entirety, places an emphasis on the social, cultural, and cognitive components of language learning while acknowledging the connections between learning, culture, and language. He emphasizes how crucial meaningful communication, social contact, and cultural awareness are to the process of learning a language (Vygotsky, 1978).

1.1.2.1 Zone of Proximal Development

Zone of proximal development is a theory created by Lev Vygotsky, who defines it as the space or gap that exists between what a student already knows or masters on his/her own (actual level of development) and what he may be able to achieve when he has guidance from an adult or in collaboration with his classmates (potential development). Therefore, it is necessary to exercise and explore the students' previous knowledge of a language, in order to include a link between this knowledge and what they are going to learn (Vygotsky,1978).

1.1.3 Implementing Environmental Education

Integrating environmental education into learning encourages students to take responsibility for their actions both inside and outside the classroom. Implementing environmental education into language instruction increases students' awareness of important contemporary topics, teaches them how to improve the health of the environment, and provides authentic contexts for language learning (Hauschild et al., 2012). Likewise, environmental education should be taught at all educational levels, especially in foreign language teaching, as this will enable students to have greater environmental awareness and meaningful learning of the foreign language (Çetinkaya et al., 2015).

1.1.4. Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning involves students working together in a lab or on some project, which requires teachers to structure cooperative interdependence among their students. Collaborative learning enhances the language learning skills of English language learners because it provides them with opportunities to interact with members of their group through the exchange of ideas, which contributes to the deep assimilation of any topic and the knowledge is retained in their minds for the long term (Rao, 2019). When students work on their projects in teams, they will be able to defend their positions, articulate their points, and exchange ideas, thus obtaining a more complete understanding.

1.1.5 Didactic Activities

Didactic activities, according to Borbor (2015), “involve self-management (the existence of a goal the awareness that this objective has) and self-control, i.e. monitoring and evaluation of the own behavior depending on the objectives that guide it” (p. 20).

1.1.5.1 Didactic Activities with Environmental Focus

Progressive Didactic activities with an environmental approach are resources that need some preparation to be carried out objectively when developing the teaching-learning process of language with contents aimed at internalizing and developing environmental values. These types of activities can help motivate students in the teaching-learning process, since they promote student interaction and participation, in addition to making them aware of the environment. There is a great diversity of didactic activities that can be developed with this approach, some of them are:

1.1.5.1.1 Dramatizing

The activity consists of developing a dramatization that transmits a message of environmental awareness, for which students must develop a script and make their costumes with recycled material.

1.1.5.1.2 Stand

Another very entertaining activity is a stand. The activity can be carried out individually, in pairs, or in groups. The teacher designates an environmental topic for the student(s), they will look for information regarding the topic and create decorations with recycled material to decorate their stand and later the students will have the opportunity to present their topics in front of their classmates.

1.1.5.1.3 Creating a Story

Creating a story can be a lot of fun, even better if it's collaborative. Students can create a story using the vocabulary they have learned. At the end, students can read the story in front of the class, and they will mention what environmental awareness message the story had.

1.1.5.1.4 Making a Notebook

For this activity, students will develop their creativity and personal expression. Students need to look for notebooks that they no longer use but that still contain unused pages. Then, they will remove the unused pages from the notebooks to create a new notebook, which will have a new cover with a message of environmental awareness. Finally, they show their notebook to the class, express what message the phrase on its cover conveys and what their experience was doing the activity.

1.1.5.1.5 Making a Flyer

Making a flyer is another activity where students must put all their creativity and skills into the target language. To carry out this activity, students must look for stationery at home that they no longer use. Then, choose a topic (for example: I like to recycle, types of pollution, how to take care of the planet? etc.). In addition, they must include information, drawings, or images on the chosen topic. Once the flyer is created, the students will present their topic in front of the class with the help of the flyer they created.

1.1.6 Motivation in English language learning

Motivation is an important factor in language learning since the teacher contributes to the students' acquisition of new knowledge and skill development, but it is the students' motivation that encourages them to move forward in the teaching-learning process (Nguyen, 2019). In addition, motivation involves intrinsic and extrinsic elements, so it can be maintained or increased depending on them.

1.1.6.1 Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation, according to Quitiaquez and Sierra (2014), is not developed with the purpose of obtaining results but arises from the pleasure generated by performing a task. A student with intrinsic motivation carries out a task or activity without putting effort or expecting a reward since it is done out of complacency.

1.1.6.2 Extrinsic Motivation

According to Mowrer (1960), extrinsic motivation is the one that arises through incentives, as they are the main behavioral motivator. Also, this type of motivation is found in relation to the learning of emotional responses. A student with extrinsic motivation is encouraged by incentives to achieve learning.

1.2 Antecedents

Some authors have developed studies around the topic addressed in this research, among them are:

A research found was "La educación ambiental en la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera inglés en la secundaria del Distrito Federal: una intervención didáctica, 2006-2007" conducted by Escobar (2008) in Mexico. This research with a qualitative approach and descriptive and interpretative scope was conducted with the purpose of integrating environmental education with the English language so that through environmental themes, the teaching-learning process of the language, students learn new things, express ideas, and develop environmental awareness. The sample consisted of 10 students between 14 and 15 years old, 9 of whom had a low level of English. The researcher designed and applied a didactic unit involving environmental themes to be used in the English class, which was developed during four stages. The results showed that the educational institution should make adjustments in the planning since it does not involve the protagonist of the educational process; on the other hand, it was identified that the students enjoyed learning environmental topics in English class and were able to strengthen their reflection and critical skills.

The author Nielson (2010) developed action research in Colombia entitled "Actividades didácticas de motivación en el aula para la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera de los estudiantes de grado undécimo del Colegio Champagnat de Bogotá", which possessed a quantitative approach, and as an objective had to create motivational activities that could be welcomed by the students and in turn be effective for their learning. The research was carried out with 33 students between 16 and 17 years old. The researcher developed 8 lesson plans in the classroom, considering the educational and formative environment; the researcher created a pleasant and participatory environment that allowed them to use the four linguistic skills while varying the didactic activities from session to session. The conclusion showed that the motivational didactic activities achieved a significant impact on the students, increased their communicative competence and the application of these activities facilitated the understanding of the content. This is reflected in a high percentage of students who obtained satisfactory results in the international PET exam, with 45% achieving a result of "PASSED WITH MERIT" and 30% obtaining a result of "PASS".

On the other hand, Riegerová (2011) did research in Czechia entitled "Environmental education in English lessons". This article aimed to incorporate environmental education in English classes. The research was carried out with two groups of students between 18 and 19 years old, the first group was made up of 15 students and the second was made up of 13. The researcher divided the research into two parts, one theoretical and the other practical. In the first part, the researcher analyzed theoretical aspects surrounding environmental education and the parts of the FEP that focus on environmental education, a set of practical activities to integrate into the teaching of English focused on environmental topics. In the second part, she provided ideas and 10 specific activities, which were aimed at adolescents and adults with a level from A1 to B2. The activities included linguistic skills such as oral comprehension, reading, writing, and listening comprehension and focused on developing as many skills as possible. At the end of the research, three activities were chosen and developed with each group. This article concludes that the activities can be carried out with classes with a large number of students, but it is recommended to do them in groups. In addition, it is noted that the time is established according to the workgroup since each one is different, also provides students scaffolding, adds topics that are of interest to the students, and adjusts the tests according to the abilities and needs of the students. Finally, the

author mentions that when applying these activities in their context there may be errors, so he recommends adapting them to your context.

The research conducted by Kazarian and Prida (2014) entitled "Activities to motivate student learning in English classes" in Cuba aimed to identify the type of activities that first-year students at the Latin American School of Medicine prefer in English classes to increase their motivation for learning since it was identified that they show low motivation. The authors conducted research with a qualitative approach and a cross-sectional descriptive scope. The methods used were analysis-synthesis and inductive-deductive. The population consisted of 264 first-year students, and the simple randomized probabilistic method was used to select the sample. On the other hand, the documentary study technique was used to analyze information and support the research, while a survey was applied to know the students' opinions about their level of motivation in learning English and the activities they prefer in class. It was concluded that students recognize the importance of learning English for future medical professionals and expressed a preference for recreational activities such as jokes, games, and songs, particularly games in their entertainment options. In addition, the need for recreational activities to be incorporated into classes and other extracurricular activities was evidenced.

Also, Del Hierro (2016) developed research in Ecuador entitled "Actividades recreativas y didácticas para la enseñanza del idioma inglés en los alumnos del segundo año de bachillerato de la unidad educativa Babahoyo, en la ciudad de Babahoyo, provincia de los ríos, durante el periodo lectivo 2015-2016" to discover which playful and didactic activities could be applied in the teaching of the English language. Before conducting the research, the researcher made a diagnosis of the students about their expectations, needs, suggestions, possibilities, and limitations, in order to choose and apply the activities. Subsequently, an effective, stimulating, and integrating climate was created to proceed with the development of the activities, which implied that the students used their experiences and previous knowledge, in addition to teamwork. In the end, the researcher created a space for the students to self-evaluate, avoiding negative emotions but motivating them to improve if necessary. The results were obtained from a survey of students and teachers. Students stated that teachers should use playful and didactic activities to teach their classes attractively; teachers indicated that the use of these activities influences the motivational factor.

Finally, research was carried out in Nepal by Bhusal (2021) entitled "Papers English Language Teachers' Perceptions on Integrating Environmental Education". This qualitative research aimed to examine how students identify and take responsibility for environmental issues within Kolb's experiential learning theoretical framework. For the development of this research, the author conducted interviews with teachers and subsequently analyzed their experiences and perceptions. As a result, it was found that students have been able to develop environmental awareness, positive attitudes, and critical thinking skills to solve environmental problems in a responsible way by integrating environmental education into their lessons.

CHAPTER II

MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Context

The present research was carried out at "María Auxiliadora" School. This school is located at Pacific Avenue and Beato Luis Monza, Kilometer 2.5. It is a presential institution with morning and afternoon hours. It has an educational offer for Basic Elementary, Basic Middle, Basic Higher, and Baccalaureate. English is taught at each of its levels.

2.2 Type of Investigation

The research had a mixed approach (Qual/quan) with a descriptive scope and non-experimental design. According to Hernández et al. (2003) quantitative research uses data collection and analysis to answer posed questions and test a previously determined hypothesis, and notes that it focuses on numerical measurement, counting, and statistics. For this reason, the research process allowed us to determine the number of students who had learned about environmental topics, what topics were of interest to them, and how they would like to learn these topics; moreover, it was possible to know their point of view on didactic activities with an environmental focus to learn English. Likewise, for the qualitative part of the research, Blasco and Pérez (2007) idea that “qualitative research studies reality in its natural context and how it happens, extracting and interpreting phenomena” (p. 25) was followed. This qualitative approach helped interpret the teacher's responses to the questions asked in the interview.

Furthermore, this research is also considered descriptive, since a detailed and complete analysis of the information collected in the interview was made. Research with a descriptive scope involves aspects such as the description, interpretation, recording, and analysis of nature itself as well as the processes or composition of the phenomena (Tamayo, 2004). The research also had a non-experimental, which “is research that lacks the manipulation of an independent variable. Rather than manipulating an independent variable, researchers conducting non-experimental research simply measure variables as they naturally occur... “ (Price, et al., 2017, pag). The

research was non-experimental since the information was collected without manipulating or controlling the variables.

2.3 Population and Sample

The population of this research was seventh-grade students and the English teachers assigned to that basic year. The sample was made up of class “A”, which has 32 students who are between 11 and 12 years old, as well as 1 teacher who taught the English subject in that class.

The population and sample were chosen intentionally since it was considered that these students did not feel motivated to learn English, did not enjoy the classes, and were not very participative.

2.4 Variables

The variables studied were:

- Dependent Variable: Students’ motivation towards the English learning
Level of interest that students have regarding learning the English language.

- Independent Variable: Didactic activities with an environmental focus.

Set of activities designed for the development of a more motivating and transcendental English learning process.

Operationalization of the Variables (Appendix A)

2.5 Methods

The methods used in the research were:

Analysis and Synthesis: It was used to make an analysis and synthesis of the information collected was carried out in search of the essence of the ideas.

Hermeneutics: It helped to interpret the results obtained from the questionnaires applied and the information from the research or articles studied.

Descriptive Statistics: It was used to process the data collected during the research.

2.6 Techniques

Documentary Review: The documentary review allowed the study of research and articles related to the topic of this research and that would help to support it.

Interview: The interview was focused on identifying teachers' perspectives regarding the use of educational activities with an environmental focus.

Survey: The survey developed was applied to group seventh-grade students' "A", in order to know the environmental topics that interested them and their point of view on the use of educational activities with an environmental focus in their classes of English.

2.7 Instruments

In this research, different techniques have been used to collect valuable data. To obtain quantitative information, a questionnaire was designed consisting of five questions that included both closed and semi-open questions, which made it possible to identify the environmental topics that students prefer and their point of view regarding didactic activities with an environmental focus.

Additionally, an unstructured interview was carried out with the teachers, based on three key questions. This qualitative approach in the form of an interview provided a deeper understanding of the individual opinions and perspectives of the teachers, allowing nuances to be explored and enriching information to be obtained from the integration of the use of didactic activities with an environmental focus towards the learning of English. For the documentary review, a series of studies, articles, and research related to didactic activities to motivate students to learn English and the integration of environmental education in the teaching of English were reviewed.

2.8 Data Processing

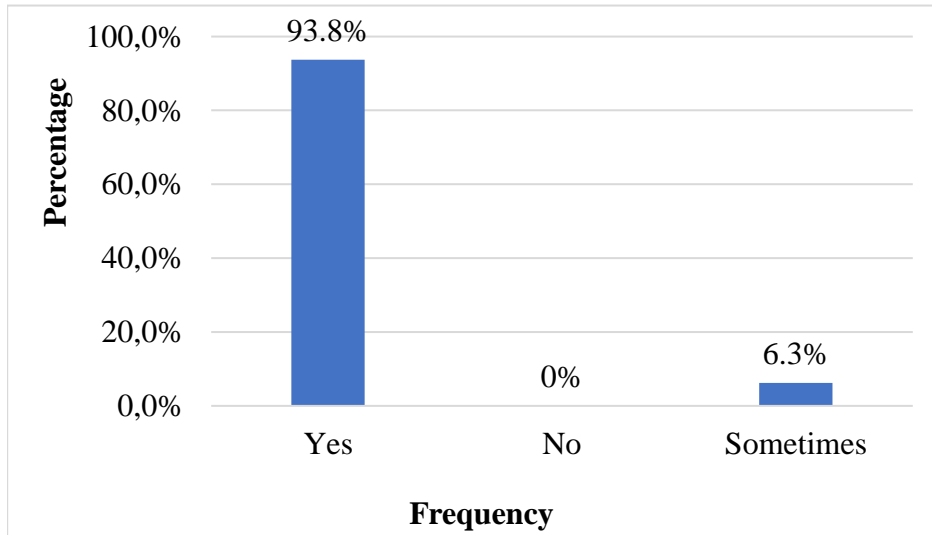
The information collected in the application of the surveys was processed and represented graphically with Microsoft Excel. The interview data were presented in a narrated report.

CHAPTER III RESULTS

Through the application of a five-question survey, it was possible to obtain valuable information and find out the students' prior knowledge, their interests, and criteria regarding environmental topics.

Figure 1 shows that 93.8% of the students have systematically learned about environmental topics in their previous classes and 6.3% only sometimes.

Figure 1
Learning about environmental topics in class



Source: Survey applied to students.

Concerning the environmental topics preferred by students, Table 1 presents the diverse interests of the students regarding the environmental topics they would like to learn in their English classes. The topics that students liked the most were “Endangered Animals” (81.3%), “How to make a vegetable patch” (66.6%), and “Recycling” (46.9%).

Table 1*Preferred environmental topics in English classes*

Environmental topics to learn in the English classes	A.F.	%		
How to take care of the planet	13	40.6		
How to make a vegetable patch	21	65.6		
Types of pollution	12	37.5	Descriptive Statistical summary	
Recycling	15	46.9	Mean	17
Endangered animals	26	81.3	Standard deviation	5

Note. It's a multiple-choice question. N= 32. Source: Survey applied to students

The data reflected the variety of students' interest in the activities. Among the activities that captured the students' attention the most, with absolute positive frequency, were making a stand (75%), and dramatizing (68.8%). In contrast, the activities that failed to attract the students' attention (Absolute negative frequency) were making a flyer (59.4%) and making a notebook (56.2%). Finally, creating a story was an activity that 65.6 % found interesting; however, (11%) out of the 32 students did not find it interesting.

Table 3*Interest of students according to the types of educational activities*

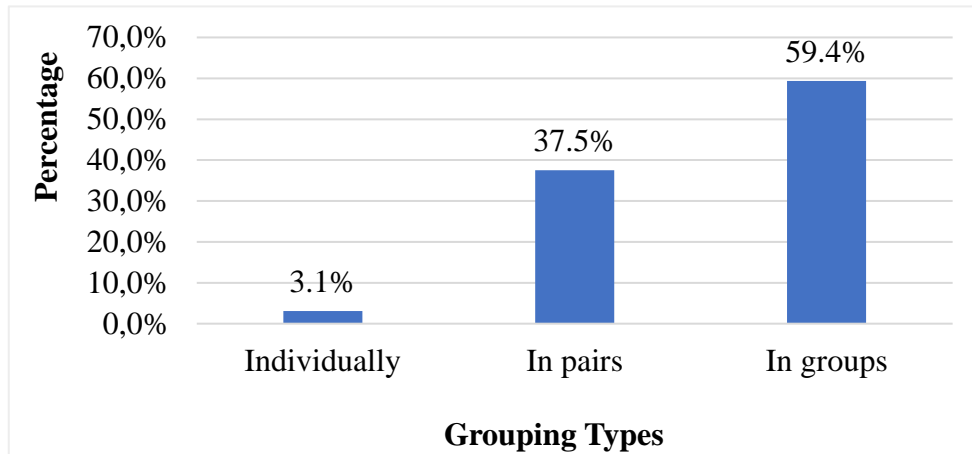
Activities	VI	I	APF	%	NVI	NIAA	ANF	%
Dramatizing	10	12	22	68.8	8	2	10	31.2
Stand	10	14	24	75	5	3	8	25
Making a notebook	6	8	14	43.8	11	7	18	56.2
Making a flyer	3	10	13	40.6	12	7	19	59.4
Creating a story	13	8	21	65.6	7	4	11	34.4

Note: VI= Very interesting; I= Interesting; APF= Absolute positive frequency; NVI= Not very interesting; NIAA= Not interesting at all; ANF= Absolute negative frequency. Source: Survey applied to students.

The students expressed how they would like to develop the activities of their interest. 59.4% indicated in groups, 37.5% indicated in pairs, and only 3.1% wanted to do them individually.

Figure 2

Types of grouping that students prefer to develop didactic activities

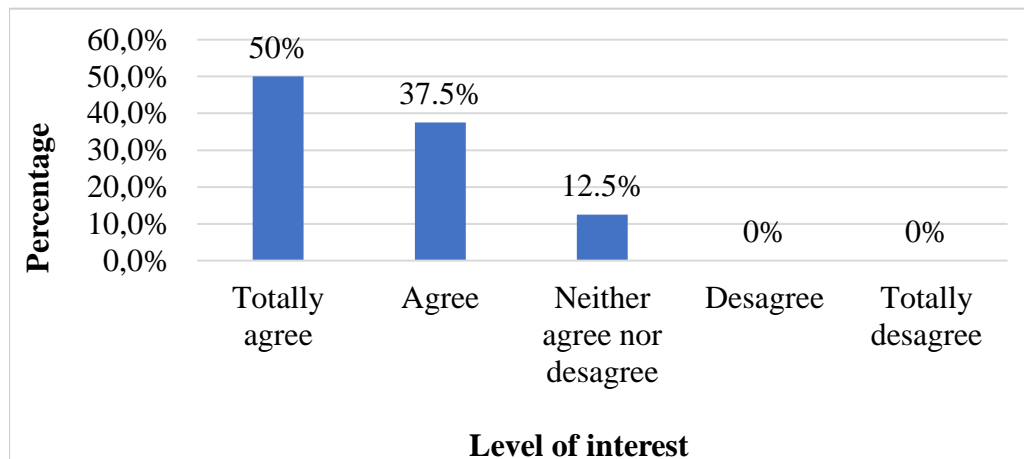


Source: Survey applied to students.

Finally, a control question was asked regarding the criteria they have regarding the importance of learning about environmental topics. Most students “totally agreed” (50%), others agreed (37.5%), and very few “neither agreed nor disagreed” (12.5%).

Figure 3

Criteria on the importance of learning environmental topics



Source: Survey applied to students.

Likewise, it was possible to know the perspective towards the integration of didactic activities with an environmental focus and aspects surrounding the same topic of the teacher who taught classes in the parallel surveyed. The analysis of the interview is described below.

The teacher interviewed states that she has developed didactic activities with an environmental focus, because there is a unit in the English book on the environment, which has allowed her to carry out educational activities around topic mentioned. This reveals a practical focus, in which the curriculum itself becomes a guide for the development of activities.

Furthermore, the teacher demonstrated a positive stance towards the integration of didactic activities with an environmental focus, emphasizing its dual purpose in addressing English language development as well as environmental awareness. Also, the teacher proposed activities, such as: group discussions, debates, presentation of crafts with recyclable material and role playing related to solving environmental problems. As an example of the implementation of these activities in her context, she stated that at Christmas the students made Christmas decorations in groups with recycled materials. Each group chose a type of decoration and material to make it, to finally present their work in front of their classmates and explain the steps to make it.

Finally, the teacher manifested that implementing educational activities with an environmental focus can significantly motivate students towards learning English. The teacher highlighted that using the environmental focus allows students to explore vocabulary, express opinions, and develop linguistic and critical thinking skills. Eventually, she pointed out that integrating didactic activities with an environmental focus not only improves language learning but also cultivates a sense of responsibility and environmental awareness in students.

Considering the activities and themes that most attract the students' attention, the following proposal for didactic activities with an environmental focus was made.

ACTIVITY 1. DRAMATIZING

Language focus: Speaking

Topic: Endangered Animals

Objectives:

- To improve speaking skills and reinforce vocabulary.
- To promote creativity, collaborative work, and awareness about endangered animals.

Resources: Sheets of paper, newspapers, cardboard, plastic covers, bottles, paint, brush, silicone, scissors.

Procedures:

- The teacher will reinforce the topic of endangered animals (previously taught) and will discuss with the students the importance of environmental awareness.
- The teacher will form groups of 6, and he will explain the work to be done. The work consists of performing a dramatization of endangered animals that transmits a message of awareness, using the vocabulary learned.
- Students within their small group will discuss how they will do the dramatization. Then they will write the script using the vocabulary learned, assign the role that each one has, and decide the recycled materials they will use.
- The teacher will monitor the students and provide advice or to clear doubts.
- Students will create their stage and costumes with the recycled materials they have decided to use, in a classroom space that the teacher has designated for them.
- The teacher will take the students outside the classroom, so they can practice the dramatization in an open space to create a good learning environment that manages to stimulate their creativity and increase motivation.
- Students will present their dramatizations in front of their teacher and other classmates. The teacher will take notes and in the next class period will ask the students about their experience developing that activity and will also give feedback on the work they have done.

ACTIVITY 2. STAND

Language focus: Speaking

Topic: How to make a vegetable patch?

Objectives:

- To create opportunities for students to put learned vocabulary and oral skills into practice.
- To promote environmental awareness, collaborative work, and creativity.

Resources: Cardboard, magazines, plastics, cardboard, old tires, paper, cardboard, scissors, silicone, plants, and a sample of a vegetable patch.

Procedures:

- The teacher forms pairs and assigns each pair the task of creating a stand related to the making of a vegetable patch. Each couple must choose a plant that germinates quickly, to make their vegetable patch sample to show on the day of the presentation.
- Students should discuss the plant they will choose, plan how they will make the stand, and the materials they will use. They must look for information about creating a vegetable patch and designate which part each one will explain.
- The teacher will allow the students to make their vegetable patch in the school garden.
- Students gather materials and plants that they will use and begin to build their gardens. Then, the students continue with the making of their stand, using the recycled materials they considered for its creation.
- Once the stands and vegetable patches are ready, the students present their work to the class, explaining how to make a vegetable patch with the plant they chose. Classmates can ask questions and the teacher can facilitate a discussion about sustainable practices and gardening.

ACTIVITY 3. CREATING A STORY

Language Focus: Writing

Topic: Types of pollution

Objectives:

- To reinforce vocabulary related to pollution and writing skills by creating stories.
- To promote environmental awareness, collaborative work, and creativity.

Resources: Notebook, sheets of paper, pens, cardboard, eraser, old magazines, colored markers, colored pencils.

Procedures:

- The teacher reinforces the vocabulary learned about the different types of pollution. Then, the teacher creates groups and presents the activity, which consists of writing a story using the vocabulary. To do this, the teacher mentions how to make a story, that is, the elements involved and the parts it has, using an example.
- Students brainstorm ideas for their story, considering characters, settings, and plot elements related to pollution.
- Each group writes a short story incorporating the vocabulary they have learned and emphasizing an environmental awareness message.
- Groups share their stories with the class, emphasizing the message their story conveys.
- The teacher creates an open dialogue for students to give their opinions on the work of other groups.

CHAPTER IV DISCUSSION

Didactic activities with an environmental focus have turned out to be an innovative element, which can be presented as an extremely effective proposal to motivate students towards learning English, provide dynamism, stimulate language learning, among others. However, it is crucial to know the relationships and nuances of this research from the perspective of authors with experience in this field. All of this will provide a deeper understanding of the proposal, thus enriching the research.

In this research, it was shown that most of the students had previously learned about environmental topics in classes. On the contrary, authors Çetinkaya et al. (2015) in the research they conducted on the introduction of environmental education in language teaching for young students, point out that the content taught about environmental education is very limited to the content of subjects such as biology or science, and that it should be taught in English lessons to make language learning more meaningful.

Based on the above, educational institutions must recognize the importance of continuous training, experiential exchange among educational actors, evaluation of teaching staff, and periodic review of the curriculum to manage adaptations. Likewise, teachers should frequently update their knowledge, self-evaluate, and use innovative resources. All of these in order to avoid knowledge gaps and provide students with a quality education.

Also, the results presented that the environmental topics that students prefer to learn in English classes are the following: "Endangered Animals", "How to make a vegetable patch" and "Recycling". This aligns with the article by authors Hauschild et al. (2012) on the fusion of environmental education and language instruction, as they mention that once the teacher selects the topics that will be part of the lessons, he/she can give students the opportunity to identify interesting topics that are related to the general topic. Providing space for students to take a more active role in the English teaching-learning process gives students more control over their learning and creates a learner-centered environment.

Additionally, the present research reflected on the didactic activities that captured the students' attention, the data indicated that the most interesting activity for them was making a

stand, dramatizing, followed by creating a story. On the contrary, Kazarian and Prida (2014) in their research oriented to identify the type of activities they prefer for English classes and increase motivation for their learning, collected information that manifested that students prefer playful activities such as games and storytelling. From this, it can be estimated that the teacher should take the task of identifying the students' aspects such as interests, learning styles, needs associated or not to the disability, among others; in order to integrate to the teaching-learning process activities, strategies and methodologies that adjust to them as well as to the context in which they develop.

Moreover, it was expressed in the results that students would like to develop the didactic activities mentioned above in groups or pairs. This finding coincides with those of Nielson (2010), who investigated motivational didactic activities in the classroom for teaching English as a foreign language. In his study, Nielson found that students prefer group activities in English classes. Collaborative work is a good method for language learning, according to author Rao (2019) in research presented about collaborative learning in a language learning environment, collaborative work not only allows students to elevate their language skills in the language by exchanging ideas among team members but also contributes to the knowledge learned being retained in their minds in the long run. It is considered that involving students in activities that encourage collaborative learning is important during language learning since students will enhance their English language skills and it will help the internalization of knowledge.

The result obtained from the control question showed that most students think that learning about environmental topics is important, but there is still a small percentage who do not think it is important. These results contrast with those obtained by Escobar (2008) in a survey applied to students during the development of his research on environmental education in English teaching in a high school in Mexico. That survey showed that about 50% of the students would like to learn about environmental topics in their English classes because they think it would be interesting and they could use that knowledge in a real context; while the other 50% stated that they do not like English and that it would be difficult to learn English and environmental topics at the same time. The results invite teachers to address the barriers and develop effective didactic activities to promote a greater understanding of the importance of environmental education, demonstrating to students that learning environmental topics in English class can be easy and fun.

The results of the interview with one teacher reflected that she had had the opportunity to develop didactic activities with an environmental focus in her lessons, which she considered meaningful because of their dual purpose, i.e., teaching English and environmental awareness. In turn, the teacher suggested activities such as group discussions, debates, crafts with recyclable material and role-playing to teach this type of topics. Finally, the teacher expressed that the implementation of environmental activities with an environmental focus can not only have a positive impact on the students' motivation towards learning but also on the development of language skills and critical thinking skills. Similarly, Bhusal (2021) who conducted research to understand the perspective of teachers on the integration of environmental education, obtained in his results that teachers have also had the opportunity to integrate environmental topics in the activities and that they have had a positive impact on their contexts.

The same author points out that the findings encourage the incorporation of environmental content in the teaching of English about, through, for, and in the environment; in addition, it motivates students to think and learn in another language, since it allows them to have contextual learning and significantly relate to the environment.

Considering both results, teachers recognize the effectiveness of didactic activities with an environmental approach, however, to increase the level of effectiveness and impact, before developing didactic activities with an environmental approach, teachers can first create environmental habits in the students, since this way they are related to the subject matter, and they will enjoy learning English through this type of activities.

Finally, in this research, three didactic activities were designed considering the themes and activities that most attracted the attention of the students, each one of them apart from the educational objective. The first activity is based on a dramatization about endangered animals, during which students will practice oral skills, reinforce their vocabulary, collaborative work, and creativity. The second activity designed to consist of making a stand on how to make a vegetable patch, where students will apply vocabulary learned and develop their oral skills. The third activity is based on the creation of a story about the types of pollution, in order to practice writing skills, reinforce the vocabulary learned, and develop creativity. This coincides with what Del Hierro (2016) found in his research related to recreational and didactic activities to be applied in the teaching-learning of the English language.

The didactic activities that the author implemented were: "The Hangman" to teach grammar, "Dictation Game" for students to learn to write correctly as well as to work collaboratively, and two "Complete the Song" activities for students to practice the skill of listening and writing correctly. Also, "Memory Games" and "Charades" were implemented for vocabulary recall. The results allow us to appreciate the diversity of didactic activities and purposes for which they can be used; however, it is important to take into account the preferences of the students so that they are motivated and involved during the learning of English.

CHAPTER V

5.1 Conclusions

Students have a basic understanding of environmental topics, indicating that they have a foundation of environmental awareness. In addition, they reflect great enthusiasm to learn about specific environmental topics through collaborative teaching activities that involve dramatizing, making a stand, and creating a story. This suggests that integrating environmentally focused activities into students' English learning can enhance the learning experience.

The teacher had a positive outlook towards the use of didactic activities with an environmental focus; stating from her experience that they not only enhance language learning but also foster a sense of responsibility and environmental awareness among students. In addition, she pointed out that there are a variety of didactic activities that can be used in the English class to teach environmental topics.

Three didactic activities with an environmental focus were designed based on the interests of the students. The first activity consists of developing a dramatization in groups about endangered animals. The second activity is based on making a stand in pairs about how to make a garden. In the third activity, students in groups must create a story about the types of pollution. These activities provide the opportunity to increase motivation, develop English language skills, and promote environmental awareness.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the findings of this investigation, the following recommendations were proposed:

- For educational institutions, the importance of providing adequate training and resources to teachers cannot be underestimated. Educators must receive training that enables them to design and implement didactic activities with an environmental focus in an effective manner that is aligned with the established curriculum. In addition, the availability of adequate

resources, both material and pedagogical, is essential to facilitate the successful implementation of these educational practices. Investment in the training and ongoing support of teachers is crucial to ensuring quality education.

- For teachers, the integration of didactic activities with an environmental focus in the English language teaching process is very necessary. This integration not only provides students with the opportunity to improve their language acquisition through motivating and contextually relevant methods but also contributes to cultivating valuable environmental awareness. By incorporating environmental topics into English language learning, a more enriching and meaningful educational environment is created.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

OBJECTIVES	VARIABLES	CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION	OPERATIONAL DEFINITION	DIMENSIONS	INDICATORS	ITEMS
To know the students' points of view about the didactic activities designed with an environmental focus	DEPENDENT: Students' motivation toward English learning	Interest that students show in learning and improving their skills in the English language.	Internal drive of students that influences their effort and predisposition to commit to learning English, this involves the dynamics of learning, the development of language learning, and their motivation's level.	Learning Dynamic English Learning Motivation	- Methods - Activities - Topics - Interest level - Development of language skills - Participation in classes - Intrinsic - Extrinsic	
To identify the teachers' perspectives toward the use of didactic activities with an environmental focus.	INDEPENDENT: Didactic activities with an environmental focus	Set of activities designed to facilitate the teaching-learning process and integrate environmental themes.	Activities to teach environmental topics through didactics, specific focus, and environmentally friendly resources.	Didactic Focus Resources Teacher's perspective	- Activities - Environmental focus - Recyclable material - Implementation experience - Criterion	
To design didactic activities with an environmental focus.						

Appendix B

Survey For Students

1. Have you ever learned about environmental topics in classes?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

2. What environmental topics would you like to learn in your English classes?

- How to take care of the planet?
- How to make a vegetable patch?
- Types of pollution
- Recycling
- Endangered animals

Other _____

3. How interesting do you consider the following activities to learn about environmental topics?

	Very interesting	Interesting	Not very interesting	Not interesting at all
Dramatize				
Stand				
Making a notebook				
Making a flyer				
Creating a story				

4. How would you like to develop the activities that you found interesting?

- Individually
- In pairs
- In groups

5. To what degree do you think it is important to learn about environmental topics?

- Totally agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Totally disagree

Appendix C

Interview For a Teacher

1. Have you ever developed didactic activities with an environmental focus in your English classes? Why or why not?
2. What do you think about the integration of didactic activities with an environmental focus in the English teaching-learning process? How would you do it?
3. Do you consider that implementing some didactic activities could motivate students to learn English? Support your answer.

Appendix D

Documentary Review

Num	Documents	Author	Relevant information collected