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What do the English teachers think about spelling bee competitions in relation to students' English learning motivation?

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Abstracto

El presente estudio explora las diferentes perspectivas que los maestros de inglés tienen hacia la competencia conocida como *Spelling Bee*. Ésta es una competencia común en las escuelas privadas donde el inglés es enseñado como segunda lengua. De forma personal, he tenido experiencia con este concurso siendo estudiante y maestra. Mi perspectiva se modificó cuando lo experimenté como maestra. Es por ello que esta investigación fue llevada a cabo para saber lo que otros maestros piensan acerca de Spelling Bee y su influencia en la motivación de los estudiantes durante el aprendizaje del idioma inglés. La motivación es un aspecto que los maestros llegan a considerar importante al aprender un idioma, ya que se verá reflejada en el desempeño del alumno dentro y fuera del salón de clases. Este trabajo de tesis está basado en las experiencias que los maestros de inglés han tenido en relación con el concurso. Las opiniones de los maestros participantes son descritas y analizadas con el fin de obtener conclusiones que aporten información acerca de las ventajas, desventajas que se puedan obtener del concurso y de su influencia en la motivación de los estudiantes hacia el aprendizaje del inglés. Las instituciones optan por llevar a cabo este concurso, ya que es una actividad extracurricular. El periodo de preparación de los estudiantes, el concurso en sí y el resultado final son aspectos determinantes para la motivación, actitudes o comportamiento de los estudiantes hacia el aprendizaje del idioma. En este periodo el maestro adquiere un rol importante, ya que puede influir en la manera en la que los alumnos perciben el concurso y el aprendizaje de toda la experiencia.

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter I introduce the present study which seeks to understand English teachers' perceptions of spelling bee (SB) contests and their relation to learners' English learning motivation. Firstly, I share the motivation that encouraged me to carry out the study, followed by its background and objectives. Then, I explain the context where the research took place as well as its contribution to the English language teaching field. Finally, I briefly explain the content of the complete thesis.

1.2 My Motivation

Many years ago, I was studying in a private junior high-school where SBs were frequently carried out more than once in a year. I was an outstanding student in the English subject; therefore, I liked the activities related to it. The teacher chose the best candidates for it after weeks of practice. I had the opportunity to be part of two contests, which I thought were very entertaining. I truly enjoyed participating in SBs because I have always considered memorization as one useful learning strategy for me. Nevertheless, when I started working as an English teacher my perspective changed. The first time I was only a judge but then, I had the role of preparing students for the contest. It was not a simple task due to the fact I had to take into consideration the time I had to practice with them but also to continue with regular classes. I was told about the contest one month before its realization and students did not even know what a SB was. I felt frustrated because of the short time the authorities stated for training learners. Some students also felt frustrated because they could not spell correctly or fulfill the requirements to participate. However, other students felt encouraged to be part of the selected students for a SB and motivated to learn more about the language. Since then, I started to think about SB's importance and impact on students' learning and if it was going to help them with language learning or if it just was an ordinary event to do.

1.3 Background and Objective of the Study

A spelling bee is a contest, which was created more than 50 years ago in the United States (Merriam-Webster, 2019). Nowadays, the contest is not only carried out in the United States but also in many other countries. There are many private institutions which have implemented the contest in their programs as an extracurricular activity. As its name mentions, the contest consists of spelling English words correctly based on established norms that participants have to follow.

Many English teachers are in charge of activities or events in the school such as a SB. They can be in charge of preparing the whole event, be judges or be part of the audience. Even if the English teacher does not have any of the roles mentioned, they are always expected to prepare the students for the contests. They take part in the process in which students are involved as well before, during and after SB. Therefore, teachers create their own perspectives of how a SB affects students' English learning. The perspectives can vary depending on the teacher's contexts. Following the above, the present study focuses on how SBs influence English teachers' perspectives and beliefs based upon what they have experienced. The question that the research aims to answer is the following:

What do the English teachers think about spelling bee contests in relation to students' English learning motivation?

The objective of the research is to identify if a SB influences students' English learning in a positive or negative way. Teachers will provide their opinions about what they have noticed at their own contexts.

1.4 Context

One thing participants of this research have in common is that they are English teachers working in a private institution where SB contests have been carried out every year. They have worked for more than one year and some have had experience with SBs not only as teachers but as students. My working context is similar as well. The name of the private school where I work is *Instituto de la Fuente*, and it is located in Leon. SBs have been carried out for five years and English teachers organize it. Students from elementary, junior and high

school participate in it. I do not have information about how it was decided the implementation of the contest in the school, however I still had to be part of each of them without taking my opinion into consideration. From those experiences, I decided to carry out this study.

1.5 Potential Contribution to the English Language Teaching Field

The study can be helpful for teachers who would like to compare opinions and make a change to their institutions' extracurricular activities. In the case of SBs, setting goals in order to obtain benefit from its use and affect pupils' learning positively, depends on the event's organization. Modify it to increase students' motivation or not carry it out if it is the best choice for the school's context (students, teachers or program) are some examples of the changes that can be realized based on this study's findings. Teachers have to take into consideration how and why SB contests are carried out. Therefore, this study is to understand how SB can be beneficial or non-beneficial to students' motivation and learning. It contributes to English teaching, specifically when SBs are being carried out in order to obtain advantage from it and improve disadvantages. SBs have been continuously carried out by many schools. Therefore, teachers and school authorities have to take advantage of it and not only see it as an event. Due to the research is about English teachers' perceptions, it can be useful for other teachers who have had few experiences with SBs or need to complement they own points of view about it. The study will give a broader view about SBs in the Mexican context, specifically in some private schools in the state of Guanajuato.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

The study is divided into five chapters in total. In this chapter, the research was introduced and generally described. In the second chapter the literature related to the study is provided and different terms are discussed. The term of a spelling bee, motivation and learning strategies are some of concepts explained in it. The third chapter includes the research paradigm explanation, context and participants description and techniques and procedures used for gathering data. The fourth chapter is divided into different themes that emerged from

the analysis and interpretation of participants' answers. These topics are students' motivation and engagement, what beliefs are, teachers' beliefs and frustration. Finally, the findings and personal comments of the research are shared and described in the fifth chapter. As it was already mentioned, the following chapter provides several authors' statements related to the terms of the study.

Chapter II

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present the relevant concepts used for this research with their corresponding literature. I will define each of them and describe the connection they have to the study. I selected the main topics that are more related with spelling bee competition in order to provide a wider vision of it. First, a general description of SB contests is provided. Then, I will mention its origins and its realization in the Mexican context. Secondly, motivation will be defined, as well as students' motivation and their role in SBs. Finally, I provide an explanation of what learning strategies are and describe the role of memorization in this type of competition.

2.2 Spelling Bee

Nowadays, a SB contest consists of providing certain list (s) or words to learners. Then, teachers select three to four students of each grade in order to compete. In this process, the English teacher is in charge of preparing the students to know who the best candidates to participate are. The competition among groups is carried out depending on how authorities perceive the difficulty of the words and the students' level. For example, learners from upper elementary levels (5th or 6th) can compete with secondary learners if the school agrees with it. SB modalities vary depending on the institution. When the competition ends, it is common to give recognition and/or rewards to winners. As stated by Matthews (1951), the word "bee" in Spelling Bee "is an alteration of a word that descends from the Middle English 'bene' which meant voluntary help given by neighbors toward the accomplishment of a particular task" (p. 217). The word has historically been used to describe group activities or occasions when farmers or neighbors would help each other, such as a "husking bee," "apple bee," or "raising bee" (Matthews, 1951). According to Merriam-Webster brochure (Merriam-Webster, 2019) The National Spelling Bee begun in 1925. Then, in 1941 Scripps Howard acquired the rights of the program but there were not competitions during World War II. The

Scripps National Spelling Bee is an educational promotion sponsored by the Asociación Mexicana de maestros de Inglés (MEXTESOL) de E.W. Scripps Company in conjunction with sponsoring newspapers and organizations around the world. It is a program that covers two levels: local and national. Also, it is open to students not older than 15 years old and who attend to public, private, virtual, parochial, charter and home-schools. This contest is carried out every year in the United States. As reported by Merriam-Webster (2019) the purpose of the program is to improve students' spelling, increase their vocabulary, learn concepts and develop correct English usage.

SBs in Mexico are carried out every year in private schools and by MEXTESOL. It is an academic organization that aims to develop English language among its members and non-members. In order to expand their vision, they implemented the "MEXTESOL National Bee" for elementary (5th and 6th grade) and secondary level students. A total of 50 students participate in the contest and they have to come from schools where English is not that often used as a language or academic classes (MEXTESOL, n.d.). However, some institutions that are not associated with MEXTESOL National Bee, create their own SB contest deciding how it is going to be developed.

2.3 Learning motivation

Jones (1955) describes motivation as how behavior gets started, energized, sustained, stopped, directed and what kind of subjective reaction is present in the organism while all of that is going on. Therefore, a certain behavior or action is influenced by an intention. It involves the biological, emotional, social, and cognitive forces that activate behavior (Goyal et al., 2015). According to Atkinson (1964), synonyms of the word 'intention' are: object, aim, purpose, etc. and it can be referred as the determination to act in a certain way or do to a certain thing. Motivation is a basic and essential part of learning (Brewer & Burgess, 2005). It should always be taken into account by teachers in order to obtain better results in students' language learning. Cook (2000) claims that language acquisition is not the same among learners and believes that there are three main factors influence it: age, personality and motivation. From these three factors, she states that motivation is the most significant one. In agreement with Cook (2000), Ellis (1994) believes that the learning process simply occurs

when the person is motivated. Nevertheless, not all types of motivations can have beneficial results. Intrinsic motivation is a powerful tool for confident, inquisitive and adventurous spirits that have better performances than extrinsically motivated people (Turtorean, 2013). In the present study motivation was a key factor for teachers and students before, during and after SBs. At the same time, motivation can be divided into four types: integrative, instrumental, intrinsic and extrinsic.

According to Gardner and Lambert (1972), claims that *integrative* motivation takes place when the individual learns the language with the intention of participating in its culture. It is to say that students who are integrally motivated, have the desire to be similar to members of the community that speak the target language (Mahlool, 2009). In order to achieve this, learners seek opportunities to create similarities from the foreign culture in their identities. Cook (2011) states that integrative motivation can be seen in actions as admiring the culture, reads its literature, visits the country on holidays or finds opportunities to practice the language. On the other hand, *instrumental* motivation refers to the individual who learns a language for unrelated reasons or motives such as getting a job, obtaining a salary bonus, etc. (Mahlool, 2009). Ryan and Deci (2000) introduced a new theory named *self-determination theory* which categorizes several types of motivation in accordance with the different rationales, causes or targets that strength an achievement. In relation to this theory, the other two types of motivation have the most notable differences. *Intrinsic* motivation can be defined as the internal desire to perform a particular task (Reena & Bonjour, 2010). It is to say that an individual is influenced by personal enjoyment, interest or pleasure to complete the task. As stated by Reena and Bonjour (2010) intrinsically motivated learners have a better performance in class because they are willing to learn new things. Therefore, their learning experience is more meaningful, and students go deeper in the subject to understand better. It is called *extrinsic* when the reasons to act or behave are the opposite of intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation refers to the external factors of the individual that might not be linked to the task or activity but influence their performance (Reena & Bonjour, 2010). Those factors can be a reward or punishment, as being successful in the exam or obtaining a good grade (Vansteenkiste, Lens, & Deci, 2006).

Extrinsic motivation plays a remarkable role in SBs. However, other types of motivation as are intrinsic, instrumental or integrative can be developed throughout the process of a SB. Hence, students' perceptions and performance might define their motivation. Motivation is commonly named in the process of a SB, specifically when teachers motivate students to participate. Many schools use rewards to make students be part of the contest, whether if it is an extra point in their grades, a diploma or medal. According to Turtorean (2013), extrinsic motivation controls individuals with a poor self-image or low self-confidence. Its focus is too narrow. It can be defined as doing something as a means to an end or in other words, doing something now to get something later (Locke & Schattke, 2018). Nevertheless, Locke and Schattke (2018) claim that by thinking, people have the power to choose their own goals and that the external demands or incentives have to work through the value standards that the individual has chosen. Even though SB can be seen as an extrinsic motivation activity, teachers can persuade learners to see it as a learning improvement opportunity and not only as a competition.

2.3.1 Student motivation and Spelling Bee

A central task for researchers and practitioners is to understand student motivation and its relationship to learning outcomes (Hulleman, et al., 2015). In this research, motivation is an important part of the students' preparation for SBs. As it was previously mentioned, students are told about the competition and from there, students decide whether they participate or not depending on their own reasons, motives or beliefs. Motivation can influence how students approach school in general, how they relate to teachers, how much time and effort they put on their studies, how they perform on tests, etc. (CEP, 2012). Center on Education Policy (CEP) (2012), mentions that aspects like satisfaction with the school, greater conceptual understanding, self-esteem and social adjustment are examples of a high-motivated student. While on the other hand, unmotivated learners can disengage other learners from education affecting not only their own performance but others' too.

Ryan and Deci (2000) describe four dimensions of students' self-perception that contribute to students' motivation: a) competence, b) autonomy, c) interest and d) relatedness. Competence refers to student's feeling of capability and it establishes expectation of future

success (Murray, 2011). Pintrich (2003) mentions that “students who believe they are able and that they can and will do well are much more likely to be motivated in terms of effort, persistence, and behavior than students who believe they are less able and do not expect to succeed” (p. 669). In relation to SBs, students’ behavior is similar to what Pintrich (2003) mentions; learners can develop intrinsic motivation when they feel capable or have the abilities to complete a task. In this case, pupils that feel competent to spell or the language might have a better performance on SB. However, it will depend on their self-confidence, self-esteem or only on their personalities. As an example, a teacher can find students with competence of spelling, however they are timid or introverted, which are personality features that might limit them to compete. Ryan and Deci (2000) refer to autonomy as the sense of choice, volition and freedom that comes from an external pressure and relies on their thinking or behavior. Therefore, it is elemental for improving internalized student motivation. Control is an important factor to develop intrinsic motivation and contributes in making external motivation become internal (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Students have to take choices during the process of a SB. As an example, they have to decide how much effort they will put on spelling practice or what activities to implement in order to practice at home. Autonomy can be developed in learners and affected by their interests. Lillard (1996) claims that for individuals’ development the interaction with the environment is more productive when it is self-chosen and founded upon their interests. Creating intrinsic motivation is possible when the student is interested in the task, activity, topic, etc. Therefore, if the pupil is interested in SB or an aspect related, outcomes will be favorable. The fourth dimension is relatedness which Ryan and Deci (2000) define it as the need of feeling belongingness and connectedness to others. Individuals’ behaviors are constructed, valued or modeled by people they find attached or related with. Relatedness will help the student to internalize positive school-related behaviors. (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The teacher plays an important role in how students visualize the institution in general. Therefore, learners can be positively or negatively influenced in their perceptions towards SB. Depending on how the student develop these four dimensions, is how they can establish a favorable motivation that will help them not only in SB but in their learning process in general.

2.4 Learning strategies

According to Schumaker and Deshler (1992), a learning strategy refers to the different ways an individual organizes and uses particular sets of skills in order to learn content or to accomplish a certain task effectively and efficiently in academic or non-academic contexts. It can be simply described as a person's approach to complete a task (Freeman, 2012). It is important to know students' learning characteristics in order to increase efficiency of learning processes in social studies to create efficient citizens (Kafadar & Tay, 2014). Learning strategies research has found positive results in their use (Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1991; Lenz & Hughes, 1990; Miller & Mercer, 1993) because learners give meaning to information in cognitive and affective processes (Kafadar, 2013). Discovering strategies can help the student develop their autonomy. Learning strategies are the effort that learners put to process, understand and adopt the information introduced in their institutions or individual preparation (Tay, 2013). Gagne and Driscoll (1988) mention in their study two categories of learning strategies: cognitive and affective. At the same time, cognitive strategies are divided into the following five subcategories: attention strategies, storage strategies in short time memory, coding strategies, restoration strategies and monitoring strategies. Students can use affective strategies or sentimental strategies to achieve a goal in which they need to provide attention, convenience trust or satisfaction (Grange & Driscoll, 1988). Whether the student uses cognitive or affective strategies to accomplish a task or achieve a goal it is not certain that they will have success on it or that they will not have difficulties while reaching the target. Most of the time, SB students use memorization as a learning strategy due to it facilitates the process. Nevertheless, students can apply different strategies depending on their suitability on their contexts. It might also depend on the students' learning styles that will lead them to choose the adequate strategies. Moreover, perhaps students decide to apply or modify strategies that teachers suggest. Internal and external factors influence students' decision about the strategies they will use for a SB.

2.4.1 Memorization

As it was already mentioned, students might apply memorization as a strategy for SBs contests. According to Richards and Schmidt (2013), the term 'memorization' refers to the

conscious process of establishing information in memory. Memory is a process in which information is encoded and stored and subsequently recalled (Poo, 2016). Khamees (2016) states that memorization strategy is a conscious process that includes mental activities that are intentionally carried out by the individual. It is considered an effective tool for brain empowerment, illustration enhancement and oration feature (Khamees, 2016). This term is commonly heard in educational context due to learners use this strategy to facilitate their ability to learn a language (Ozkan & Kesen, 2008). Cook (1994) claims that repetition and learning by heart are interesting and valuable activities and they can give the learner an opportunity to practice the language. But also, students can find memorization frustrating because of its difficulty and the amount of information they need to memorize (Hadwan, 2018). Nevertheless, memorization is a skill which can be trained and developed.

For a SB this is an adequate strategy to use because of the time and amount of words learners have to practice. Sometimes, the lists of words given to learners are too extensive in relation to the time they have to learn them. Besides, as it was mentioned before, the contest consists of correct spelling. Therefore, a deep comprehension of the vocabulary is optative. According to Biggs (1987), pupils approach learning in two ways. The first way is in a surface manner which consists in only memorizing as much as possible in order to pass the evaluation or in a meaningful manner in which the student has a deeper understanding. However, it is believed that comprehension and memorizing complement each other instead of been two different activities. For this, Khamees (2016) proposes two types of memorization: *Unintentional natural memorization* and *intentional memorization*. *Unintentional natural memorization* starts by comprehending a statement and its function. Then, the statement or idea will be stored whether in the short or long-term memory depending on the frequency of its recurrence. The continuous recurrence of the idea might unconsciously enable the individual to literally recall it. The idea, statement or action are likely to evolve and become mechanical in a future. On the other hand, Khamees (2016) states that intentional memorization has a more likely possibility that the individual forgets the idea because s/he is emphasized only memorization and not comprehension. Perspectives about this strategy might vary depending on the teacher and student. Oanh and Hein's (2006) study suggest that memorization could satisfy certain needs of language learners, while Ozkan and Kesen (2008) found that subjects preferred this strategy when memorizing vocabulary. Therefore,

memorization can be useful for participants whose aims are related to SB competition. It will depend on how they carry out the process and if they want to deepen the knowledge.

2.5 Conclusion

SB contests have been carried out formally since more than sixty years ago. In SBs, students' motivation can be developed and they can implement learning strategies that might be helpful not only for SB but for language learning. In this chapter several authors were cited to support this research. Each of the topics previously described have an important contribution to SBs. Also, they are relevant to this research because they embrace the main outstanding aspects of SB competition. These concepts will be mentioned in further chapters. In the next chapter, the methodology used for this study will be presented and explained.

Chapter III

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to describe the methodology used in this research, as well as the techniques and procedures for gathering the data. Furthermore, I will explain the paradigm in which the research was based. I will also provide information about the participants, research site and the ethical aspects that had to be taken into account for it. Finally, to conclude this chapter I will summarize the main aspects regarding methodology.

3.2 Research question and objective

The question which this research aims to answer is the following:

What do English teachers think about spelling bee contests in relation to students' English learning motivation?

The perspectives that are related to the research question can have two different points of view: To help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives (Miller, 2020). But also, spelling mistakes and grammatical errors are irritant, sources of mirth to others and can lead to ridicule for those responsible ("When spelling goes wrong", May 2019). These two perspectives are completely valid, so I attempt to identify them in the research. The study's objective is to know the English teachers' perceptions about this specific contest based on what they have experienced at their own context.

3.3 Qualitative research

As it was mentioned before, the aim of this research is to know about teachers' perceptions, therefore a quantitative research is not adequate. Noor (2008) states that "the choice of research methodology is based upon the type and features of the research problem" (p.1602).

According to Creswell (2001), a qualitative research paradigm is used to understand and explain behaviors and attitudes. In this research the opinions of the teachers were more valuable because of the objective mentioned before. I wanted to see different aspects that other teachers take into account when talking about the contest. I had an impartial opinion about spelling bee competitions. I also wanted to know what teachers really think about them. In private schools it is common to hear about SB contests. However, it is not certainly known that English teachers are the ones who decide (even if they agree or not) to do, organize or participate in these competitions.

Creswell (2007) states that qualitative research methodology is developed to have an extensive understanding of the issues by textual interpretation through the most common techniques that are interviews and observation.

3.4 Phenomenology

When deciding which research methodology was suitable for this research, I had to take into account different aspects: research questions, objectives, instruments and techniques for gathering data. Thus, I concluded that the basis for the research would be the phenomenological research because I tried to understand people's points of view and beliefs towards SBs. According to Lester (1999), the objective of this type of research is to identify and study individuals' perceptions towards a phenomena. Lester (1999) states that "it gathers information through qualitative methods such as participants' observation, interviews or discussions to represent their perspectives" (p. 1). The aim of the research is to know and understand the teacher's perceptions, therefore I decided to base the study on this methodology. People behave or act in a certain way depending on their experiences in the social contexts in which they have participated (Vygotsky, 1978). I have two different experiences with the contest. I have participated in SB since I was a student in secondary school. The second experience was as an English teacher and I could complete a perspective that involves two important roles: trainer and contestant.

Teachers' beliefs were shared in their answers as they commented about their perceptions constructed by time and experience. The aim of the questions was to make the teachers think

critically about SBs. The experiences of English teachers are not the same because of the context. That is the reason why I had to look for teachers that worked in private institutions. In the following section I will describe the context of this study.

3.5 Research site

The contexts in which this research took place were six different private schools: *Instituto de la Fuente*, *Colegio Lolek*, *Intituto Ágora*, *Instituto Leonés*, *Instituto Lasalle* and *Instituto Quetzalcoatl*. The first three schools are smaller than the others in terms of number of students and classrooms. However, English is taught from preschool to high school in all of them, meaning that English has an important role in those institutions. From the schools mentioned before, there is one in which two of the participants and I work. There, the principal and the legal representative want students to speak the language and they tell parents that learners will leave the institution as bilinguals. However, as English teachers we do not have a program but course-books that cover that objective and it is required the books have to be filled completely at the end of the year. English language is important because of the ‘status’ it gives to the school. SBs are carried out in this institute mainly for parents and not for students’ development. Learners’ performance is how the authorities demonstrate to the parents that their children’s English knowledge.

During this teaching period I have had the experience of SB competitions with different roles. In the first year my role was only as a judge and in the second one I had to prepare elementary students for the contest. Since then I came up with questions about this event due to the difficulties, I had in the second year. As we are only few English teachers in the school, I decided to ask other teachers from different schools and contexts; however, the common denominator among the participants is that they work in private schools in which SB is carried out.

3.6 Participants

Before gathering data, I thought that the best candidates to participate in this research would be the students, in order to know the perceptions of the people who have the role of

participants in the contest. However, they are under-aged, therefore the participants that provided information of their own experience for this research were the teachers. Teachers are involved as well in the whole process but do not participate in SBs. The teachers' role might vary depending on their contexts. Teachers can be in charge of preparing the students, be judges, organize the whole event or even the three of them.

The data was not gathered from a specific school but from the six located in Leon and Guanajuato. Three men and four women collaborated in this research and all of them are currently working in private schools in which SBs are carried out. They are non-native Mexican EFL teachers working at the schools described in the research site. The first male has been working as English teachers for one year six months, the second for one year and the third for nineteen years. Within the female participants two of them have been working for two years, the third woman for four years and the fourth one for nineteen years. Only one of the participants has worked in the public sector for one year (third male). Teachers' pseudonyms are presented in the following table:

Table 3.1- Teachers' coding

Pseudonyms	Sex	Years of teaching
T1 (Teacher one)	Female	19
T2 (Teacher two)	Male	1 year 6 months
T3 (Teacher three)	Male	15
T4 (Teacher four)	Female	2
T5 (Teacher five)	Female	1 year 8 months
T6 (Teacher six)	Male	1
T7 (Teacher seven)	Female	2
T8 (Teacher eight)	Female	4

3.7 Interviews

The technique that was used in this research was the interview by different means, because it was useful to know what participants thought. They were sent by e-mail, WhatsApp and a few were given in paper. According to Gubrium and Holstein (2001), the interview

“democratizes the interpretation of experience by providing a working space and means for expressing public opinion” (p. 31). Experiences, opinions, beliefs are will be shared by the participants. There are open questions with the order from personal experience (as students) to teaching experience and at the end there is a question related to the implementation of SB in the public sector. As teachers, we are busy or our schedules are different, I could not set an appointment for a face-to-face interview. It is a short set of questions that are not time-consuming, and the teachers can answer easily (see Appendix 1).

The participants’ experiences and opinions were interpreted and then categorized in possible topics. Even that I could not interview the participants personally, I considered that giving or sending them the questions was a good opportunity to them to articulate freely. Also, to avoid nervousness and give the participants time to think on their answers.

3.8 Data analysis

Thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). It is often used in qualitative research because it applies analysis of transcript data emerged from interviews or observations which aim is to create “comprehensible and systematic codes and themes raised from them” (Galanis, 2018, p. 419). This type of analysis was used for this research.

After the interviews were completed from all the participants, the answers were analyzed. Fragments of the responses were taken separately in order to interpret them and based on that, find a possible theme that could embrace the idea. To facilitate the organization of the data I assigned a code to each fragment. The codes include a letter that signifies the instrument in which that data was collected and the date. The following table show the codes:

Table 3.2 - Data coding

Instrument/Technique	Code
E-mail interview	EI
WhatsApp interview	WI
Printed interview	PI

3.9 Ethics

Cowburn (2005) states that “the issues of privacy and confidentiality are identified as reasons for their particular importance in interview research” (p. 51); thus, before the interview I gave general information about the research. Participants who answered the printed interview, gave it back to me in a place we could meet without intervening in our schedules.

A day after talking to them about the research, or depending on the participant’s schedule I gave a consent letter (see Appendix 2). I decided to give it after they knew at least what I was asking for and to know when we could see him/her to give the consent letter. It explains what the research is about, and that participants’ identities were protected by pseudonyms which were already described in Table 3.1. I had a conversation with each participant before I gave them the interview as I already mentioned and of course I told them that if they did not want to collaborate it was not a problem. Participants were not forced to do it and they were told that after they signed the consent form, as it mentions it too, the information was going to be used for the research.

3.10 Conclusion

The objective for this chapter was to present the methodology that conducted this research. This was an important part of the research because it shares the reader the description of main features as are participants and context. They are important because from them is how the data was collected and therefore, I could complete this research. For gathering the data, the technique used was the interview which is very common to see in qualitative research. Also, I explained the aim of the phenomenological research which is to explore and understand the participants’ opinions about the actions that occur in their context. Finally, the ethical aspects to consider when doing this research. In the next chapter more information about the data, how it was gathered and findings that were obtained are described.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the data collected is analyzed and discussed. To do this, I interpreted and examined the data from the participants to create categories that cover the different themes obtained from it. In this chapter, I share extracts of the participants' responses as part of the analysis. First, students' motivation and engagement analysis is presented. Then, a description of beliefs is provided, followed by teachers' beliefs. Finally, frustration is the last topic presented in this chapter.

4.2 Students' motivation

According to Deci and Ryan (1991), motivation concerns energy, directions, persistence and equifinality and it is highly valued because of its consequences. That is the reason why these authors approached to human motivation and personality with the *self-determination theory*. This theory uses traditional empirical methods which highlights the importance of humans evolving inner resources for personality development and behavioral self-regulation (Deci & Ryan, 1991). Motivation is an important part that concerns SB because it might influence students' performance. Regarding this, T3 explains that motivation can be influenced by external factors, as follows.

It can be motivating if it has a reward which would be a prize or a plus in their class grade. (T3)

For T3, students can be motivated extrinsically for participating in SBs. According to Copeland et al. (2010), activities that are extrinsically motivated are performed to attain a goal, to obtain a reward, or to avoid a penalty or a negative consequence. While preparing students for SB contests, English teachers might face students that do not want to participate without a reward or the ones that put more effort because of it. If students are mentally

focused on the acquisition of a prize when winning or even just for participating, they will develop positive feelings towards SBs. As T8 said:

Just as in movies: if the public schools organize a competition with other schools, and they prize students with something valuable, then students will try to enroll to the contests and try their bests. (T8)

Here, T8 claims that students will put a lot of effort if the reward is something valuable. But what would be considered valuable for the teacher and students. Extrinsically motivated individuals can have different type of benefits as health gains, performance gains, social recognition, or financial rewards (Oudeyer et al., 2016). In SBs it is very common to give prizes, diplomas, medals, etc. to the first three places. Most of the times, students do not know what type of reward they are going to obtain if they win, and it might increase their motivation. On the other hand, some teachers may be aware of what the students are going to obtain. As T5 mentions the following point:

...and the ones who won only got a 'diploma'. It was not big deal. (T5)

In this extract, T5 seemed disappointed or indifferent towards the reward students received. The context is different for each teacher. Therefore, many situations can be interpreted. Teachers have different experiences because of their contexts as it could be seen in the previous comment. Experiences can vary, as follows:

I loved practicing with them because they really wanted to learn, and they enjoyed practicing with me because they wanted to win and wanted to demonstrate that they actually knew some English. (T7)

To T7, her students liked to practice for the competition but also showed interest for the language because of the words they were learning to spell. Perhaps those particular students were developing intrinsic motivation. Rheinberg et. al. (2000) claim that individuals are intrinsically motivated when they perceive themselves as causes of their own behavior rather than a subject or reward outside of them. From this type of motivation positive aspects emerge and are called *intrinsic benefits*. These are positive feelings that an individual can experience during the performance of the exercise itself, such as enjoyment, pleasure, satisfaction, feeling of accomplishment, competence, mastery, etc. (Oudeyer et al., 2016).

T7 could see how the students acted or felt when practicing spelling and the difference between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. It was advantageous for the teacher because students ended with a good attitude towards the language. This can be called *engagement*; which leads to the next theme.

4.3 Students' engagement

Students' engagement is an important aspect in a classroom that teachers take into account when teaching. Due to it can affect learning in a positive way. Students' engagement does not have a certain definition. However, Fredericks et al. (2004) state three dimensions of engagement in students:

1. Behavioral engagement: Students' participation in education specifically towards school's academic, social and extracurricular activities.
2. Emotional engagement: Students' emotional reactions in the classroom and school (a sense of belonging or connection to the school).
3. Cognitive engagement: Students' investment in their learning (motivation and self-regulation).

T7 could notice behavioral engagement because of the actions, feelings and attitudes students had towards SB. Then, cognitive engagement was developed in students too.

I actually think it influences a lot...they feel motivated to learn more. (T7)

T7's answer is about the influence of SB towards English learning. It seems that T7 is convinced that the contest influenced her students in a positive way towards English classes. According to Newman (1992), student engagement can be defined as the level of participation and intrinsic interest that students show at school. In this participants' class, students could have shown different positive attitudes or behaviors. For example, the teacher could notice an increase in participation, interest, success in the activities performed in class, etc. In terms of education, students' engagement has been positioned as a characteristic of high-quality teaching and learning (Ashwin & McVitty, 2015). One of a teacher's goal is making his/her students be engaged with the subjects or classes because of the favorable

results it might have. Teachers believe that engagement is a key element for a successful classroom, as the next participant mentions:

On the other hand, when they success in the competition, scholars feel stronger and with a higher English level. (T1)

For T1, when students win, they become engaged and self-confident in the use of language. However, it does not mean that they acquire a certain level because of SB. Engaged students will seek out activities inside and outside the classroom, display curiosity, develop a desire to know more and positive emotional responses to learning and their school (Newman, 1992). These aspects lead to a successful learning. It might be believed that good teachers engage their students in the class and good students are the ones engaged or committed with their classes. Nevertheless, many factors can influence students' engagement as it is the context in which SB is carried out. A psychological mediator of the relationship between student engagement and educational context is the degree to which students feel competent and confident of their ability to be successful in completing educational tasks (Akey, 2006). As it was previously mentioned, students from T1 developed confidence after they won the competition, because they believed they were able to have success in English learning as they were in the contest.

4.4 Beliefs

Beliefs are constituted by states of the brain, seen as conceptions of reality. Therefore, what a person believes is determined by what s/he does, says or thinks in various circumstances (Baker, 1995). They are mental representation of the different ways our brain expects things and the environment to behave, and how things should be related to each other (Lewis, 2018). Beliefs are part of an individual's life and are influenced or created by many factors that surround us as family, race, education, cultural background, etc.

4.4.1 Teachers' beliefs

Beliefs are an important part of teachers' identity due to it influences the way of teaching. They are formed by experiences that teachers had when they were students or from what they have learnt inside or outside a classroom. Not only teachers are influenced by beliefs, but students are too. Beliefs are important in students because they will be present in how they see things in the classroom and how they will perform in it. Each student has his/her own ideas and theories about language teaching and learning, which have an impact in their affective variables (i.e., motivation) and behaviors (i.e., learning strategies) (Kamira, 2018). Pupils' beliefs influence their conduct at school, classroom and even with certain subjects. Sometimes their perceptions are formed by what their parents think about or what they have learnt from other teachers. The comment bellow illustrates an example of teacher's beliefs.

I think spelling bees have an influence in the students learning progress. This is because students need to memorize words in order to have to correct answer. (T6)

T6's belief is formed by his experience as a student. Perhaps his strategy for learning was memorizing and he had success with it. He ensures that memorization is necessary for the contest and the learning. However, he might not be taking into account students' beliefs about their own learning strategies or what other techniques they would like to use in class. It is very important for teacher to know what type of students s/he has in order to have better outcomes. Of course, not all teachers' beliefs match with students' as the next participant states:

I was taking those classes because I knew I wasn't good at English, but he had a different opinion. (T8)

In this case, T8's belief as a student did not match with her teacher's belief. In her answer she mentioned that when she was a student, she thought she was not good in spelling, but her teacher had a different opinion. Then, she was encouraged to complete the task. This was a case in which the teacher and the student could know each other beliefs. For many teachers it is impossible to get to personally know each of their students because of different reasons (lack of time, number of students, school's policies, etc.). Nonetheless, teachers should try to discover what do their students belief about the class, language and ever themselves to improve learning.

Teachers' beliefs affect what they accomplish in their classroom, their attitudes, and their student's beliefs (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Their beliefs are significant to the extent of what teaching methods, techniques or other decisions are taken in the classroom (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Other educational terms that are more contextual but still part of teachers' beliefs are students, classroom, school policies and even the language. This is reflected in the following statement:

I think the most difficult part was about checking the rules...some students spelled the words by saying double O or double L and according to the rules was incorrect but according to you and your perspective as a teacher that's totally correct. (T2)

T2 was struggling with a specific feature of SBs which are the norms. SB's rules change according to the context. In most schools from Mexico where a SB is carried out, the norms are similar. Not only spelling is what judges take into account to discard a word but many other aspects. As it was the experience of this teacher with double letters. In my personal context, there is not a rule that forbids students to say "double", actually, students have two options when spelling double letters. Even though pupils from the T2 lost the competition because a misunderstanding of a norm, the teacher felt proud of his students because he believed their performance was good.

As it was previously mentioned in the last chapter, most of the English teachers are not in charge of deciding whether SB should be done or not in their schools. In one case, teachers are just the students' "coaches" for the contest because they do not agree to implement it. On the other hand, many teachers are the ones in charge of deciding where, when and why the SB is carried out. Even if teachers do not share their beliefs about those situations, they are still there. Some of the participants only have experience within SBs as teachers but not as students. Therefore, they do not have the perception of how SBs could have affected their learning, motivation, engagement, etc. Commenting on this, T5 says:

I never participated in a spelling bee as a student...and probably I would have never done it anyways. (T5)

SB perceptions depend on the subject. It is a different experience as a student and as a teacher. I do not have a complete panorama of T5's context, therefore I can only interpret this

comment as a bad experience. Many things could have happened in her personal context that led her to this belief. She thinks that even though she did not participate in SB, she would never have tried to. Perhaps because as a teacher she did not see SBs as favorable for students or even for her. Similar to what T5 mentions, T8 comments:

I think it shouldn't be like a mandatory thing to do for all schools, but they all should have options to do the SB. (T8)

T8 believes SBs should be optional for private and public schools in order to avoid imposing activities in the institution due to the negative attitudes it might cause. Teachers abide to what their authorities decide. However, the best option is to make an agreement in which both opinions are involved. At the end of the day, the importance should be given to the students' learning and from there the decision should be taken. Teachers' beliefs might not be the same as the students' beliefs either:

...but some students told me 'no I do not want to go' and I completely respected their decision. (T5)

For SB contests the teacher has to decide which students (3-5 people) are going to participate because if every student participate it would be time-consuming. As the teacher prepares pupils, s/he decides who the best candidates to compete in a SB are. However, the teacher's belief about the best candidates is not the same as the students' beliefs. In this case, T5 chose the students that would participate but they did not want to. Sometimes students feel like they are not capable to do it, that they will make mistakes in front of a crowd or another classmate can take his/her place. Teachers will always try to encourage them to compete but never force them. Because of the problems it might cause in the students and their learning. In the next topic a description of the feeling that teachers and students had in common towards SB competition.

4.5 Frustration

Frustration is a key negative emotion which roots in disappointment and can be defined as irritable distress in response to limitation, exclusion and failure (Jeronimus & Laucelle,

2017). Individuals experience frustration throughout their lives and people in the educational context are not different. It is common as a teacher or student to feel frustrated when teaching or learning, whatever is the case. The causes vary depending on the context in which the student and teacher are involved. In the schools where SB is carried out is very common to have an audience. Audience can be parents, students or both, causing more pressure and therefore frustration in participants. T1 expressed that students were frustrated even before the competition, as follows.

When the students fall in one word... feel frustrated, upset and unmotivated. (T1)

In SB preparation, teachers give list(s) to students in order they can study words anytime and anywhere. Of course, they give these lists with anticipation, so students have time to practice. In the previous comment, T1 expresses that in her experience, she noticed how students felt when they could not achieve a goal. On this occasion, when her students could not spell a certain word, frustration came to them. Level of difficulty, frequency or familiarization could be some of the reasons why pupils could not spell the words. Perhaps T1 did not know the exact reason why they struggled with the words, but she could notice the negative feelings it raised. As another participant says

So it was frustrating for students to try to remember the words just because instead of actually using the words in context... (T2)

Similar to what T1 mentioned before, T2 could notice frustration in his students too. This particular situation happened because the students were given the words lists without the context in which they can be used. Most of the times, SB contests do not use words that students see in their courses. Of course, it could happen that some of the words can be the same from their English course and SB words lists but they are few. During the contest, students can ask judges for examples or complete sentences using the main word they have to spell, however that is not enough context. Teachers decide whether they teach literacy to students. Nonetheless, teaching each word with context can be time-consuming and perhaps students would be overwhelmed of information and lose focus in spelling. Commenting on this issue, T2 mentions:

My experience as teacher... was kind of difficult because the words in secondary level were very very very difficult. (T2)

Here, T2's answer was interpreted as students had to spell words that were in an upper level to what they are used to. Frustration came to the teacher and perhaps to students too. Being able to spell difficult words is only one element needed to become a literate student (Swain, 2015). SB teachers might base their spelling teaching in phonics and fluency so students can identify the word said by another person (judges) and pronounce it with a certain speed. According to Swain (2015) teaching the sound-letter patterns is needed to read and spell and it is an important component of literacy instruction. However, effective instruction should also include phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary knowledge and text comprehension. SB competitions can be seen as *qualitative evaluations*. In qualitative evaluation the teacher wants to know how many points the student can recall, the number of words they can spell, the number of grammatical rules they can use, etc. (Biggs & Collis, 1982). Therefore, a SB does not aim to know if students have a meaningful learning but show how many words they learned to spell.

The next teacher expresses frustration within the preparation, as follows.

My experience was hard. It was my first-time teaching and practicing with my students for this contest. Actually, I did not know how to start. (T7)

T7 did not experience a SB when she was a student. Thus, she did not know that teacher's roles were needed in the contest. This is a clear example which shows the lack of English teacher's involvement in school's decisions about events or activities. T7 was told that she had to prepare her students for a SB without knowing about her experience or her beliefs about it making her feel frustrated. It can be interpreted as she was not instructed about how does a SB work and had to discover it by herself, making her feel uncomfortable and not confident of what she was going to do. T7 had a similar experience as T8, as suggested in the following extract:

...it was really stressful because the principal wanted that students participate, but they were not prepared, and they did not want. (T8)

Sources of frustration can be internal or external. Yahya (2012) claims that internal sources include individual deficiencies as are lack of confidence or dread of social situations that interfere with people from attaining a goal. On the other hand, external sources consist in conditions outside the individual as are everything present in the outside world (people, economic supplies, politics, etc.). T8's experience included the two types of frustration sources. Students and T8 felt frustrated because of the school's authority (external) and students did not want to participate because of own particular reasons (internal). This situation was difficult for the teacher because she did not have an option that could have made things easier. T8 could not force students to compete in a SB and she had to attain to what the principal said. Frustration can be seen as a problem-response conduct and can have variation of effects depending on the individual (Yahya, 2012).

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, findings of the research were discussed. Motivation, engagement, beliefs and frustration were themes that raised from data. Different perceptions were shared in the portions from participants' answers. As it could be seen, positive and negative aspects about Spelling Bee competition were discusses along the chapter. SB implementation depends on the institution; however, goals should be determined before that. Elements such as the school's program, students' interests, needs, learning styles and teacher's beliefs, should be taken into account in order to decide whether to carry out SBs or not. SBs should not only be focused in memorizing words and winning a competition, but as a learning strategy to improve students' learning. In the next chapter the study's findings and conclusions will be presented.

Chapter V

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter I present the conclusions of this research. I start by answering the research question and summarizing the findings. Then, I will describe the implications of the study and the limitations I found while conducting this research. Additionally, I will share information for conducting future research and finally, personal thoughts about the work presented.

5.2 Answering the research question

The purpose of the present study was to answer the following research question:

What do English teachers think about spelling bee competitions in relation to students' English learning motivation?

This was a qualitative study that used interviews as a data collection technique. Based on the answers gathered from them the following findings were stated:

Motivation towards English language can be influenced by students' performance in SB. Students who have an outstanding performance in SB tend to develop more interest and positive attitudes than students that underperformed. Students who obtain one of the three first places in the competition, increase their confidence in their language learning because they feel capable. On the other hand, students who do not obtain a place or even participate in the contest, their motivation was diminished or negatively affected towards English language. As students' SB performance is uncertain, the teacher has the role of mediating the feelings students face in order to avoid demotivation.

Motivation is developed in students before the competition if there is an extrinsic reward. Pupils put more effort in learning for the contest because there is a reward to obtain. Rewards can range from benefits in their grades to prizes as medals or diplomas. Students' reactions

towards rewards vary depending on their interests and needs. There are rewards for SB winners, but the teacher can also give rewards in order to motivate students to participate. Nevertheless, extrinsic motivation will last until they receive the reward if students do not find advantages from SB experience in order to continue motivated.

Teachers face difficulties while preparing students for the competition because of lack of experience within SB. Some participants did not take part in SBs as students or teachers, creating lack of confidence about their actions or roles they had to play in a SB. Unexperienced teachers in SBs do not have enough preparation for training students because they have not participated in one and do not know its process. Hence, teachers experience frustration when discovering it by themselves and at the same time, train the students.

Many English teachers are not in charge of the implementation of SBs in their institutions or their opinions are not taken into account for it. Most of the participants did not collaborate in the decision of implementing SBs in their schools. Authorities from their institutions did not ask for their beliefs or created an agreement in which both opinions were considered. The implementation of SBs should not be only considered as an extracurricular activity but as an opportunity to improve language learning. Therefore, teachers should take part of this decision in order to set goals for SB competitions and improve English learning.

SBs cause frustration in some students because it is a public event where other people is present and their performance is critical to develop a positive or negative attitude towards English language. Learners felt nervous and embarrassed during the competition creating pressure on their performance. Which is determinant to their attitudes towards the target language. The teacher has to be aware of students' feelings and attitudes and be in constant communication with the school's authorities, in order to avoid negative consequences in the students' personalities and language learning.

SBs can influence students' learning process in terms of the way they find strategies to learn. Before the contest, students are required to learn the words. Therefore, practice is needed inside and outside the classroom, making students find techniques or strategies for it. Those strategies can be useful for their language learning process and can develop students' learning autonomy. Teachers can suggest strategies and even apply strategies in class created by students.

Words in SBs are taught without context or use in daily language. Students that participated in SBs were not familiarized with the words of the list that were given to them. English teachers could not find other use to these words besides the contest. Most of the time, English teachers follow a program provided by the school. As a SB is an extracurricular activity, it is not based on the school's program, having unknown words for the students. Therefore, students do not find a use for the words and learn meaningless.

5.3 Implications

Findings of the present study are helpful for teachers to know how SBs should be carried out to generate favorable results. This study can be useful for teachers who want to broad their perceptions about this particular contest. Also, to the extent in which they can make a change in SB implementation or training in order to take advantage of it for English language teaching. It can have impact in teachers' roles in SBs at their contexts. Because the study can be a guide for them by learning about other teachers' experiences. Also, English teachers can change their beliefs of what they think about SB and help their students to have a meaningful learning and not just memorizing. Likewise, teachers can take advantage of SB by developing confidence in their students towards English language in general and not just spelling.

This study was a good opportunity for English teachers to give their opinions about SBs. Communication is an important factor in order to negotiate decisions related to SB. Some of this can be deciding the age or grade of students that will participate. As well as dates, audience, how much time to practice learners have or how the process to prepare students will be. Sometimes teachers cannot express their opinions freely because of the consequences it might have or because they do not feel comfortable sharing their opinions with their superiors. Nevertheless, as it was mentioned, communication is the best option for taking advantage of each extracurricular activity applied in the school.

5.4 Limitations

Even though the study is about perceptions, some limitations were faced during its implementation. They vary depending on the teachers' context. For some, their perceptions were positive and for others only negative because of their previous experience. Therefore, their answers were not from a neutral position and I could not find other topics to investigate about.

Another limitation that influenced the whole study was the participants. I mentioned in the methodology chapter that the first group of participants that were considered were students. Teachers play an important role in extracurricular activities such as SBs. However, the main subjects are the people who actually participate in the context, it means, the students. They did not participate in this research because of lack of time to communicate with parents and explain the aims of the study. In my personal context, pupils from 1st grade in elementary to 6th semester in high school participate in SB. It means they are under-aged and ethical problems arise from interviewing them. Certainly, this can be considered for further research in order to obtain more variety of results.

5.5 Further research

Taking into account the information described in the previous section, researchers can create an interview that includes more open questions for future studies. Questions that lead participants to reflect or analyze their teaching practice and students' language proficiency in relation to SB. Questions used for gathering data in this research were created according to the topic and teacher's necessities. I mentioned in Chapter III that I considered teachers' time and schedule to answer when creating the interview. However, it can be modified. Perhaps in the future, there can be face-to-face interviews in order to have more detailed answers and maybe include physical reactions too. Based on the participants' answers, it can be assumed that teachers took time to answer the written interview but did not take the time to actually reflect on them. For that reason, the data gathering techniques can be modified to broad the research.

Another aspect that can be improved for future studies are the participants. As it was described English teachers from private schools where SBs were carried out, were the people

selected for conducting this research. However, researchers can take into consideration gathering data from SB participants (students), teachers and parents. Each of these group of participants can add valuable information from different points of view. It would be a broader research if learners' opinions are added to the study in order to know their beliefs and perceptions about SBs in English language. Also, I mentioned parents because it would be a complete panorama of the topic. Their perceptions are important to the extent of what changes they notice in students towards SBs, the language or both. Also, because they can be present and help them throughout the process of carrying out SBs.

5.6 Final thoughts

In the institution where I studied at, SBs were only for junior high school. Personally, I enjoyed it because memorizing is a strategy I like to use in learning. But my SB perceptions change completely as an English teacher. I realized many things I could not notice as a student. Authorities from the institution I am working at, decided that SB should be applied to young learners as preparation for future contests. Therefore, from one moment to another I had to implement spelling to classes in order to practice. When SBs are concluded I was satisfied with learners' performance but that was just my opinion. This led me to think about other people's perceptions about it. In this research I found different opinions that gave me an idea of how SBs can be beneficial or damaging in students' English learning. It depends on the teacher's and students' roles throughout the process. From the findings I could understand how other teachers were in the same position as I and modify my perception of SBs. Perhaps for some was an unfortunate situation in which they could not do much about it and others take it as an advantage to raise students' interest towards the language. I conclude that SBs should be always looking for improvement in learning and not just competition. It has to be planned and organized according to the students' needs and interests. Therefore, SB should be implemented if the institution has well defined goals for teaching and learning improvement whether if it is in a private or public context.

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Appendices

Appendix 1- Interview

- How was your experience with spelling bee as a student?
- How was your experience with spelling bee as a teacher?
- Do you think spelling bee has an influence in students' English learning? Yes/ No
Why?
- Can spelling bee be motivating or demotivating in students' English learning?
- Do you think spelling bee should be only for the private educational sector? Yes/No
Why?

Carta de consentimiento

El presente formato describe brevemente la investigación realizada por la alumna Dara Betsabé Argüelles Espinoza que actualmente se encuentra cursando el 8° semestre de la Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés en la Universidad de Guanajuato. Con el motivo de obtener y analizar información sobre su opinión acerca del evento conocido como “Spelling Bee” para el proyecto de tesis llamado “English teachers’ perceptions towards Spelling Bee competition”.

La participación en esta investigación es estrictamente voluntaria. La información que se colecte será confidencial y no se usará para ningún otro propósito fuera de este propósito académico. Su información será analizada e interpretada con el fin de responder a las preguntas que dirigen este estudio. Su identidad no será revelada sino que se usarán seudónimos.

Podrá contactarse con la alumna en cualquier momento durante la investigación. Una vez firmado este consentimiento, su información se utilizará para el proyecto sin posibilidad de descartarla.

He entendido y aceptado participar en este proyecto

Nombre y firma del participante