

<https://doi.org/10.69639/arandu.v12i4.1686>

Using Teaching Routines to Foster Motivation in English Classes on Children From Rural Areas

*Utilizar Rutinas de Enseñanza Para Fomentar la Motivación en las Clases de Inglés en
Niños de Zonas Rurales*

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*Artículo recibido: 25 septiembre 2025 - Aceptado para publicación: 28 octubre 2025
Conflictos de intereses: Ninguno que declarar.*

ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of structured teaching routines on children's motivation to learn English in rural educational settings. Conducted in a public primary school in Ecuador with 35 students aged 7 to 8 years, the research employed a qualitative action-research approach that combined interviews and classroom observations. Results show that implementing predictable and attractive teaching routines, such as songs, games, and motor activities, significantly enhances students' motivation and participation. Students showed a greater willingness to use English spontaneously and less anxiety about learning the language. The study identified three key elements for successful routines: predictability to create a safe learning environment, the incorporation of cultural content to increase engagement, and the provision of constant positive reinforcement by teachers. These structured approaches have helped to overcome common problems in rural education, such as limited resources and a lack of familiarity with the English language. The limited availability of technological resources, frequent absences, and the restricted number of hours dedicated to English instruction hinder its widespread use. Recommendations include comparing groups from rural and urban areas to assess whether teaching methods have a similar impact, as well as using samples from different age groups. This research enhances our understanding of how structured teaching methods can improve language learning in resource-limited settings by promoting psychological safety and cultural relevance.

Keywords: motivation, teaching routines, English, rural areas

RESUMEN

Este estudio investiga el impacto de las rutinas de enseñanza estructuradas en la motivación por aprender inglés entre niños en entornos educativos rurales. Realizada en una escuela primaria pública de Ecuador con 35 estudiantes de 7 a 8 años, la investigación empleó un enfoque cualitativo de investigación-acción que combinó entrevistas y observaciones en el aula. Los resultados muestran que la implementación de rutinas de enseñanza predecibles y atractivas, como canciones, juegos y actividades motrices, mejora significativamente la motivación y la participación de los estudiantes. Los estudiantes mostraron una mayor disposición a usar el inglés de forma espontánea y menos ansiedad por aprender el idioma. El estudio identificó tres elementos clave para que las rutinas sean exitosas: la previsibilidad para crear un entorno de aprendizaje seguro, la incorporación de contenido cultural para aumentar el compromiso y el refuerzo positivo constante por parte de los docentes. Estos enfoques estructurados han ayudado a superar problemas comunes en la educación rural, como los recursos limitados y la falta de familiaridad con el idioma inglés. La disponibilidad limitada de recursos tecnológicos, las ausencias frecuentes y el número reducido de horas dedicadas a la enseñanza del inglés dificultan su uso generalizado. Las recomendaciones incluyen comparar grupos de zonas rurales y urbanas para evaluar si los métodos de enseñanza tienen un impacto similar y utilizar muestras de diferentes grupos etarios. Esta investigación mejora nuestra comprensión de cómo los métodos de enseñanza estructurados pueden mejorar el aprendizaje de idiomas en entornos con recursos limitados al promover la seguridad psicológica y la relevancia cultural.

Palabras clave: motivación, rutinas de enseñanzas, inglés, áreas rurales

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INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a foreign language in rural contexts has faced persistent and increasingly complex challenges in recent years. Factors such as the lack of up-to-date teaching materials, limited teacher training in English language instruction, and minimal exposure to the language outside the classroom have created a challenging environment for students (Shan & Aziz, 2022). Added to these conditions is an intangible yet decisive element: student motivation. As López-Obregón & Rodas-Auquilla (2022) emphasize, when motivation is absent or weakened, even the most creative teaching strategies lose effectiveness, limiting the possibilities for meaningful learning.

Despite these difficulties, the relevance of learning English continues to grow on the global stage. Mastery of the language not only provides access to international academic and career opportunities but also enables participation in global communication networks and access to diverse information. For this reason, developing and implementing innovative strategies that enhance rural students' motivation is an educational priority, especially in contexts where socioeconomic conditions and infrastructure are unfavorable to foreign language learning.

Among the factors that decisively influence second language acquisition, motivation occupies a central role. It can be classified as intrinsic when it arises from internal impulses, such as curiosity, personal interest, or enjoyment of the activity, and extrinsic when it is supported by external factors, including rewards, praise, or social recognition (Turabik & Baskan, 2015). Various studies suggest that implementing structured routines in the classroom fosters both types of motivation by creating a predictable, safe, and cognitively less demanding environment (DaSilva, 2023).

Well-designed routines also strengthen executive functions such as working memory, self-regulation, and cognitive flexibility, which are essential for foreign language learning. Additionally, they foster emotionally stable classroom environments that promote active participation and confidence. Nevertheless, despite their potential, the use of routines as a motivational strategy in rural contexts remains largely unexplored. Adverse socioeconomic conditions, resource limitations, and a lower cultural appreciation for English often hinder their adoption and impact (López-Obregón & Rodas-Auquilla, 2022).

From this perspective, the present study aims to address the question: How do structured routines impact the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of children learning English in rural communities? To address this, the research examines the role of routines in fostering intrinsic motivation through engagement and independent learning, assesses their impact on extrinsic motivation through reinforcement systems, and identifies viable strategies for implementation in contexts with limited resources. In doing so, it aims not only to contribute theoretically to the

study of motivation in language learning but also to provide practical tools that teachers can use to optimize their interventions in rural classrooms.

Literature Review

Motivation

Motivation is a complex, dynamic, and multidimensional psychological construct that plays a central role in learning processes and students' academic performance (Schunk et al., 2019; Eccles & Wigfield, 2020). In general terms, it refers to the internal and external factors that drive individuals to initiate, sustain, and direct goal-oriented behaviors, constituting an essential engine that promotes active participation, persistence in the face of challenges, and improved academic achievement (Vela et al., 2024; Hashemi et al., 2024). Its importance lies not only in determining the level of effort students invest in their studies but also in shaping their attitudes, emotions, and behaviors toward the learning process.

In the specific field of second language acquisition (SLA), motivation has been widely recognized as a crucial factor in success. Research indicates that students with high levels of motivation tend to achieve better results and show greater willingness to engage in communicative activities, whereas a lack of motivation is often associated with low performance and disinterest in learning (He & Li, 2023; Reséndez, 2023). Thus, motivation not only acts as a facilitating element but also constitutes a necessary condition for students to overcome contextual limitations and the inherent difficulties of learning a foreign language.

The complex nature of motivation has led to the development of various theories that seek to explain its dimensions and impact on educational processes. Among them, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) holds a prominent place, distinguishing between intrinsic motivation, which is based on personal interest, enjoyment, and satisfaction derived from the activity itself, and extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external factors such as rewards, recognition, or social pressure (Hashemi et al., 2024). Likewise, the ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, and Satisfaction) provides a practical framework for understanding how teachers can design pedagogical strategies that enhance motivation by capturing students' attention, connecting learning to their interests and contexts, fostering confidence in their abilities, and promoting satisfaction from the achievements attained (Vela et al., 2024).

Another relevant aspect is the reciprocal relationship between motivation and academic performance. Recent research shows that motivated students are more likely to adopt active learning strategies, consistently participate in classroom activities, and maintain a positive attitude toward the language acquisition process (Hashemi et al., 2024). This dynamic not only contributes to the development of linguistic competencies but also strengthens learners' self-confidence and autonomy. Conversely, the absence of motivation tends to generate attitudes of disinterest, lack of commitment, and abandonment of educational goals, which negatively affect academic outcomes (He & Li, 2023).

Consequently, understanding motivation involves recognizing its role as a dynamic process that constantly interacts with context, students' needs, and the teaching strategies implemented. As Reséndez (2023) and Vela et al. (2024) point out, motivation not only shapes individual learning trajectories but also has broader implications for pedagogical practices, since it enables educators to design more inclusive, engaging, and effective learning environments. This requires attention to the diversity of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational sources, as well as the need to establish connections between learning content and students' everyday lives.

Teaching Routines

Teaching routines are systematic procedures and practices that educators establish and maintain to facilitate learning and manage classroom dynamics (AERO, 2023). Their importance is fundamental to students' academic and social development, as they provide structure and predictability, both of which are crucial for an effective learning environment. Teaching routines play a crucial role in educational change, as they enhance organizational performance, particularly in challenging situations (Merki et al., 2022). This adaptability of routines reflects a broader understanding of the need for both self-regulated and collectively regulated learning strategies in educational contexts.

In addition to their fundamental role in classroom management, teaching routines also enhance students' participation and cognitive development. Incorporating physical activity into teaching routines has been shown to produce positive academic outcomes, particularly in early childhood education. Nielsen-Rodríguez et al. (2021) highlight the importance of interactive experiences that combine cognitive demands with physical activity, thereby fostering both physical and mental skills. Teachers who effectively manage routines that promote this dual engagement tend to create a more stimulating educational experience, fostering an environment in which students can actively explore and manipulate their learning materials.

Moreover, teaching routines have a significant influence on interpersonal dynamics. Karam's study highlights the correlation between students' expectations regarding instructor punctuality and classroom structure and their overall learning experience. Students prefer a well-organized classroom environment, which they associate with respect and appreciation from their instructors (Karam, 2022). These expectations illustrate the psychological and social dimensions of classroom management, highlighting how adherence to teaching routines can positively affect student satisfaction and reduce stress.

The adaptation and evolution of teaching routines are crucial to addressing both immediate educational demands and long-term curricular goals. Merki et al. emphasize the need for adaptive routines, particularly in times of crisis, when traditional methods may prove inadequate (Merki et al., 2022). In such scenarios, educators must reflect on and redesign their routines to meet the changing needs of their students, indicating that teaching routines are dynamic elements of educational practice.

To foster effective teaching routines, educators must receive professional development support. Karam's findings suggest that instructors who are competent in classroom management techniques show a greater ability to maintain organized routines, which ultimately benefits their educational practice (Karam, 2022). Therefore, training and professional development should integrate classroom management strategies that empower teachers to implement effective and adaptable teaching routines in diverse scenarios.

Furthermore, the role of teaching routines transcends immediate educational frameworks. Routine's structure interacts among students and between students and teachers, fostering a learning community in which both collaborative and independent skills thrive. Rodríguez et al. demonstrate how well-structured routines can lead to enhanced physical activity and increased cognitive engagement, laying the foundation for more profound learning experiences (Nielsen-Rodríguez et al., 2021).

The interdependence between cognitive skills and routine practices suggests that educators should not only focus on implementing routines but also on adapting them to promote meaningful learning outcomes. This process requires continuous feedback and evaluation to ensure that routines remain relevant and practical.

In addition, teaching routines contribute significantly to establishing a classroom culture. When students become familiar with routines, they engage more readily with the curriculum and feel a sense of belonging within the classroom community. The predictability of routines can reduce anxiety, allowing students to focus on learning rather than the uncertainty of daily activities. This aligns with the findings of Merki et al., which demonstrate how well-implemented routines can improve organizational performance, especially in challenging contexts (Merki et al., 2022).

It is essential to highlight that the interaction between teaching routines and student autonomy presents another dimension of educational dynamics. The structure provided by routines should foster opportunities for student choice, prioritizing a balanced approach to academics. Rodríguez et al. stress that teaching methodologies that encourage active participation and decision-making enable students to develop the physical and cognitive competencies essential for their holistic development (Nielsen-Rodríguez et al., 2021).

Teaching Routines as a Motivational Strategy

In the educational field, routines are more than just an organizational tool within the classroom; they comprise compelling strategies that can help motivate students and increase their willingness to acquire a new language. They can be defined as a pattern of predictable and consistent behavior, helping to establish order and stability within the classroom, reducing uncertainty and fear of what may come, and benefiting from the participation of students in academic activities (DaSilva, 2023).

Classroom routines play the role of scaffolding, helping 'executive functions' such as working memory, planning, cognitive flexibility, and emotional regulation, which are essential for self-regulated learning and have been linked to long-term academic success (Best et al., 2011; Diamond, 2013). Skills that are fundamental to maintaining high motivation in students, as they enable them to manage distractions and follow instructions autonomously (DaSilva, 2023). For students, especially young children, the presence of clear and well-structured routines helps reduce anxiety, promoting confidence that supports their increasing readiness to face challenges that arise during the learning process.

Additionally, the routines help reduce cognitive load during the school day. Instead of waiting for what will happen in each class, family patterns can guide students, which allows them to engage in a deeper learning process. These structured classes are motivating because they are accompanied by constant reinforcement, such as praise and recognition, which strengthens the sense of achievement and promotes continuous participation (DaSilva, 2023).

Routines beyond the individual level function as collective practices that have an impact on school culture and collaborative processes. According to Merki et al. (2023), routines are not static, as they can be adapted to educational contexts and challenges. Their adaptability has been shown to strengthen school climate and collaborative practices in diverse settings. Routines within initial education or inclusion contexts are even more critical. The Head Start ECLKC framework notes that predictable transitions reduce disruptive behavior and support language development, creating a safe environment in which motivation naturally arises. When these environments are created within the classroom, both academic skills and social and emotional foundations for lasting motivation during learning are strengthened.

METHODOLOGY

Method

This study presents a qualitative action-research methodology to observe, implement, and reflect on the use of teaching routines in English classes from rural areas. Action research was selected because it allows the researcher to interact directly with the classroom environment, thereby implementing changes in lesson structure to improve participant motivation. This method facilitates continuous adjustment during the research process and promotes reflection, which is essential in these classrooms, which are in rural and underserved areas.

Context and Participants

This study was conducted in one of the public schools located in a rural community in the province of Esmeraldas, Ecuador. This area faces several challenges, including economic difficulties, limited educational resources, and a cultural identity that significantly influences students' language acquisition. This educational institution serves children from local peasant

families and the surrounding areas. Due to curricular restrictions, English classes are only offered for a limited number of hours a week.

A total of 39 students, comprising 18 boys and 21 girls, aged 7 to 8, were invited to participate. However, only 35 of them, 17 boys and 18 girls, were included, as parental consent was required. All these students belong to local farming families and speak Spanish as their native language, making the classroom their primary source of exposure to the English language.

The teaching staff at this school face significant challenges, including large class sizes and a shortage of teaching resources. However, the school's administrators supported and allowed the implementation of teaching routines for 7 weeks. Participants were selected for this study due to their convenience and accessibility.

Data Collection Instrument

During the research, which aimed to understand how teaching routines affect students' motivation in rural English classes, two qualitative instruments were employed: Semi-structured group interviews and classroom observations.

Semi-structured group interviews

Pre- and post-interviews were conducted with participants from a rural school. These interviews were conducted in Spanish and lasted approximately 20 minutes each for the respective groups. Six groups participated, each consisting of five students. The interviews included three questions, which made it possible to understand the participants' motivation toward the language, their favorite activities, and the challenges they faced. In addition, both sets of interviews were analyzed to identify any changes or improvements in their motivation following the implementation of the teaching routines.

Classroom observation

For classroom observation, a checklist was designed to record key behaviors related to participants' motivation and commitment during interventions. Observations were made over 12 sessions, both before and after the implementation of the teaching routines. Notes were taken on the students' disposition, body language, willingness to participate, enthusiasm, concentration, and collaboration with peers.

Data Analysis

To conduct the qualitative analysis, a thematic analysis approach was used, identifying significant patterns and changes in participants' motivation after the implementation of the English teaching routines. Participant interviews were transcribed, and classroom observation notes were organized by date and type of activity. Coding was then applied to identify keywords or phrases associated with perceptions of English and motivation to learn it. Thematic categories emerged, including motivation to learn English, perceptions of teaching routines, changes in active participation, and preferences for routine activities. Finally, the results of the pre- and post-

surveys were compared, allowing for an assessment of whether the routines increased student motivation in the rural context studied.

Ethical Consideration

Strict ethical guidelines were followed in this study to ensure the well-being, safety, and privacy of each participant. Because the participants were 7 or 8 years old, parental consent was obtained from each participant through a letter of consent, which they signed, and authorization was also requested from the institution's authorities. These documents shared the characteristics of the research with parents and authorities, and participants' consent to participate in data collection activities was requested. During this study, anonymity and confidentiality were maintained. The names of the participants or the institution were not mentioned in any reports or records, and all data obtained were stored securely with restricted access. Interviews and classroom observations were conducted in a peaceful manner to avoid any pressure or discomfort. The study also attempted to adapt to the culture respectfully, with each activity and routine developed within the classroom, taking into account the diverse backgrounds of the participants. Overall, this research emphasized transparency, informed participation, and respect for the community.

Innovation

Description of intervention

The intervention was carried out over a period of seven weeks, during which students participated in two sessions per week, each lasting two hours. Lesson planning was structured around teaching routines as a strategy to enhance student motivation in English classes within a rural school context. The objective was to transform traditional lessons characterized primarily by the mechanical copying of vocabulary and minimal student participation into organized, predictable, and engaging learning experiences.

The implementation of the structured routines began with the administration of a semi-structured group pre-interview, conducted before the application of the strategies. This instrument provided insight into students' perceptions of English, their preferred activities, and the challenges they encountered, revealing low levels of motivation, linked mainly to copying and memorization tasks. Based on this initial diagnosis, the researcher designed and implemented structured teaching routines to guide the classes throughout the intervention process.

Each session followed a fixed sequence of activities that were consistently repeated, with slight adaptations depending on the topic. The routine began with an English greeting song, fostering a positive and familiar atmosphere. This was followed by a brief warm-up activity or game designed to capture students' attention and stimulate engagement. Subsequently, vocabulary related to the topic was introduced through images, videos, or simple audio materials, which were incorporated into interactive activities. Learners then participated in practical tasks, such as completing worksheets, giving simple presentations, or engaging in role-plays, allowing

them to practice the newly introduced content. Finally, each class concluded with a review of the material and positive feedback, reinforcing both students' confidence and motivation.

As the weeks progressed, students began to anticipate the sequence of activities, demonstrating greater willingness to participate voluntarily and spontaneously use short expressions in English. The consistent repetition of routines provided a sense of security, contributing to a motivating and participatory learning environment.

The intervention concluded with the administration of a semi-structured post-interview, employing the same questions as in the pre-interview. The findings indicated that structured routines can effectively transform a rigid and unmotivating classroom environment into a dynamic, predictable, and culturally relevant learning experience. Students not only engaged actively but also developed greater confidence in using English in everyday classroom situations. A detailed schedule of the intervention is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Intervention Schedule

Day	Experimental
1	Group Pre-Interview Application (Students learned the "Good Morning" song)
2	Introduction to the class routine: greeting song, warm-up activity. Introduction to vocabulary: Alphabet . Activities with pictures and worksheets. Conclude with positive feedback.
3	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Spelling my name . Worksheet activities and presentations (My name is and It's spelled like this). Closing with positive feedback.
4	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Body parts . Worksheet activities and a pointing game ("Touch your nose"). Conclude with positive feedback.
5	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Clothes . Worksheet activities. Close with positive feedback.
6	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Colors . Worksheet activities. Closing with positive feedback.
7	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Emotions . Role-play (Hello, I am Joy). Closing with positive feedback.
8	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Wild animals . Worksheet activities. Closing with positive feedback.
9	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Domestic animals . Worksheet activities. Closing with positive feedback.
10	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Family . Worksheet activities. Closing with positive feedback.

11	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary feedback: Family . Expositions (This is my family...). Closing with positive feedback.
12	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Fruits . Worksheet activities. Closing with positive feedback.
13	Greeting song, warm-up activity. Vocabulary introduction: Vegetables . Worksheet activities. Close with positive feedback.
14	Application of post-group interview. General feedback and closing of the intervention.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The examination of pre- and post-interviews, as well as classroom observations, revealed marked differences in students' perceptions, emotions, motivation, and classroom behaviors after the integration of the structured teaching routines. The main results are organized in four theme categories, including (1) Perceptions of Teaching, (2) Emotional Responses, (3) Motivating Activities, and (4) Behavioral Changes. Each theme presents the change in students and highlights the reasoning behind the centrality of the routines as a transformational pedagogical tool, broadly defined.

Theme 1: Perceptions of Teaching

Pre-interview Insights

Before the intervention, students consistently described English classes as rigid and teacher centered. The dominant practice involved the teacher writing on the blackboard while students copied into their notebooks. Although this method ensured exposure to vocabulary items such as numbers, colors, or fruits, it lacked interactive or communicative dimensions. Students recalled *We only wrote the numbers in English*, and some emphasized that the teacher mainly explained while they copied. This suggests a reliance on rote memorization as the principal teaching strategy, which not only limited engagement but also reinforced a passive classroom culture where the teacher served as the sole source of knowledge.

Post-interview Insights

Following the introduction of structured routines, students reported a noticeable transformation in the teaching style. They reported greater enthusiasm from their teacher and recognized the inclusion of varied activities such as singing, the use of worksheets, and positive feedback. One student highlighted, *I like it when we sing before starting class*, underscoring the appreciation of predictable yet enjoyable openings that set the tone for learning. Generally, students identified the teacher's energy and motivational strategies as central to their enjoyment of the lessons.

Interpretation

The transformation in students' perceptions highlights the critical role of teaching routines in reshaping pedagogical practices from static, teacher centered models to more interactive and dynamic ones. Structured teaching routines not only improved the variety of teaching strategies but also provided a sense of order that facilitated learning. According to Merki et al. (2023), teaching routines create a predictable framework that reduces uncertainty and fosters active participation. The findings also echo Ryan and Deci's (2020) Self-Determination Theory, particularly in relation to competence and relatedness: by offering consistent structures, teachers enhanced students' confidence in their abilities and strengthened their connection to classroom practices. Moreover, the presence of enthusiastic and engaging teaching styles aligns with broader evidence that teacher affect has a direct impact on student motivation and learning outcomes. In this case, routines served as both a pedagogical and motivational scaffold, enabling the teacher to deliver lessons that students perceived as engaging, organized, and supportive.

Theme 2: Emotional Responses

Pre-interview Insights

At the beginning of the study, students reported that English classes made them feel "good," "comfortable," or "easy." However, these emotional responses appeared superficial, reflecting a minimal connection with the subject matter. Although English was occasionally described as "fun," classroom observations contradicted this sentiment, showing persistent signs of anxiety, limited participation, and a lack of enthusiasm. Students seemed to rely on the teacher's presence rather than deriving intrinsic satisfaction from the learning process itself.

Post-interview Insights

After the intervention, students expressed more positive and meaningful emotional responses. They began to consistently use words like "happy," "fun," and "exciting" when describing English lessons. Many emphasized that the inclusion of songs, games, and creative activities made them look forward to classes. Observational data supported these claims: students smiled more, maintained eye contact, and participated voluntarily. Importantly, routines provided a sense of predictability that reduced anxiety, as learners no longer felt uncertain about what to expect during lessons.

Interpretation

The shift in emotional responses reveals how teaching routines act as a stabilizing force that mitigates anxiety and fosters enjoyment in learning. DaSilva (2023) argues that teaching routines free up cognitive resources by reducing uncertainty, enabling students to focus on learning instead of worrying about what comes next. This study strongly supports that perspective: students who previously displayed nervousness and disengagement now demonstrated confidence and joy. Furthermore, Turabik and Baskan (2015) emphasize that intrinsic motivation grows when learning is meaningful and enjoyable. By embedding playful and

emotionally positive activities within structured teaching routines, the intervention transformed English into a subject associated with excitement rather than stress. This also aligns with Ryan and Deci's (2020) concept of relatedness, as students felt emotionally connected to the class, their peers, and their teacher, contributing to an overall favorable emotional climate.

Theme 3: Motivating Activities

Pre-interview Insights

Before teaching routines were implemented, class activities were mechanical and repetitive, lacking variety and creativity. Students mostly copied vocabulary, such as numbers or fruits, from the blackboard. Occasional games, such as *Simon says*, were present but irregular and did not form part of the learning structure. Many students expressed a desire for more engaging activities, such as painting, drawing, or group work, suggesting that the lack of diversity hindered their motivation.

Post-interview Insights

With the introduction of routines, students described a wide range of motivating activities that made English lessons more enjoyable. They particularly valued painting, drawing, and singing, with one group highlighting, *I like learning colors in English*. The multisensory approach allowed students to engage visually, auditorily, and kinesthetically, creating a more holistic learning experience. Classroom observations confirmed that these activities generated sustained enthusiasm, high levels of participation, and active collaboration.

Interpretation

The integration of multisensory and playful activities within structured routines had a profound impact on student motivation. By embedding variety into predictable structures, teachers were able to capture and maintain students' attention while also making lessons meaningful and relevant. The ARCS model of motivation (Vela et al., 2024) provides a valuable lens for understanding this change: routines captured students' attention, built confidence through structured practice, and provided satisfaction through enjoyable activities. This also reflects Turabik and Baskan's (2015) argument that intrinsic motivation is nurtured when tasks are both meaningful and satisfying. Furthermore, DaSilva (2023) notes that predictability enables students to allocate more energy to creative and challenging tasks. In this study, the routines functioned not as rigid structures but as enabling frameworks that created the conditions for innovation and play in the classroom.

Theme 4: Behavioral Changes (Observational Data)

Pre-intervention Insights

Before the intervention, classroom observations revealed a generally passive learning environment. Students demonstrated minimal participation and rarely used English spontaneously. Transitions between activities were slow and disorganized, often accompanied by

restlessness or distraction. Students required constant reminders from the teacher and showed little initiative in anticipating the next step of the lesson.

Post-intervention Insights

After the implementation of routines, classroom behavior improved noticeably. Students began to participate more actively, using short English expressions such as *thank you* and *yes, please* without prompting. Transitions between tasks became smoother, with students often anticipating what was coming next. Observers also noted more positive body language: students smiled, appeared more relaxed, and displayed greater confidence compared to earlier sessions.

Interpretation

These behavioral transformations underscore the role of teaching routines in fostering autonomy, organization, and engagement. Predictable structures not only minimized confusion but also encouraged students to take responsibility for their participation. This supports Merki et al. (2023), who emphasize the importance of routines in fostering stable and participatory environments. Moreover, the findings align with Ryan and Deci’s (2020) Self-Determination Theory, which emphasizes competence and autonomy as key drivers of motivation. By offering clarity and consistency, routines enhanced students’ confidence to engage spontaneously in English, reducing reliance on the teacher and fostering independence.

Table 1
Contrast of Pre- and Post-Interview and Observation Findings

Group	Q1. What do they like about the way the teacher teaches English?	Q2. How do you feel in English class?	Q3. What activities motivate them?
Group 1	Pre: The teacher wrote on the blackboard without using games. They copied the numbers, colors, and alphabet into their notebooks. Post: They like it when they sing together before starting classes and when they draw pictures. The classes are fun.	Pre: They felt good and comfortable, and they think English is easy. Post: They felt happy and eager to learn because the classes were fun.	Pre: Written vocabulary exercises only. Post: They enjoy painting and learning new things.
Group 2	Pre: They liked everything, but they learned little (fruits, numbers), the traditional method of copying. Post: They enjoy the games and the teacher's enthusiasm.	Pre: Easy and fun, although with limited learning. Post: They enjoy learning English; they	Pre: Copy numbers and fruits, without games or variety. Post: Drawing, painting, and working with emotions.

		find it both easy and fun.	
Group 3	Pre: They liked it, but they only copied vocabulary and occasional games without continuity. Post: They like it because it "teaches well" and explains clearly.	Pre: They felt good, easy, and fun class. Post: Happy, they see it as fun and easy.	Pre: They wanted to paint, draw, and share. Post: Learning colors and working on emotions.
Group 4	Pre: They liked to learn about fruits and play "Captain Commands." The teacher wrote and repeated. Post: What they like most is "learning" in itself.	Pre: They felt good, easy, and fun. Post: Feel good, positive environment.	Pre: Copying, drawing, games like "Captain Commands" and "warming bones." Post: Painting and drawing, creative activities.
Group 5	Pre: They liked it when I asked questions, copied, and painted. Post: They like it when they do dynamic classes (singing, drawing, learning fun).	Pre: Some difficult, some easy, and fun. Post: Happy, easy, and fun classes.	Pre: Copying. Post: Painting, drawing, learning colors and emotions.
Group 6	Pre: They liked to copy numbers and do physical activities. They appreciate their enthusiasm and the variety of activities they engage in (singing, painting, drawing).	Pre: They felt good, fun, not difficult. Post: Happy, motivated, fun, and easy.	Pre: Copy numbers and physical exercises. Post: Painting, drawing, learning colors and emotions.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore how structured teaching routines can enhance motivation in English classes for children from rural areas. Specifically, the objectives were to examine how routines foster intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, assess their impact on student participation and emotional responses, and identify viable strategies for resource-limited contexts. To achieve this, a qualitative action-research approach was employed, utilizing two primary instruments: semi-

structured group interviews (pre- and post-intervention) and classroom observations conducted using a checklist. These tools provided insights into students' perceptions, emotions, and behaviors before and after the implementation of teaching routines.

The findings demonstrate that structured teaching routines had a transformative effect on students' motivation and participation. Predictability and consistency reduced anxiety, while multisensory and playful activities such as songs, games, and drawing created an engaging environment that sustained interest. Cultural relevance further strengthened students' connection to English, making it meaningful in their daily lives. Most importantly, the teacher's enthusiasm and positive reinforcement amplified the effectiveness of the routines, encouraging spontaneous use of English and active engagement. Overall, routines proved to be a low-cost, high-impact strategy for improving language learning in rural schools.

Despite its contributions, the study faced some limitations. The lack of technological resources limited the variety of activities and strategies, as classes were conducted without digital or audiovisual tools. Additionally, the reduced number of instructional hours for English in the rural curriculum restricted the time available to strengthen the impact of the routines.

Future research should consider comparing rural and urban contexts to determine whether teaching routines have similar or different impacts on motivation depending on the school setting. It is also recommended to examine the effectiveness of teaching routines across various age groups, comparing young children, adolescents, and older learners.

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