

**11TH GRADE STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING
THEIR ENGLISH LEARNING**

**PERCEPÇÃO DOS ESTUDANTES DO 11º ANO SOBRE OS FATORES QUE
INFLUENCIAM SUA APRENDIZAGEM DE INGLÊS**

**PERCEPCIÓN DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DE 11º GRADO SOBRE LOS
FACTORES QUE INCIDEN EN SU APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLÉS**

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ABSTRACT

The English language holds great relevance worldwide. In recent decades, proficiency in this language has provided access to various opportunities in academic, professional, and cultural fields. At the secondary level, English language learning is influenced by both internal and external factors. The objective of this research is to analyze the perceptions of 11th-grade students regarding the factors that influence their learning of the English language. The study is framed within the quantitative paradigm, applying a non-experimental, cross-sectional descriptive approach. The results show that the factors that most affect English language learning among 11th-grade students are: the instrumental value of the language (future, travel, resources), motivation and personal confidence (self-efficacy vs. anxiety), pedagogical practices (activities, materials, teacher's role), and extracurricular habits (low exposure to authentic English). In conclusion, 11th-grade students recognize the value of English for their future lives and are aware of the factors that influence their learning of the language.

Keywords: English Learning. Perception. Secondary Education. Factors. Students.

RESUMO

O idioma inglês é uma língua de grande relevância em nível mundial. Nas últimas décadas, o domínio desse idioma tem possibilitado o acesso a diversas oportunidades nos âmbitos acadêmico, profissional e cultural. No ensino médio, o aprendizado do inglês é influenciado por fatores internos e externos. O objetivo desta pesquisa é analisar as percepções dos estudantes do 11.º ano sobre os fatores que influenciam sua aprendizagem do idioma inglês. O estudo insere-se no paradigma quantitativo, adotando uma abordagem descritiva, não experimental e transversal. Os resultados demonstram que os fatores que mais impactam a aprendizagem do inglês entre os estudantes do 11.º ano são: o valor instrumental do idioma (futuro, viagens, recursos), a motivação e a confiança pessoal (autoeficácia vs. ansiedade), as práticas pedagógicas (atividades, materiais, papel do professor) e os hábitos extraclasse (baixo contato com o inglês autêntico). Em conclusão, os estudantes do 11.º ano reconhecem o valor do inglês para sua vida futura e estão conscientes dos fatores que influenciam sua aprendizagem.

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Palavras-chave: Aprendizagem do Inglês. Percepção. Educação Secundária. Fatores. Estudantes.

RESUMEN

El idioma inglés es una lengua de gran relevancia a nivel mundial. En las últimas décadas, el dominio de dicha lengua ha permitido el acceso a diversas oportunidades dentro del ámbito académico, profesional y cultural. A nivel secundario, el aprendizaje del idioma inglés se ve impactado por factores internos y externos. El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar las percepciones de los estudiantes de 11.º grado sobre los factores que influyen en su aprendizaje del idioma inglés. El estudio se enmarca en el paradigma cuantitativo aplicando un enfoque descriptivo no experimental y transversal. Los resultados demuestran que los factores que más inciden en el aprendizaje del idioma inglés en estudiantes de 11.º grado son: el valor instrumental del idioma (futuro, viajes, recursos), la motivación y confianza personal (autoeficacia vs. ansiedad), las prácticas pedagógicas (actividades, materiales, rol docente), los hábitos extraclase (bajo contacto con inglés auténtico). En conclusión, los estudiantes de 11.º grado reconocen el valor del inglés para su vida futura y están conscientes de los factores que inciden en el aprendizaje del mismo.

Palabras clave: Aprendizaje del Inglés. Percepcion. Educación Secundaria. Factores. Estudiantes.

1 INTRODUCTION

The English language is a language of great relevance worldwide. In recent decades, mastery of this language has allowed access to various opportunities within the academic, professional and cultural fields. At the secondary level, the teaching of this language has always been a challenge due to multiple internal and external factors related to the teaching-learning process of this language. (BASTIDAS; MUÑOZ, 2020).

In Panama, the English language is taught as a foreign language from primary to university level with the aim of providing students with the necessary skills to function in a globalized and interconnected world. However, in the case of the secondary level, the students' levels of competencies do not meet the expected standards. Research shows that there are several factors that affect the teaching-learning of the English language at the secondary level. These factors range from socioeconomic and educational factors (quality of teaching, educational resources), personal motivation, as well as the perception and attitudes that students have about their ability to learn the language. (BABILONIA et al., 2018).

The teaching of any language goes beyond just didactic strategies. Different aspects must be taken into consideration, such as the internal and external factors that may affect this process. Muñoz (2009) cited by ROA ROCHA (2023), highlights that there are psychological, physical, and social states that can affect language learning. According to BASTIDAS; MUÑOZ (2020), various studies have been carried out on both internal and external factors that influence the learning process of a language (p.165). In his study Factors that influence the learning of English by high school students in Pasto, Colombia, he establishes that there are biological, cognitive, linguistic and psycho-socio-affective factors, as well as sociocultural and pedagogical factors that affect the motivation and attitude of students towards learning the English language. Their study shows that among the external factors that have the greatest impact on English language learning, the learning environment in the classroom, the institutional curriculum, the professional preparation of the teacher, the role of the local community and the role of national educational policies stand out; On the other hand, the internal factors that exert the most influence include the attitude, attention and motivation of the students.

The study carried out by BABILONIA et al. (2018) factors that affect the Learning of the English Language as a Second Language in Students of Grade 6, 7, 8 and 9 of Basic Secondary School of the Jesús de Nazareth Educational Institution, located in the village of Los Monos, municipality of Lorica, Córdoba establishes that the factors that most affect the

learning of the English language in its context are motivation since students are not motivated to learn because they do not understand (38%), in addition to the lack of support to reinforce knowledge from teachers and parents (94%).

Other international research related to this topic is that of CANRINUS et al. (2024) who found that intrinsic motivation varies significantly depending on the type of school and geographical location, and that even weak external motivation can evolve positively over time. Similarly, MAI et al. (2024) emphasize that linguistic (such as vocabulary and grammar), affective (self-esteem, anxiety), and pedagogical (class size, teaching methods) factors condition student participation in English classes. These findings highlight the complexity of the phenomenon we studied.

This research focused on analyzing 11th grade students' perceptions of the factors that influence their English language learning. The elements that facilitate or hinder the acquisition of skills in this language were identified, as well as the expectations that are held about the learning of the English language in relation to the professional and academic future. This analysis seeks to offer a clear vision of the factors that must be considered to develop methodological strategies and thus optimize the learning of the English language at the secondary level.

Research Question:

1. What is 11th graders' perception of the internal factors that influence their English learning?

General and Specific Objectives: General Objective:

- To analyze 11th grade students' perceptions of the factors that affect their English learning.

Specific objectives:

- Identify the factors that affect English language learning in 11th grade students.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in secondary education is a complex and multidimensional process, influenced by a diverse network of variables. Understanding these factors is key to improving teaching methodologies and enhancing student performance (ROA ROCHA, 2023). This research is based on a taxonomy of the factors that affect second language (L2) learning, dividing them into internal (or individual) and external (or contextual) categories, with a special emphasis on student perception.

2.1 AFFECTIVE AND COGNITIVE FACTORS OF THE STUDENT

Internal factors are those psychological, cognitive, and affective attributes of the student that mediate their interaction with the learning process (RICHARDS; RENANDYA, 2002).

2.2 MOTIVATION IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING

Motivation is universally recognized as the force that initiates and directs learning behavior, being a predictive factor of success in Foreign Language Learning. In L2 teaching, motivation can be conceptualized as a continuum that varies from an autonomous orientation (intrinsic, for the pleasure of learning) to a controlled one (extrinsic, for rewards or pressure) (CANRINUS et al., 2024). Research has shown that motivation, while it can be stable, also undergoes changes over time, influenced by contextual factors such as the type and location of the school, as well as the teaching methodology employed.

2.3 PERSONAL TRUST AND LANGUAGE ANXIETY

Among the affective factors, personal trust and its counterpart, anxiety, play a determining role. Self-esteem is a variable that affects the learning of English, since the student's perception of himself directly influences his or her willingness to face linguistic challenges (CEBALLOS PARRA et al., 2014).

Specifically in the classroom, language anxiety acts as a barrier that limits interaction and participation. Affective factors are a main group of obstacles that prevent the student's active participation in conversation classes, including fear of making mistakes or being judged ((XUAN MAI et al., 2024). This anxiety directly affects oral production, despite the high intrinsic motivation that the student may have.

2.4 CONTEXTUAL AND PEDAGOGICAL FACTORS

External factors encompass the social, cultural, and educational environment that surrounds the student and that provides the stimuli and conditions for learning.

2.5 THE TEACHING ROLE AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES

The quality of instruction and the role of the teacher are determinants in the teaching-learning process of English. Studies underscore the importance of pedagogical practices that prioritize the functional use of language. For learning to be meaningful and effective,

classroom activities must facilitate the development of language skills, including the implementation of practical, game, and conversational activities (ROA ROCHA, 2023). Likewise, constructive feedback and a supportive environment from the teacher contribute to mitigating the factors that hinder student participation (XUAN MAI et al., 2024).

2.6 SOCIO-CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

The environment outside the classroom significantly influences exposure to English and attitude towards the language.

Social and Family Environment: The support of the family and the social circle is a factor that affects academic performance, providing an environment of reinforcement or obstacle (BABILONIA DÍAZ et al., 2018; BASTIDAS; MUÑOZ, 2020).

Instrumental Value of Language: At the baccalaureate level, the perception of the usefulness of English becomes a crucial factor, since language is seen as a tool for access to university, the labor market, and global information. This perspective is key to maintaining extrinsic motivation in the long term.

2.7 PERCEPTION AS A LEARNING FILTER

Perception not only describes what the student "sees" in his environment, but also how he interprets and values the factors that affect him. In the educational context, perception is the filter through which students experience the learning process, determining whether the activities are "useful," whether the teacher is "motivating," or whether the language is "difficult." Therefore, 11th graders' perceptions of internal (such as English difficulty) and external (such as the quality of materials or social support) factors have a direct impact on their attitude and learning outcomes. The exploration of these perceptions allows the educational institution to better align pedagogical strategies with the needs and subjective realities of its student population.

3 METHODOLOGY

This study was framed in the quantitative approach, since numerical data obtained through structured instruments were collected and analyzed, with the purpose of objectively and systematically describing the perception of 11th grade students about the factors that affect their learning of the English language. The quantitative approach allows measuring and analyzing response patterns in a representative sample, which facilitates the generalization

of the results within the context studied. The research is descriptive, since its main purpose was to identify and characterize the perception that students have about various internal and external factors that influence their English learning process. This type of study does not seek to establish causal or correlational relationships between variables, but to provide a clear and detailed view of the phenomenon from the perspective of the students themselves. The design adopted is not experimental, since the study variables were not deliberately manipulated. Data will be collected in their natural context, without intervention by the researcher. Within this design, the transversal modality was used, since the information was obtained in a single time moment, which allowed capturing the perception of the students at a specific stage of their academic training.

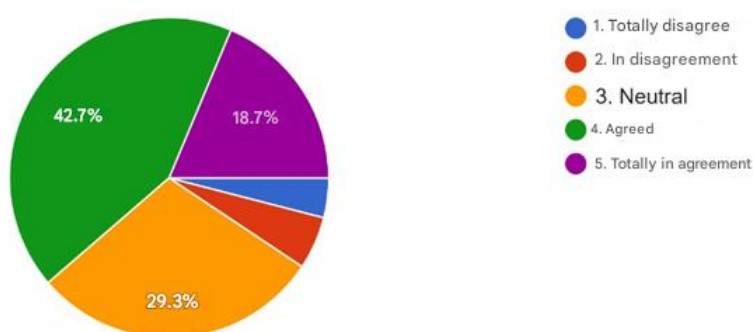
3.1 PARTICIPANTS

The population was made up of 75 11th grade students from an educational institution in the area. The technique used was the survey and the instrument, a structured questionnaire with items on a Likert-type scale. The questionnaire consisted of questions that inquire about factors that affect their learning of English. The data collected were processed using descriptive statistical tools, such as frequencies and percentages, to clearly describe and interpret the students' perceptions in relation to the identified factors.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Figure 1

I feel motivated to learn English

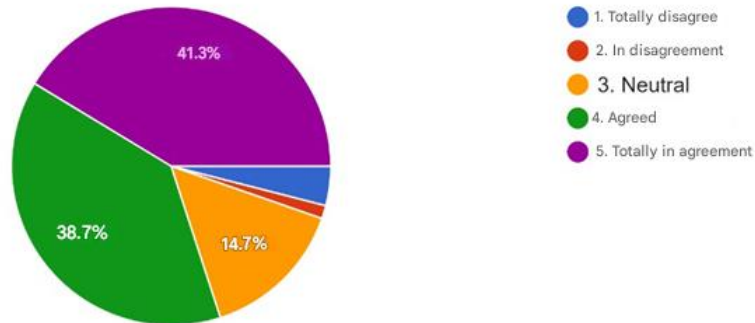


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: 11th graders' motivation towards learning English shows a predominantly positive trend, with 42.7% of respondents agreeing and 18.7% strongly agreeing. Overall, more than half of the students (61.4%) feel motivated. This finding underscores the importance of motivation as an internal factor in the learning process

Figure 2

Importance of English for the Future

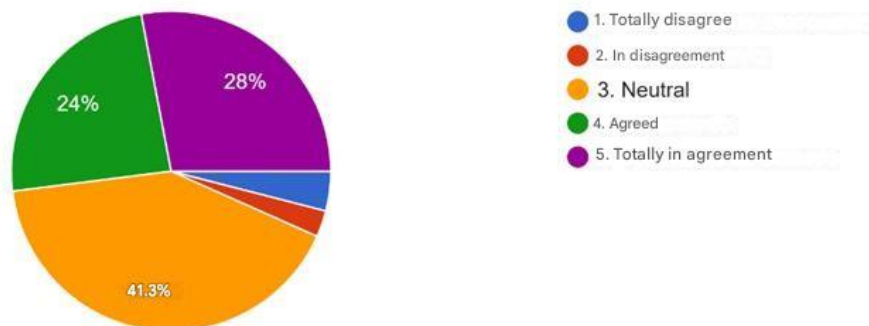


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: There is an overwhelming consensus among 11th graders on the instrumental value of English for their academic and professional future, with 41.3% strongly agreeing and 38.7% agreeing. This means that 80% of the student population recognises the relevance of this language for their future life, a factor that has a significant impact on their learning.

Figure 3

Enjoy Class Activities

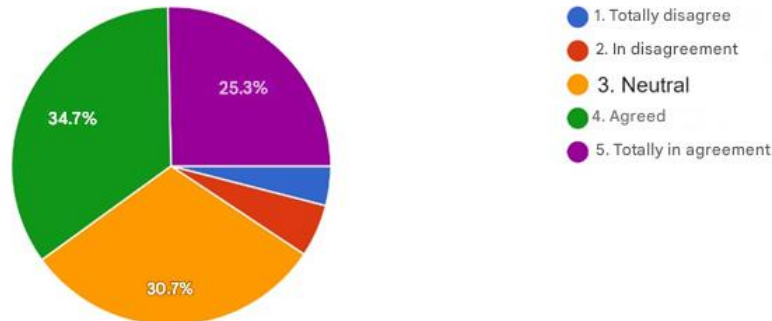


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: The perception of enjoyment in participating in English activities in class is markedly divided, with a high percentage of students in the "Neutral" category (41.3%). Despite this, a sizable portion do enjoy the activities, with 28% strongly agreeing and 24% agreeing. This result suggests that pedagogical practices (activities and teaching role) are a key factor influencing learning and participation in the classroom.

Figure 4

Learning English as Fun and Entertaining

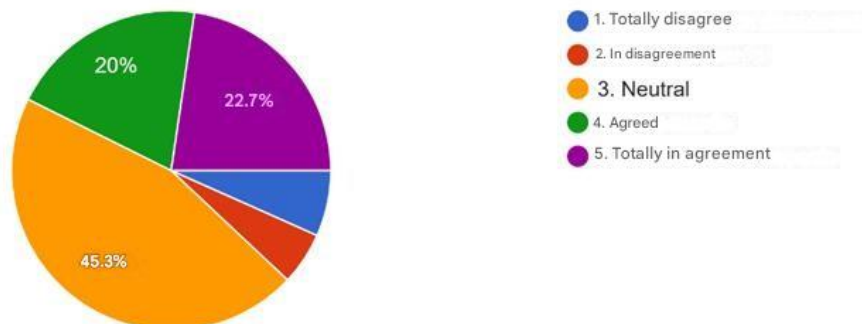


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: The perception of English as a fun and entertaining process is mostly positive, with 34.7% agreeing and 25.3% strongly agreeing. In total, 60% of students see it positively. However, 30.7% remain in a neutral position. This general perception of entertainment may be related to students' motivation towards the language.

Figure 5

Perception of English Difficulty

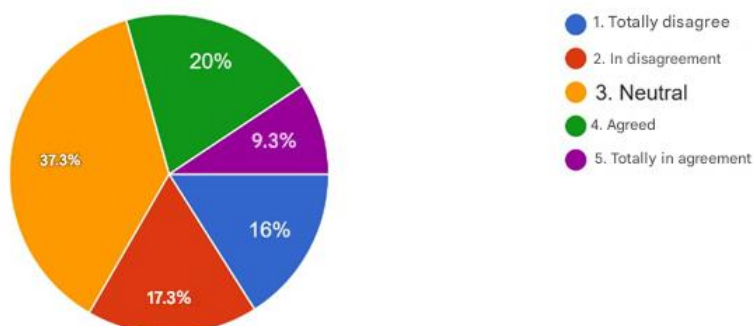


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: The opinion on the difficulty of English is quite ambivalent, since the majority of students (45.3%) were neutral. Positive and negative perceptions are distributed in a similar way: 20% agree and 22.7% strongly agree with the difficulty, while 7.9% (4.7% strongly disagree and disagree) do not consider it difficult. This high level of neutrality could indicate insecurity or variations in individual perception of linguistic complexity

Figure 6

Comfort in Speaking English Compared to Others

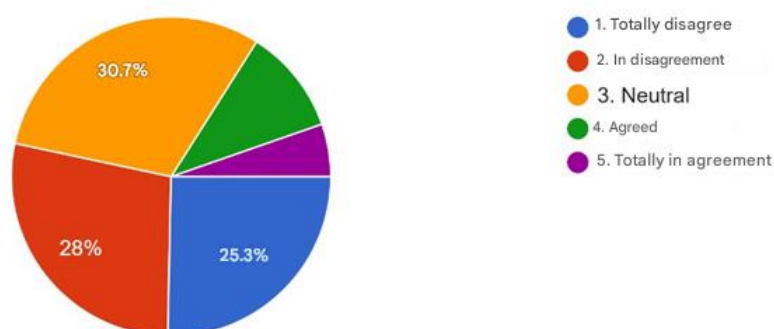


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: A significant portion of 11th graders show anxiety or lack of confidence when speaking English in front of others, with 16% strongly disagreeing and 17.3% disagreeing, totaling 33.3%. The highest percentage (37.3%) is in the neutral position. Only 29.3% (20% agree and 9.3% strongly agree) feel comfortable. This result highlights the influence of personal confidence (self-efficacy vs. anxiety) as a crucial internal factor that affects learning.

Figure 7

Preference for Authentic Content (English Movies/Series)

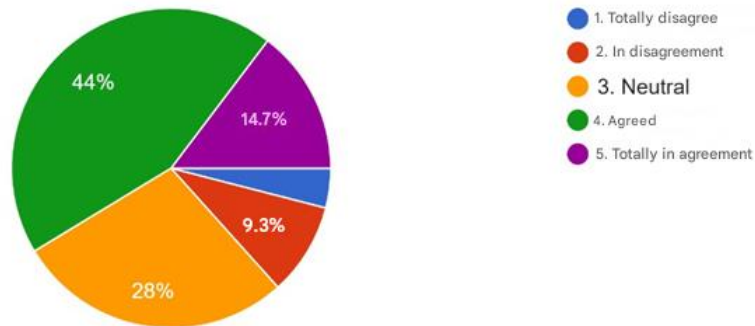


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: The preference for extra-class contact with authentic English (films or series) is remarkably low or neutral. 30.7% declare themselves neutral, and 53.3% disagree or strongly disagree (28% and 25.3% respectively). Only a small 16% say they do prefer this type of content (12% agree and 4% strongly agree). This low exposure to authentic material is pointed out in the results as a relevant factor that affects learning.

Figure 8

Satisfaction with Progress in Learning English

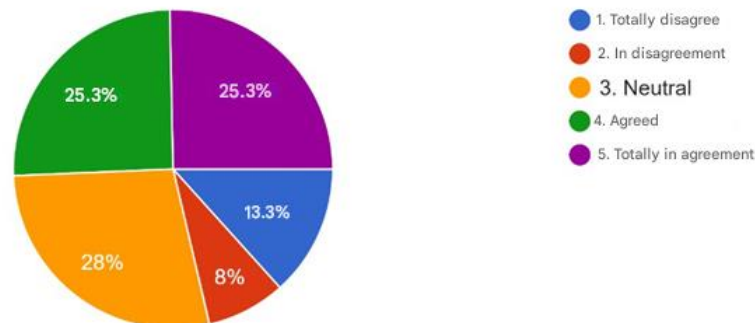


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: A sizable majority of 11th graders are satisfied with their progress in English, with 44% agreeing and 14.7% strongly agreeing, totaling 58.7%. 28% remain neutral, while only 13.3% declare themselves dissatisfied (9.3% disagree and 4% strongly disagree). This satisfaction may be linked to their self-perception of ability, an internal factor that influences their learning.

Figure 9

Family or Friend Support

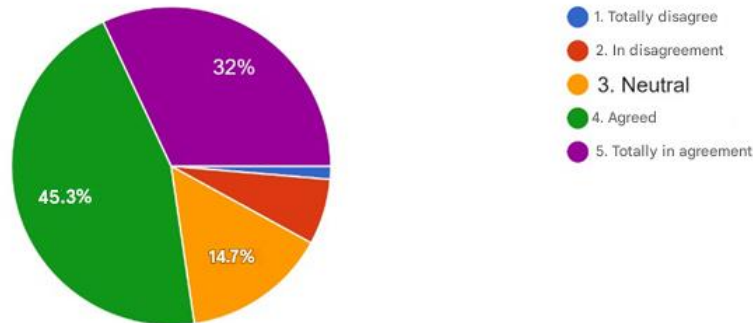


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: Perceptions of family or friend support for learning English are evenly split between agreement (50.6% agree and strongly agree), neutrality (28%), and disagree (21.3% disagree and strongly disagree). That almost half of the students report support is positive, although the percentage of neutrality and disagreement is considerable and suggests that the lack of external support is still a factor for many.

Figure 10

Usefulness of Practical Activities (conversation, games, etc.)

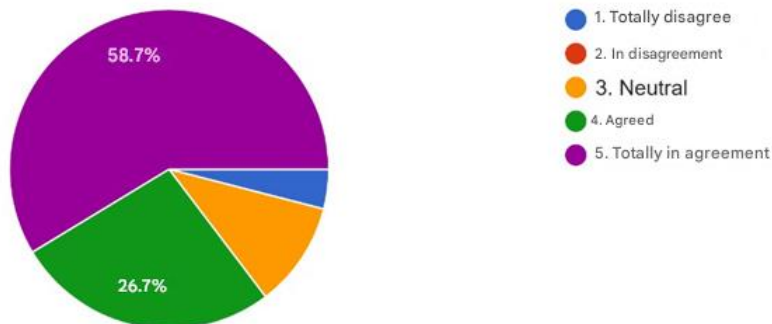


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: There is a strong consensus that practical activities (conversation, games, etc.) are beneficial for learning English. 45.3% agree and 32% strongly agree, adding up to 77.3% support. Only 14.7% remain neutral. This result reaffirms the importance of pedagogical practices that prioritize active participation.

Figure 11

English as a Global Communication Tool

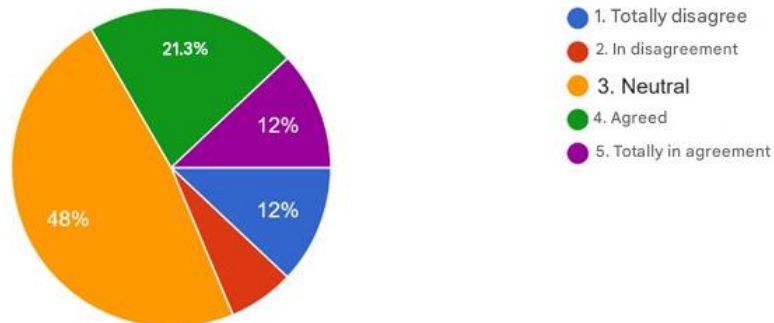


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: The vast majority of students perceive English as a vital tool for global communication, with 58.7% strongly agreeing and 26.7% agreeing, totaling 85.4%. This perception reinforces the instrumental value of the language (travel, resources) and its motivation to learn.

Figure 12

Desire for More Oral Practice Time

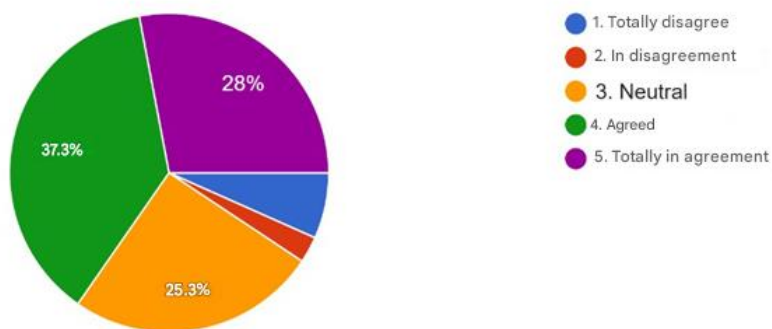


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: The opinion on the need for more time for oral practice leans towards neutrality (48%). However, 33.3% would like more time (21.3% agree and 12% strongly agree). 18% disagreed or strongly disagreed (6% and 12% respectively). This result suggests that, although oral practice is valued (see Figure 10), not all students feel a pressing need to increase their class time, which could be related to anxiety when speaking in front of others (see Figure 6).

Figure 13

Access to Information and Resources on the Internet

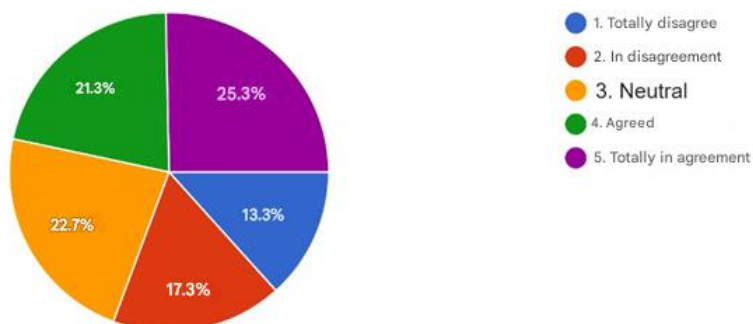


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: 11th graders strongly recognize the instrumental value of English as a key to accessing information and resources on the internet, with 37.3% agreeing and 28% strongly agreeing. This represents 65.3% who agree. This perception is a component of the factor that affects their learning, the instrumental value of language.

Figure 14

Anxiety or Nervousness When Speaking English in Class

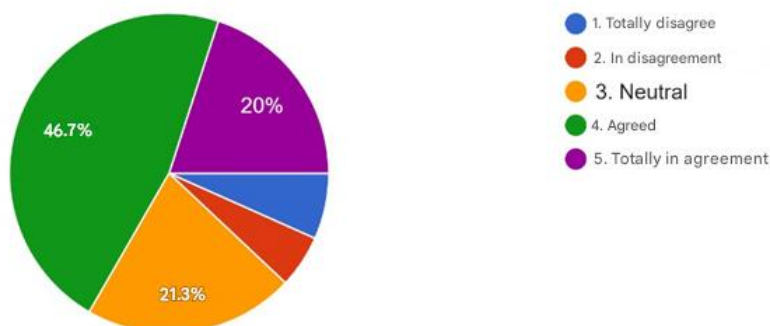


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: Anxiety or nervousness when speaking English in class is a significant feeling, with 21.3% agreeing and 25.3% strongly agreeing, adding up to 46.6%. 22.7% remain neutral. Only 30.6% disagree or strongly disagree (17.3% and 13.3% respectively). This high level of anxiety is part of the personal confidence factor (self-efficacy vs. anxiety) that influences the learning process.

Figure 15

Interest and Usefulness of Class Materials (books, videos, etc.)

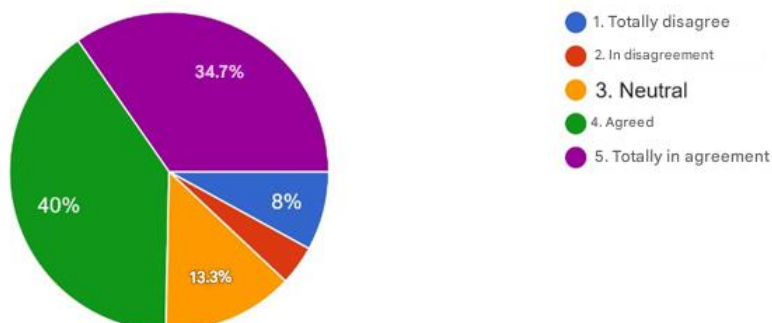


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: Students have a mostly positive perception of the usefulness and interest of class materials (books, videos, etc.), with 46.7% agreeing and 20% strongly agreeing, totaling 66.7%. Only 21.3% are neutral. This suggests that the materials contribute favorably to pedagogical practices, a factor that affects language learning.

Figure 16

Learn English to Travel and Experience Cultures

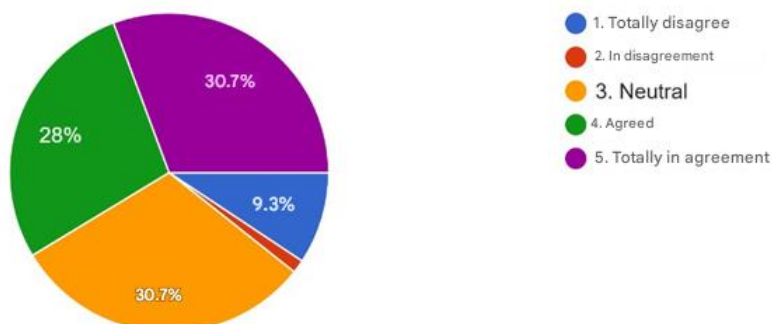


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: The desire to learn English for travel purposes and cultural knowledge is very high, with 40% agreeing and 34.7% strongly agreeing, for a total of 74.7%. This aspiration is linked to the instrumental value of the language and is a source of motivation for students.

Figure 17

Perception of English as Easy to Learn with Practice

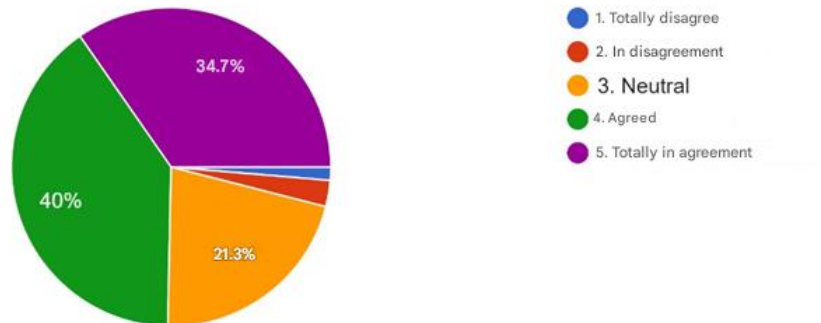


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: The perception that English is an easy language to learn with frequent practice is divided, with 58.7% agreeing or strongly agreeing (28% and 30.7% respectively) and 30.7% in the neutral position. 10.6% disagree or strongly disagree (1.3% and 9.3% respectively). The implicit correlation between practice and ease suggests students' belief in self-efficacy.

Figure 18

Confidence in Achieving a Good Level of English

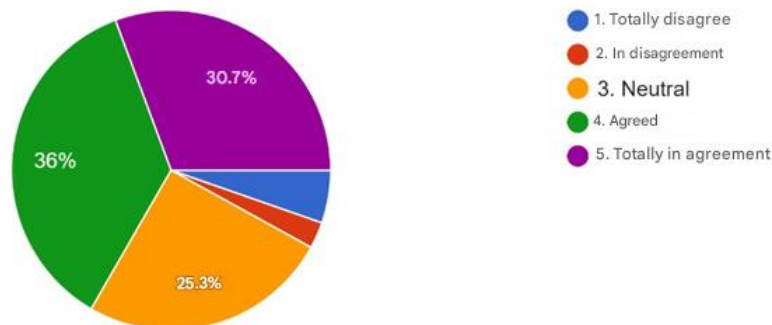


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: Personal confidence in one's ability to achieve a good level of English is very high, with 40% agreeing and 34.7% strongly agreeing, resulting in 74.7% of positive responses. Only 21.3% remain neutral. This high self-efficacy is an important internal factor that favorably impacts learning.

Figure 19

Motivation by Teachers

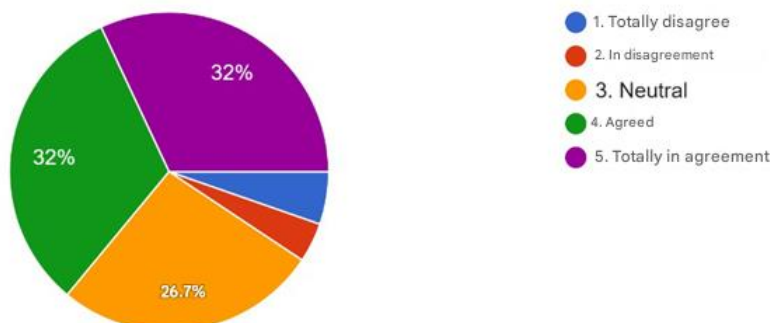


Source: from the authors.

Analysis: Most students perceive positively the role of the teacher in their motivation, with 36% agreeing and 30.7% totally agreeing, adding up to 66.7% of positive responses. 25.3% declare themselves neutral. Pedagogical practice and the role of teachers are confirmed as key factors that influence student learning and motivation.

Figure 20

Taste for the Sound of English



Source: from the authors.

Analysis: Liking for the sound of English when speaking it is high, with 32% agreeing and 32% strongly agreeing, totaling 64%. 26.7% are neutral. This positive attitude towards the sound of the language can be considered as an internal factor that contributes to motivation and the general attitude towards learning.

5 CONCLUSION

This research has made it possible to identify and characterize the influence of internal and external factors on the process of language acquisition at the secondary level. The results confirm that 11th graders recognize the value of English for their future lives and are aware of the factors that affect their learning.

The factors that, according to the student's perception, have the greatest impact on learning English are:

- **The Instrumental Value of Language (External Factor):** There is a majority recognition of English as a crucial tool for academic and professional future, access to more information, internet resources, travel opportunities and knowledge of new cultures. This strong recognition of external value acts as a motivating engine for learning.
- **Motivation and Personal Confidence (Internal Factors):** Students report feeling motivated to learn English and exhibit a high level of self-efficacy, with most confident that they can achieve a good level of English over time. However, anxiety or nervousness when speaking English in class is a significant obstacle, affecting almost half of those surveyed. This shows that, despite motivation, confidence and anxiety (self-efficacy vs. anxiety) are critical internal factors that must be addressed in pedagogical practice.
- **Pedagogical Practices (External Factors):** Students value aspects of teaching positively. A large majority agree that hands-on activities such as conversation and

games help them learn better and perceive classroom materials to be interesting and useful. In addition, the influence of the teaching role is positive, indicating that their teachers motivate them to continue improving their English.

- Extracurricular habits (External Factor): Low contact with authentic English outside the classroom is identified, as only a small percentage of students prefer to watch films or series in English. This limited extra-classroom exposure to the authentic language represents a barrier to optimising learning and the acquisition of skills.

In summary, the findings suggest that future methodological strategies should capitalize on students' high motivation and recognition of the value of English, while implementing specific approaches to reduce speaking anxiety and actively encourage contact with authentic English outside the classroom, in order to bridge the gap between the desire to learn and the linguistic competence achieved.

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