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**THE BENEFITS OF THE HUMANISTIC APPROACH IN AN ENGLISH
LANGUAGE CLASS: A CASE STUDY IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN
FORTALEZA, CEARÁ**

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THE BENEFITS OF THE HUMANISTIC APPROACH IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASS: A CASE STUDY IN A PUBLIC SCHOOL IN FORTALEZA, CEARÁ

Francisco Diego Cruz Lima

Abstract

This article aims at presenting the results of a study carried out at an elementary public school in Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil, in a 7th grade classroom with twenty-seven (27) students. This is a qualitative research, developed through a case study, in which a humanistic activity was applied during an English Language class, to evaluate the perception and motivation of the students involved. The results showed that the students felt more motivated to participate in the language class, and they seemed to be more interested in the classes as well. Also, it was observed the humanistic activities seemed to improve the learning atmosphere for the students and the teacher.

Keywords: Humanistic Approach. English Language Teaching. Public School.

Resumo

Este artigo tem por objetivo apresentar os resultados de uma pesquisa conduzida em uma escola pública de ensino fundamental, em Fortaleza, Ceará, Brasil, para uma turma de sétimo ano com vinte e sete estudantes. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, desenvolvida por meio de um estudo de caso, no qual se aplicou uma atividade humanística durante uma aula de Língua Inglesa, para avaliar a percepção e motivação dos alunos envolvidos. Os resultados mostraram que os alunos se sentiram mais motivados a participar da aula de língua estrangeira, demonstrando mais interesse. Ademais, observou-se que a atividade humanista parece ter melhorado a atmosfera da sala de aula para os alunos e para o professor.

Palavras-chave: Abordagem Humanística. Ensino da Língua Inglesa. Escola pública.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Humanistic Approach in ELT has as its basic principle a shifting from the focus in education from teaching to learning, so that the teacher is no longer the focal point in class but someone who facilitates the process of education (Moskowitz, 1978). The Humanistic approach in the language learning scenario can provide effective learning by valuing the students' position in the classroom. The fundamentals of this theory concern taking students' feelings into consideration, in the context of the classroom environment so that they can feel fulfilled and motivated to study and learn.

Thus, some considerations on this subject are presented in this article, as well as the results of this research, based on the application of a humanistic activity in an English language learning classroom of a public school in Fortaleza, Ceará, Brazil. The aim was to evaluate the perception and motivation of twenty-seven 7th grade students, in face of a humanistic activity designed for one English class and based on Moskowitz (1978).

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Humanistic education: concepts and implications

The term "Humanistic Education" is normally used to refer to various theories and practices engaged in the worldview and ethics of humanism. Its proposal aims at improving development, well-being and dignity as the ultimate goal of the teaching and learning process, helping students to enhance their performance through attention, respect and affection (Willians and Burden, 1997). Following the same lines, Stevick (1990, p. 23-24) states that, humanism is based in one or more of at least five components:

- a) Feelings: not only about personal emotions, but also including self-appreciation, both mental and physical;
- b) Social relations: this aspect is based on friendship and cooperation, and values human interaction as an important way of feeling encouraged;
- c) Responsibility: this is about being aware of the relevance of criticism, correction and improvement, as it is important to accept the need of them;
- d) Intellect: this is about the importance of knowledge and understanding, as reason and mind must be constantly challenged, in order to permit learning;

e) Self-actualization: one's full realization can bring liberation.

From the combination of all these elements, it is possible to say that we have a complete humanistic frame and, if exercised in a classroom, it can help students to learn more effectively. Thus, as Zucca-Scott (2010, p. 37) claims, "We need to ensure that students feel supported in developing their talents and individualities by designing curricula that allow flexibility and freedom of intellectual exploration".

2.1 Humanistic Education and Language Learning

Concerning to the language classroom, Wang (2005) states that if a student does not have his basic needs fulfilled, both physically and psychologically, he might fail to have good results in learning a language. So, the humanistic approach emphasizes the caring for individual's necessities, physical and emotional, in order to provide human development and, consequently, learning as well.

According to Moskowitz (1978, p. 13), the relation between language learning and humanistic education can be explained as follows:

But what has all this to do with learning a foreign language? Suppose target language is taught so that students develop more positive feelings about themselves and their classmates and find out more about what they are really like. Such an approach will help increase the esteem and understanding students have for themselves and others, thus facilitating growth in the direction of being more self-actualized. Since self-actualization is such a powerful inherent need in humans, as students see the subject matter as self-enhancing, it will be viewed as relevantly related to their lives. They will then become more motivated to learn to use the foreign language and, as a result, will be more likely to learn.

So, it was based on these assumptions that this research was designed, aiming at using a humanistic activity during an English class, in a public school in Fortaleza, Ceará, to 12-year-old students. The goal was to verify if, through a humanistic activity, based on affection and full attention and appreciation of the student, they would be able to achieve better learning results, as well as to feel more interested and motivated to learn English.

Almeida (2001) carried out a study to investigate how the applicability of humanistic principles in language classrooms would increase students' motivation to learn. He found out that the group of students, which adopted a more humanistic approach, had an increasing in its level of motivation within the period of data collection, in comparison to the other group, which showed a decrease in their level of motivation

within the same period. Thus, this author states that the more a teacher applies humanistic practices to his/her classes, the higher will be the level of motivation of his/her students.

Similar results were found by several studies focusing on the implications of humanistic classes around the world. Abu Khait (2014), while evaluating to what extent humanistic language teaching was being incorporated in classes of a college in Dubai, found out that humanistic activities were “[...] beneficial to learners as it decreased learning anxiety and helped them become more engaged in learning” (ABU KHAIT, 2014, p. 05). Also, this author suggested that teachers should definitely embrace the humanistic teaching methodology, in order to achieve the potentially liberating educational philosophy, helping the students to learn more effectively and with pleasure.

Zhang (2010), in a study which investigated what a humanistic concept of teacher-student joint presentation and critical inquiry could evoke in the language classroom within the Chinese context, applied to 289 college English literature learning students and 87 in-service secondary school teachers, found out that humanistic ideal does increase students’ learning competence of critical insight, independent thought and reflective analysis.

Yong (2015) also carried out a study in China, from the humanistic teaching point-of-view, aiming at answering the following questions: 1) Is the classroom teaching still teacher-centered? 2) Have any changes taken place in our classroom? This author, then, applied a questionnaire to 400 students to evaluate the presence or absence of humanistic features in their classrooms. The findings showed that less humanistic teaching still exists in foreign language classrooms. Teachers, as the center, seldom give students opportunity to experience themselves in the target language, and that a certain degree of anxiety and high pressure from the tests and the boring teaching style combine to lower their motivation to study. This, the study concluded that foreign language teaching in China needs a more humanistic approach.

Based on the panorama described so far, the present study was carried out aiming at analyzing the effects of the application of a humanistic language teaching activity to elementary students at a public school in Fortaleza, Ceará.

3 METHOD

With the purpose of identifying students and teacher's perceptions in the context of an L2 classroom of the humanistic approach, and how a humanistic activity applied in a public school setting can contribute for the teaching and learning process, this research followed the methodological structure presented in this chapter which brings the objectives, participants, context, procedures (humanistic activity, instruments for data collection) and, finally, the data analysis.

2.1 Objectives

This present study aims at investigating an L2 teacher and her students in the context of English as a Foreign Language class. Such a class was given to students of a public educational institution, based on the perspective of the humanistic approach. The data consisted of reaching students and teacher perceptions, facing a humanistic activity in the context of the English class. In this sense, two research questions have guided the development of this study:

- a) How do students perceive a humanistic activity in the English classroom?
- b) How does the teacher perceive a humanistic activity in the English classroom?

In order to assess the students' perception, they have answered a questionnaire with seven open questions related to their perception of the class with the new approach. The teacher's perception was assessed through a semi-guided interview concerning her career, as well as her new experience applying the activity based on the humanistic approach.

2.2 Context and participants

The dates in which the present study was carried out were September 22nd and 29th, 2016, in which all the *corpus* was collected, at a public school located in the city of Fortaleza, CE.

The 7th grade class had twenty-seven students. The students are from a semi-intern public school named Aldemir Martins. The school curriculum specifies three hours of English classes per week, which are divided in two days: in the first day, the teacher

conducts an expositive class, which can be based on the current English book or any activity design by the teacher. Although the book was supposed to be used during the whole year, they hardly ever use it. In the second day, the students have a lab meeting or an extra activity. The teacher is in charge to decide the best task in order to engage students in a fun and interesting activity.

The research counts on a teacher, which has just got a degree in linguistic and literature eight months prior to the moment of the study. Therefore, it was her first year teaching at a public school.

2.3 Procedures

The tools used for collecting the data for the present study consisted of a questionnaire with seven open questions and a semi-guided interview. The data itself consists of both answers about the teaching process from the teacher and answers to the questionnaire from the students participating in this study. The questionnaire consisted of seven open questions related to the students' feelings toward the humanistic activity, and the teacher's interview consisted of her experience in dealing with the humanistic approach. I have carried out one classroom observation with the teacher in action with the group of students, in order to investigate the students' behavior prior to the humanistic activity, on September 22nd, and after that, during the class of September 29th. The research has had two phases: first, data was collected before the humanistic activity was applied; secondly, more data was collected during and after the application of the humanistic activities.

During the first phase, before carrying out the task based on the humanistic approach, the teacher was confronted with some aspects of such an approach. Those were things such as not focusing on grammar points too much, not emphasizing students mistakes, but focusing on the positive aspects such as hits and students achievements. According to Moskowitz (1983, p. 25), humanistic activities should emphasize identifying our strengths and those of others, developing a positive self-image.

Furthermore, I have tried to investigate how the students were motivated in the process of learning a foreign language. With regard to this, I collected from the teacher some data about the students' motivation. The teacher stated that students have been demotivated for two main reasons: first, they did not like the book, because they found it

boring and difficult; second, the previous teacher had just left them and the new one had just started working with the class. They were a bit resistant to accept the new teacher.

The second phase happened when students and teacher were submitted to the instructional process sessions: questionnaires and a semi-guided interview. After the task was carried out, a questionnaire of seven-open questions was immediately applied to the students and the teacher was interviewed about her feelings during the performance of such task.

The specific objective of the instructional humanistic activity was to assign one task to the English class. In the task, the teacher taught students based on a humanistic approach. In this context, the teacher received a lesson plan one week in advance, to plan and perform the task.

The humanistic exercise applied for this study was an adaptation of one of the activities from the book *Caring and Sharing in a Foreign Language Class* (Appendix). The idea was to get students to break the ice and speak to others in class that they do not rely on, facilitating them to getting acquainted more easily (MOSKOWITZ, 1978). Although the aim of the humanistic approach is not the linguistic function, it cannot be left out of the process. In what concerns the linguistic functions, students would learn the first and second person singular and practice asking and answering questions.

The activity consisted on an identity card (see Appendix), and it is divided in 3 parts: first, each person receives a five-by-eight inch card and a straight pin. The students filled out the cards with the information provided by the teacher and pinned them on. The information gave them the basis for talking with their classmates. The students' first names were written in the middle of the card. The four corners of the card had personal information from the students. They chose four of the five pieces of information to add in the four corners of their cards. They were: (1) two adjectives that described them; (2) something they do well (3); the person who they admire the most; (4) what they would like to be in the future; and (5) the most significant year of their lives. As they wrote on the card, the teacher was going around the room helping students with possible doubts about language structure and vocabulary.

Secondly, students shared the information with a partner. Each person questioned the other and received a response about the items on the cards. This part of the activity functioned as a rehearsal for the next step. In the third moment, the teacher announced to the students that they would move into two circles as music was being played and that they would move until it stopped for a round with a new partner. Facing

a partner, the students would talk about their information. The students would then continue doing that for at least five or six time. At the end of this activity, the students were asked to sit down and answer the questionnaire, while the teacher went through the semi-guided interview.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 The answers to the questionnaire

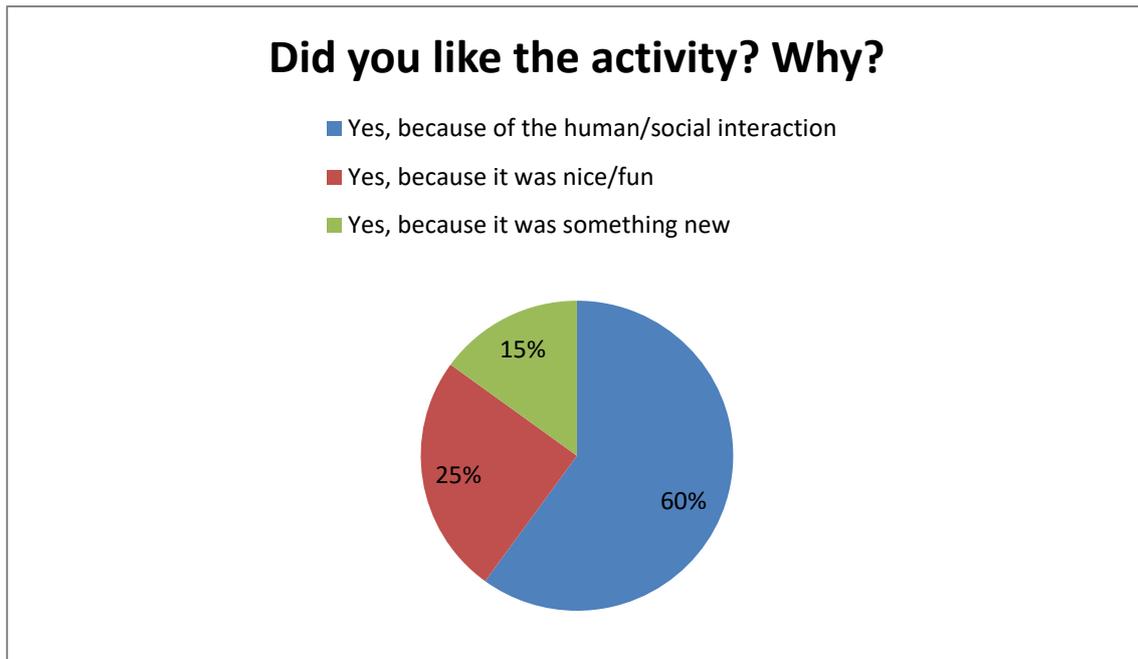
In this section, the results originated from data collection are presented, through an analysis of the students' answers. Three instruments were used: 1) classroom observation, in order to observe students' participation, interaction and motivation; 2) a questionnaire to assess students' perceptions after the humanistic activity applied; 3) an informal interview with the teacher, in order to assess her point of view and perception as a foreign language teacher, besides collecting data about her class. For the observation class, I attended the application of one lesson and took notes about it. For the conversation with the teacher, I had one informal meeting with her. Finally, to assess students' perceptions, a questionnaire with seven questions was immediately applied to the students after the activity proposed in this research. Twenty students and one cooperating teacher were involved on this research.

First, the results of the questionnaire are presented below, and the speeches of the students are indicated as demonstrated: P1 for student 1, P2 for student 2, and successively, until student 20, designated as P20.

The first question was: "Did you like the activity? Why?" All the twenty students who answered the questionnaire said "yes". This particular result demonstrates that one of the goals of the activity was successfully achieved: to draw students' attention and to involve them in an activity whose purpose is the learning/exercise of the English language. This way, if the students enjoy the moment and care about it, they will more likely learn the contents presented in the classroom.

The answers can be grouped in three main reasons, which are: 1) Because of the human/social interaction (12 students – 60%); 2) Because it was nice/fun (5 students – 25%); and 3) Because it was something new (3 students – 15%).

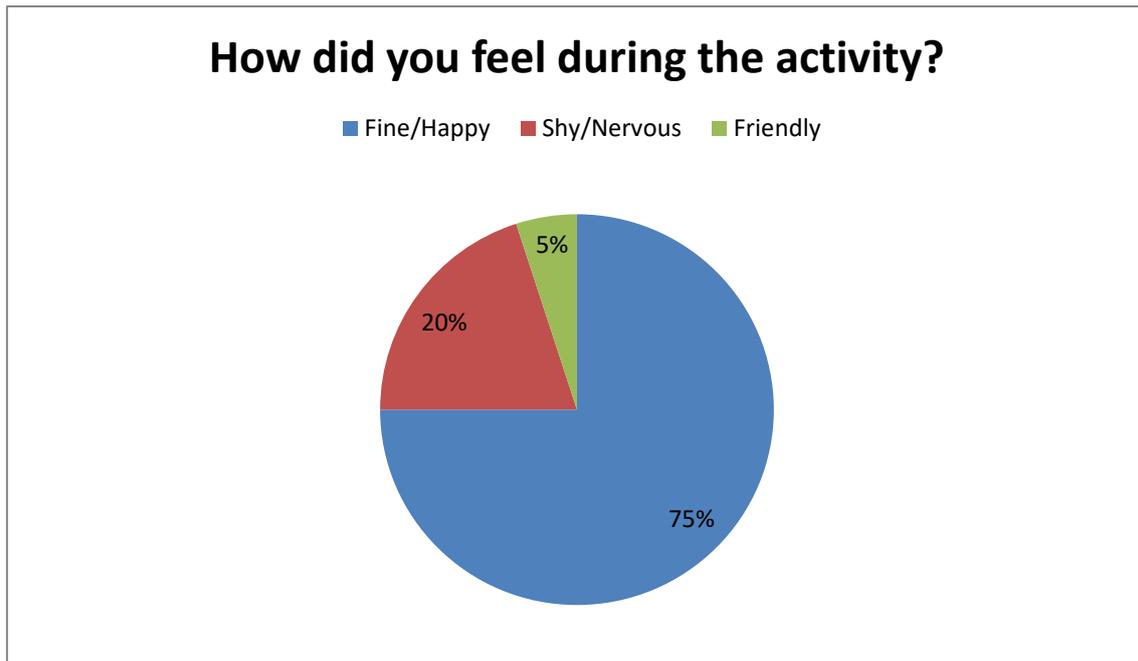
Table 1 – Answers to the question “Did you like the activity? Why?”



“Yes, because it was really nice” (P2, P5, P14, P17 and P18) are some answers of the students who felt the activity was a nice/fun moment. Also, the students were happy to talk to their classmates and to get to know more about them. “Yes, because I could open up with someone” (P1), “Yes, it was really nice to talk to our friends (P4), “Because it was really nice to share stuff with the other students” (P9) are examples of answers which valued the human interaction as the main reason why they enjoyed the activities. “Yes, because it was different from the others” (P7), “Yes, because nobody has ever done this, it’s super new” (P11) are examples of answers of students who enjoyed the activity because it was something new for them. These feelings agree with Valett's (1977) theory, which claims that humanistic education must consider the basic needs of humans, and that it is upon all of these needs that the educational programs must be founded. One of these needs is categorized as Social Competency, focused on interacting with classmates, in order to get to know them and relate better to them.

The second question goal was to assess the actual feeling about the activity: “How did you feel during the activity?”, and the results are presented in the following table:

Table 2 – Answers to the question “How did you feel during the activity?”

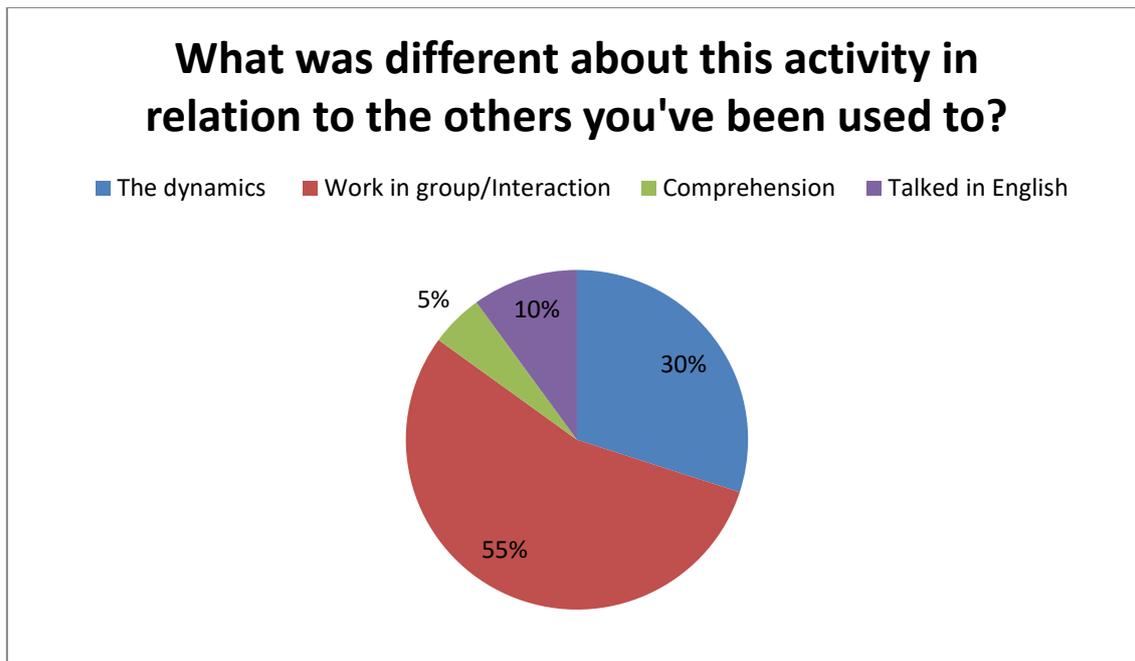


Fifteen students (75%) said they felt “fine”, “happy” or “excited” about the activity; four students (20%) said they felt “shy” or “nervous” about the activity and one student (5%) answered “friendly”. The answers were short and direct. It is noticed that most of the class felt comfortable during the application of the activity, describing the feeling of participating in it as “happy” or “fine.” Less than 1/4 of the students felt shy or nervous during the practice and one student gave a response that translates more accurately the sense of the humanistic approach: the students felt friendly during the activity, which reflects one's feelings toward classmates.

As Moskowitz (1978, p. 18) states: “Building trusting relationships and sharing oneself with others go hand-in-hand as necessities for sound mental health”, a condition that encourages a healthier and therefore more effective learning process.

The third question “What was different about this activity in relation to the others you’ve been used to?” intended to analyze what is perhaps the most relevant aspect perceived by students in general: the new, based on the experience of working in group, around the class, in a more dynamic practice and with real use of the foreign language.

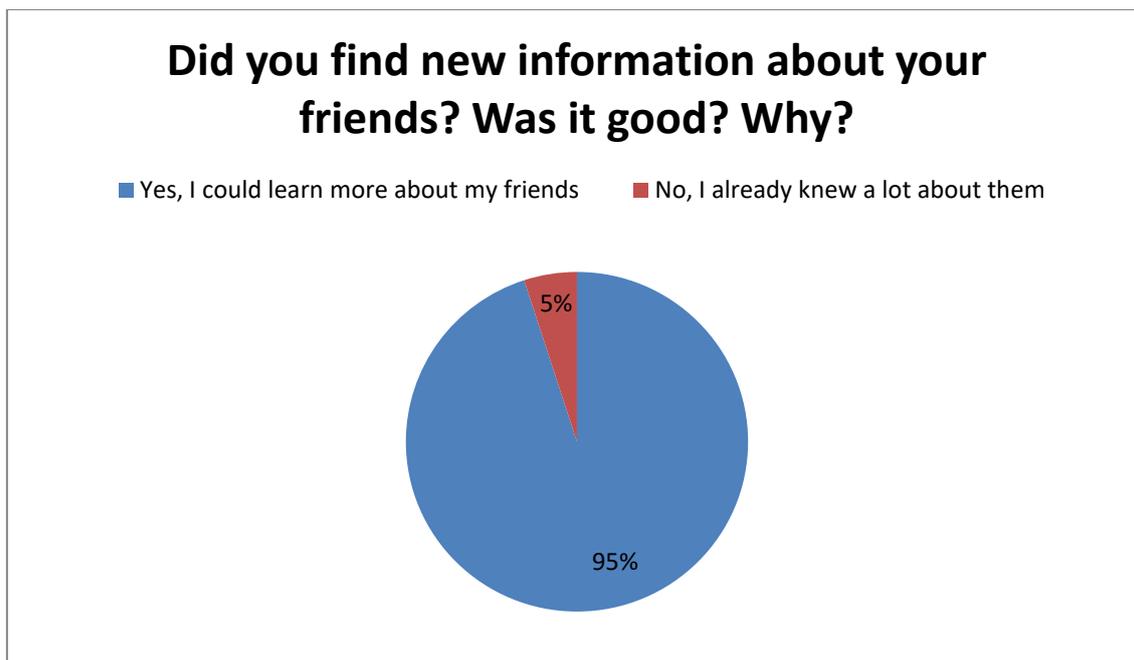
Table 3 – Answers to the question “What was different about this activity in relation to the others you’ve been used to?”



Eleven students (55%) answered “work in group/interaction” for this question. “A lot of interaction with my friends” (P5), “Because we have worked in group” (P12), “We could know each other” (P15), “We did a circle and worked in group” (P17) are examples of answers which are included in this category. Six students (30%) answered “The dynamics” of the activity as the reason why they found this activity different from the others. “The dynamics” (P2), “We didn’t have to sit down all the time” (P1) and “The games” (P8) are examples of answers to this question which fit in this category. Two students answered that “They talked in English”, valuing the usage of the foreign language, an aspect which usually represents a challenge in the classrooms of public schools in Fortaleza and which, in this case study, highlights the interest of this percentage in actually learning the language. Finally, one student (5%) answered “Comprehension”, what can be seen as a peculiar answer, as it states another feeling. Curiously, this was the same student who answered “friendly” for the previous question, enhancing the humanistic theory beliefs that guided the development of the activity applied.

The fourth question, more specifically concerned one of the features of the activity proposed, intended to check the following: “Did you find out new information about your classmates? Was it good? Why?”.

Table 4 – Answers to the questions “Did you find out new information about your classmates? Was it good? Why?”

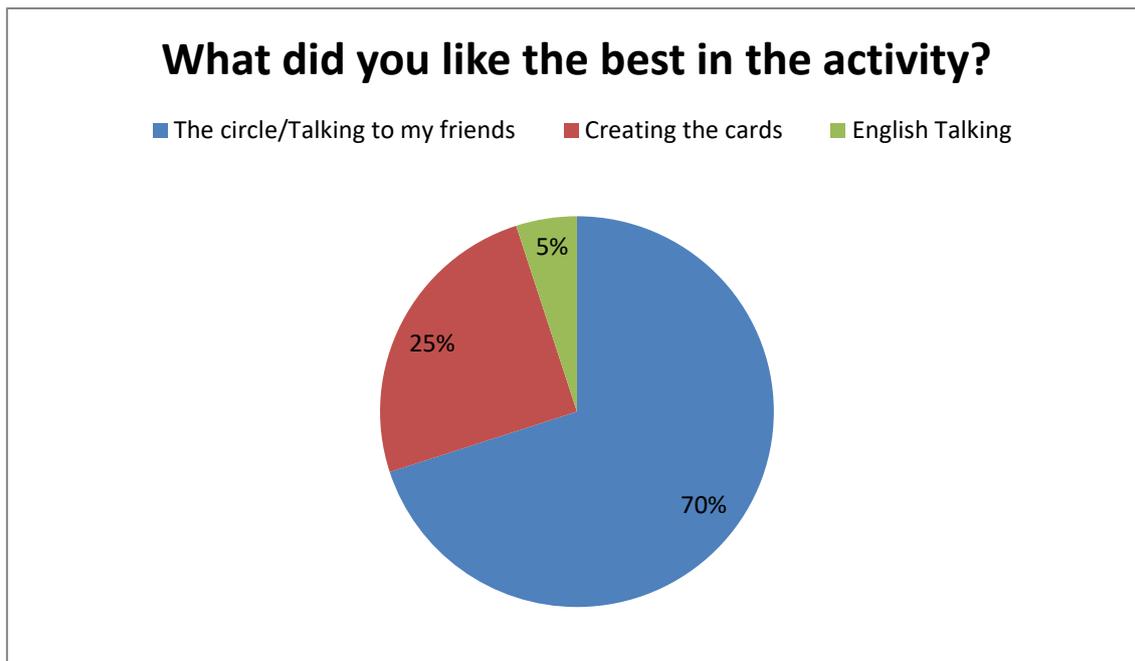


For this question, nineteen students (95%) answered “Yes, I could learn more about my friends”, indicating that one of the goals of the activity was successfully achieved, as they were able to get to know each other in a more significant way, improving the relations student-student and student-teacher, through an affective moment of disclosure. One student (P10) (5%) said “No, I already knew a lot about them”, demonstrating that the activity had no further significance. The same student answered “nervous” for question number two (“How did you feel during the activity?”), and maybe this was one reason for developing resistance doing the activity with a more open mind and excitement.

The humanistic approach, if applied in a long term to this specific class, for instance, can help students like P10 feel better in face of/towards classmates and teachers, in the classroom environment, which can consequently turn the results of the teaching and learning process into a more effective scenario.

Question number five was “What did you like the best in the activity?” and it meant to evaluate which parts of the exercise the students enjoyed the best, once again emphasizing the students feelings in the educational environment.

Table 5 – Answers to the question “What did you like the best in the activity?”



Fourteen students (70%) answered that the best moment of the activity was the “Circle/Talking to my friends” moment, which shows that the interaction is, one more time, perceived as the most valuable aspect of the activity. Secondly, five students (25%) answered that “Creating the cards” was the most special moment in the activity, valuing the hands-on activity itself. This time, only one student (5%) chose the foreign language usage as the most memorable aspect of the activity.

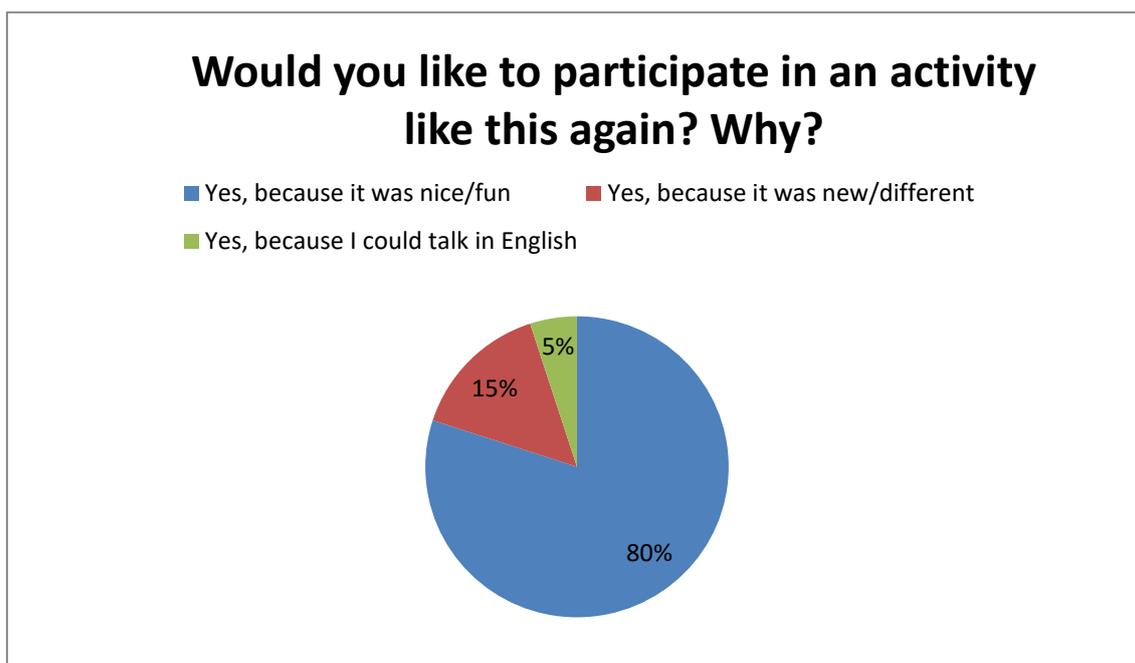
“The circle, because I could get to know the others better” (P2), “Talking” (P3), “The circle, because of the interaction” (P5), “The circle and the talking” (P13), “The circle” (P7, P12, P15 and P18) are examples of answers of students who enjoyed the group moment better, having the opportunity to open themselves and talk to each other, discovering more about their friends. “Making the cards” (P1, P8) “The moment we made the cards (P16, P17, P20) are examples of answers which demonstrate that the making of the cards was the favorite moment of these students. Student P6 said “The moment we talked in English, as if we were speaking Portuguese, but with difficulties”, indicating that this student was happy by making use of the foreign language in the classroom. Based on these comments so far, the students’ answers may indicate that an activity like the one proposed for this case study may be adequate for the initial moments of the English class, providing the classroom with a friendlier and more open environment, what can help students to learn the curriculum contents more effectively. So, in this context and in a long term application, it is possible that the humanistic

practices will also cooperate for the cognitive improvement of the students, demonstrating that affection and caring are essential elements during the lessons, as means of real use of the foreign language.

The sixth question was “Would you like to participate in an activity like this again? Why? All the twenty students (100%) said “Yes”. This result is similar to the one in question 1, when all the students answered they have enjoyed the activity. It suggests that, by drawing students' attention and involving them in the activity, the purpose of the class plan is more easily achieved and, as the students enjoy the moment and care about it, they will more likely want this moment to be repeated.

The answers can be grouped under three main reasons, which are: 1) Because it was nice/fun (16 students – 80%); 2) Because it was new/different (3 students – 15%); and 3) Because I could talk in English (1 student – 5%).

Table 6 – Answers to the question “Would you like to participate in an activity like this again? Why?”

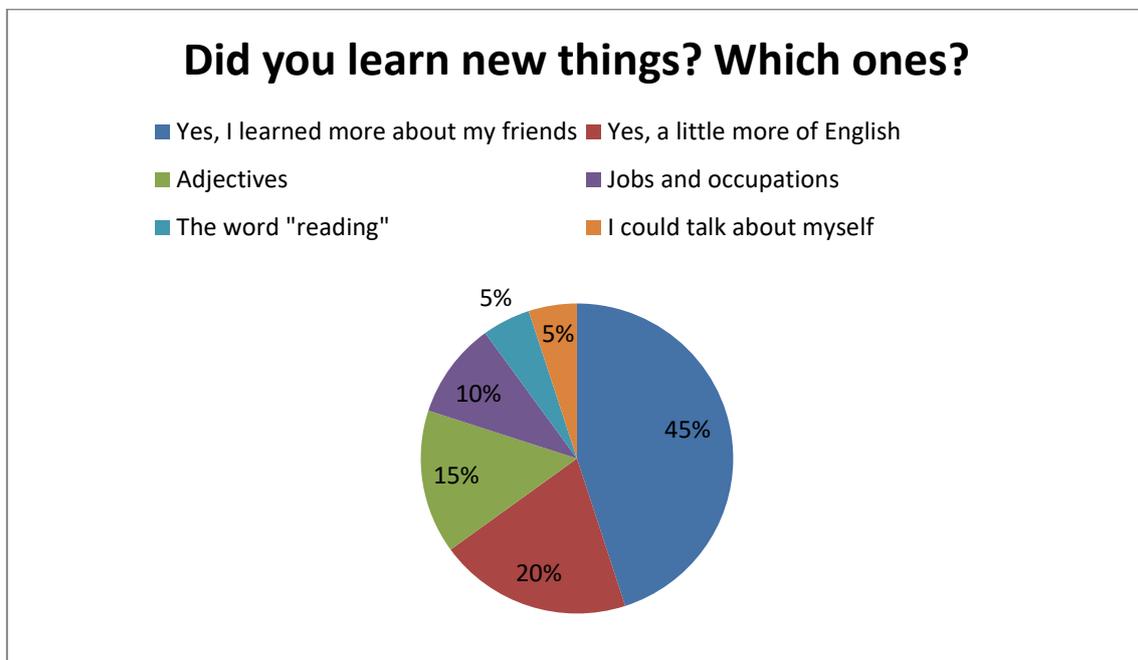


“Yes, because it was nice” (P1), “Yes, because it was really nice” (P2, P3, P4, P5, P7, P8, P9, P18, P19), “Yes, because it was nice, I felt free” (P20) are examples of answers of students who said the activity was nice/fun. “Yes, because it was very different” (P10, P14), “Yes, because it is nice to do different activities” (P16) are the answers of the students who said “Because it was new/different”. Finally, “Yes, because it is always nice to talk in English with the class” is the answer of student P6, the same one who has valued the English usage in question number 3.

As Almeida (2001) explains, the humanistic education is most likely to focus on the students feelings and interests as a motivation factor, in order to assist the intellectual development. This way, the overall mood and feeling of the students can either motivate or demotivate them in the process of learning.

The last question was “Did you learn new things? Which ones?” and, once again, all the twenty students (100%) said “Yes”. This time, the main reasons can be grouped as it follows: 1) “I learned more about my friends” (10 students – 45%); 2) “A little more of English” (4 students – 20%); 3) “Adjectives” (3 students – 15%); 4) “Jobs and occupations” (2 students – 10%); 5) “The word reading” (1 student – 5%); and 6) “I could talk about myself” (1 student – 5%).

Table 7 – Answers to the question “Did you learn new things? Which ones?”



“Yes, I knew my friends better” (P11), “I could learn more about my friends (P1, P7, P8, P14, P15, P18), “Yes, I could know my friend” (P17) and “Yes, it was nice to talk and know my friends better” (P19) are the answers of the students who believe they have learned more about their classmates. “I learned more English” (P3, P4), “I could talk in English” (P16), “New things in English I didn’t know” (P20) are the answers of the students who believed they have achieved more knowledge in English. “Yes, adjectives” (P2) and “Yes, new adjectives” (P10 and P12) are the answers of the students who said they have learned adjectives due to the activity. “Yes, the professions in

English” (P5 and P13) is the answer of two students. Finally, one student said he/she has learned the word “reading”.

Given the results presented in this section, I may argue that the application of the activity achieved the objectives of the lesson plan developed from a humanistic point of view and designed for a class at a public school in Fortaleza, Ceará. Furthermore, as Moskowitz (1978, p.12) states, “A basic assumption made is that the better youngsters feel about themselves and others, the more likely they are to achieve”. So, it is also possible to argue that, for this case study, the application of the humanistic approach in the classroom under observation was a successful, considering the students’ answers and the way they felt about themselves, their classmates, the teacher and the activity.

4.2 Class observations and interview with the teacher

4.2.1 Before the activity

In order to understand, in a global way, how the activity was applied, it is still worth taking into account the perception of the teacher in charge of the class. In an informal conversation with this teacher, in more than one moment before and after the activity, it was verified that the proposal of this research, for the case study in question, would be a positive aspect also for the English teacher, not only the students.

During a previous conversation, in the first day of observations and before the class started, the teacher, here referred to as “Teacher” only, reported some of the difficulties encountered in the public school during the first year after her succeeding the competition for the position.

I feel a little discouraged, you know? I know I’ve just passed this public contest and started the job, but I’m already tired. When I started, the students rejected me because they were used to the old teacher, so I found a lot of resistance. This made the environment heavy, made the classes more difficult and, consequently, the learning too (TEACHER, 2017, oral report).

Thus, it is noticed that, in the first year of her work at the school, the teacher faced difficulties in relating with the students, and these difficulties impacted the teaching and learning process. As it was previously discussed here, this is one of the main concerns of the humanistic education: the importance of a good and affective relationship between teacher and students, providing a healthier environment for the whole educational process.

It was also at this moment that we had a final conversation about the humanistic activity that would be applied, and the teacher presented her ideas about it (she had received the lesson plan a week before the observation day); after her approval and encouragement, the teacher felt very happy to participate, telling me that she had never really thought about the importance of the humanistic aspects to the teaching and learning process. This way, the activity was refined once again, considering the specific classroom in which it would be applied, and then finished, along with the teacher's considerations.

It was also possible to verify, during this particular class I have observed, that the students were not too interested in the English class. While the teacher was trying to explain some grammar content on the board, several students were talking to each other and making a lot of noise. Just a few students were paying actual attention to the class. Also, there was no interaction based on the foreign language learning or in the foreign language itself. The class was carried out in a more traditional way, with teacher explaining and using the board, and students sitting, supposed to pay attention to the explanation, to the detriment of a more effective learning process.

4.2.1 During and after the activity

It was observed that, during the application of the humanistic activity, the students were, at first, shy and even a little suspicious, even though they knew the reason for my presence there. Gradually, they became more comfortable with my presence and also more comfortable with the proposed activity itself. Soon they were involved in making the cards and the new class format, interacting with each other, and some even risking the use of the foreign language. The teacher led the beginning of the activities, explaining the guidelines, but also let the students at ease, so they could do it independently. Every time a student had a doubt or felt discouraged, the teacher was there to give them the necessary support, clarifying their doubts and stimulating their participation. According to her perception:

Gee, I felt very accomplished! I was really impressed with their interest and participation. Besides, it was great to be able to get to know them better (and they also knew me better, right?), because we created a kind of bond, I think. I honestly will do more activities like this (TEACHER, 2017, oral report).

The teacher also said that, during the application of the activity, her feelings of surprise and fulfillment were essential in order to make her more inspired to be there, in the classroom, in front of her students. So, in her perception, the positive changes in behavior and participation happened not only to the students, but also to herself, showing that the humanistic model of education contributed to the development of a more effective environment for the teaching and learning process.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Several works have already suggested that the humanistic approach, when applied to the teaching of foreign languages, can be very effective to the improvement of the students' motivation, interest and performance in class.

Thus, the results of this research corroborate this perspective, as most of the students who participated in this case study felt more confident and motivated during the English class, feelings that are most likely to positively impact the teaching-learning process. And as the results indicate that, both the teacher and the students had better performances in the observed class, due to the humanistic activity.

Finally, we hope and encourage that more teachers in public schools can apply humanistic activities to their foreign language teaching classes, in order to enable their students to achieve a more effective learning, fully valuing them, not only as apprentices, but also as human beings.

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