

Students' Motivation to Choose Language Itineraries in the Degree of Primary Education

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the motivation of pre-service teachers to choose a language itinerary (English or Asturian) in the Degree of Primary Education. The objective is to identify which elements drive students to select among the so-called *menciones* (tracks) to become language teachers; the study examines if pre-service teachers specializing in the international or the regional language report intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. A survey was answered by 89 students in their 3rd year of Primary Education. Variance analyses confirm the intrinsic motivation of students; no significant differences were found between future teachers of English/Asturian, although some variables render significant results.

Keywords: Primary Education, motivation, English as a Foreign Language, Asturian, language teaching.

La motivación de los estudiantes para escoger menciones de lengua en el Grado de Educación Primaria

RESUMEN: El presente artículo analiza la motivación de los futuros maestros para escoger una mención de lengua (Inglés o Asturiano) en el Grado en Educación Primaria. El objetivo es identificar los elementos que influyen en la elección de las menciones de los futuros maestros de lenguas; la investigación examina si los alumnos que se especializan en la enseñanza de la lengua internacional o la lengua regional muestran una motivación intrínseca o extrínseca. Se administró un cuestionario a 89 alumnos del 3^{er} curso de Educación Primaria. Los análisis de la varianza confirman la motivación intrínseca del alumnado que escoge su especialización; no se hallaron diferencias entre los futuros docentes de inglés y asturiano, aunque hay variables que arrojan resultados significativos.

Palabras clave: Educación Primaria, motivación, Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, asturiano, enseñanza de idiomas.

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to analyse students' motivation when choosing the track¹ (*mención*) of English (a language for international communication) or Asturian² (a regional language) in the Degree of Primary Education at the University of Oviedo. The rationale of pre-service teachers to choose among the possible specializations in the degree of Primary Education in Spain has received scant attention; moreover, no studies have approached the motivation of students to specialize in teaching the international lingua franca (English) or a minority language (Asturian). The study of students' incentives includes the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation towards the language specialization, based on the models provided by Gardner and Lambert (1972) and Gardner (1985), and the Self-determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In particular, this paper pursues the following research objectives:

1. Determine if the motivation of pre-service language teachers of Primary Education is modelled by intrinsic or extrinsic elements.
2. Examine possible differences between prospective teachers of English and Asturian language, as regards their motivation to specialize in language teaching.
3. Relate students' motivation with the established variables: gender, age, socio-economic status (SES), type of school of participants, stays abroad, previous training in Asturian.

The importance of analysing the perceptions of pre-service teachers is justified by the relevance of the teaching profession; in fact, the teaching profession has been extensively investigated as regards teaching satisfaction (Anaya & López Martín, 2014; Karavas, 2010), teachers' beliefs (Barrios Espinosa, 2014; Borg, 2003), the status of the teaching profession (Enkvist, 2010), and stress and burnout (Troman & Woods, 2001) among other issues.

The motivation of pre-service teachers towards teaching has also been investigated in the international (König & Rothland, 2012; Watt & Richardson, 2007) and Spanish (Gratacós, 2014; Sánchez Lissen, 2009) scopes, aiming to provide clues and guidelines to improve teacher training and contribute to optimize the teaching-learning process. However, the specialization choices of language teachers have been neglected so far, and no studies have investigated the reasons to specialize in teaching a particular language. Moreover, in Spain there is a dearth of research as regards the motivation of students in the degrees adapted to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA), where the former (3-year) *Diplomaturas* gave way to the new (4-year) *Grados*. We believe this paper can contribute to the opening up of new lines of research, as the motivations of Spanish students to select study tracks (or *menciones*) in the new degrees of Primary Education remain unexplored. Moreover, the

¹ The tracks or *menciones* within the Degree of Primary Education allow students to specialize in one particular subject (in most universities these tracks include Physical Education, Foreign Languages, Special Education, and Musical Education).

² Asturian (or *Bable*) is protected and recognized as the traditional language of Asturias by the *Law on the Use of the Asturian Language* of 1998, but it is not a co-official language in the Principality of Asturias.

study of the incentives of prospective teachers when choosing their specialization has not been examined in relation to their extrinsic and intrinsic motivation towards the language. As such, this paper is intended to analyse the possible divergences between students' motivation when choosing the international lingua franca (English) or a minority language which is used in the local context. Our main hypothesis is that students' motivation towards the languages will differ: in the case of English, we expect participants to be driven mainly by their extrinsic motivation (i.e., having more professional opportunities), as English is nowadays a global language used for international exchanges and which is being progressively disassociated from a particular host country or culture, i.e., the United Kingdom or the United States of America (McKenzie, 2010: 2; Lamb, 2004; Warschauer, 2000). In contrast, we predict students specialising in Asturian will report higher intrinsic motivation since they have chosen to teach a language which is used in the local environment and which has a strong affective component.

2. THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: MOTIVATION

Motivation is the force that drives and shapes human behaviour (Steers & Porter, 1991). Being motivated means to have the thrust to do something: in other words, while a person with no motivation is not driven to initiate something, someone who is motivated will have the push to do it (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). In relation to language learning, motivation has been defined by Dörnyei as the “effort, desire, and attitude towards learning” (2005: 68).

In order to study the motivation of prospective teachers to choose their language specialization, we will examine the classic distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation (Gardner & Lambert, 1972), and the categorization of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation proposed by the Self-determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Additionally, we will comment on research that specifically analyses students' choices when selecting their specialization in the Degree of Primary Education in Spain; finally, we will report on research analysing the relationship between the international language and regional languages in multilingual contexts in Spain.

2.1. Integrativeness vs. instrumental motivation

Motivation is a relevant issue in language learning, as research has consistently proven that it is a determiner in the acquisition/learning process of second languages (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008; Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Espinar & Ortega, 2015; Gardner, Lalonde, & Moorcroft, 1985; Madrid & Pérez-Cañado, 2001).

The pioneering work by Gardner and Lambert (1972) developed their Socio-Psychological Model, which defines two types of motivation: integrative and instrumental. By integrative motivation, we understand the desire or willingness of learners to become part of the culture or speech community by learning their language. According to Gardner and Lambert, integrative motivation shows “sincere and personal interest in the people and culture represented by the other group” (1972: 132); on the other hand, instrumental motivation is

related to practical and tangible outputs or goals which can be achieved by commanding the language, for instance getting a job. This theoretical framework has been revisited by Gardner (1985, 2007) and Bernaus and Gardner (2008), and motivation has been studied in relation to other variables, such as age (Fernández-Fontecha & Terrazas-Gallego, 2012), gender (Baker & MacIntyre, 2000), cultural background (Bernaus, Masgoret, Gardner, & Reyes, 2004), or the type of approach and methodology used by practitioners (Arnaiz, 2016; Lasagabaster & López, 2015).

2.2. Self-Determination Theory: intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

According to Self-determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Noels, 2001; Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand, 2000), motivation is a three-stage continuum: de-motivation (which means lack of action), extrinsic motivation, and intrinsic motivation.

By intrinsic motivation, Ryan and Deci (2000a, 2000b) refer to a construct that drives individuals to engage in a given activity voluntarily: intrinsic motivation is “the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence” (Ryan & Deci, 2000a: 55). This type of motivation is not aimed at any return on investment, as it does not look for a specific reward; contrarily, it is intended to satisfy an inherent will or desire which, in the case of education, can be extrapolated to the interest of learning about a particular field, the desire to improve society by means of education, and wanting to work with children.

Extrinsic motivation relates to a different pattern in individuals, as it pursues specific achievements or hints that can be regarded as a reward: extrinsic motivation is “doing something because it leads to a separable outcome” (Ryan & Deci, 2000a: 55); this type of motivation occurs when individuals engage in an activity to get something, and not to satisfy their own intellectual pleasure. This model claims that individuals are proactive or passive depending on their social conditions, and their extrinsic and intrinsic motivation will be influential when they choose a given profession (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

2.3. Previous research on teachers' specialization

The motivation towards studying a degree in education is a key topic within teacher training and the future of the teaching profession. Research has consistently identified which are the most salient reasons to engage in teaching: students' teaching vocation, the positive perception on the profession, parental advice, working with children, and the (tentatively favourable) job conditions (Bertomeu, Canet, Gil, & Jarabo, 2007; González López, 2005; González Sanmaned, 1995; Sánchez Lissen, 2009). Although motivation varies among pre-service teachers, research suggests that students taking a degree in education are mostly driven by intrinsic elements. This pattern is confirmed by the recent study of Gratacós (2014), who provides a comprehensive evaluation of the motivation that drives pre-service teachers. Relying on anthropological motivation models, Gratacós scrutinizes the incentives of 857 first-year students of Education in Madrid, concluding that intrinsic/integrative motivations are more relevant for prospective teachers than extrinsic/instrumental ones. In

the international scope, research has also underlined the stark relationship between motivation and professional commitment (Watt & Richardson, 2007), and the impact of motivation on the overall pedagogic knowledge of prospective teachers (König & Rothland, 2012).

It is important, as well, to cite research examining students' motivations to select a particular itinerary within the studies of Primary Education: the study by Herrada Valverde and Herrada Valverde (2012) analysed the motivation of students of the extinct *Diplomaturas* in Education and concluded that first-year students taking the specialization in foreign languages chose this track mostly due to the professional prospective; this investigation supports this finding and that foreign languages was the specialization with higher job possibilities in Spain according to the Spanish National Agency for Quality and Accreditation. Furthermore, most students acknowledge that the influence of their family and social context was a determining factor when choosing a specialization.

García Jiménez and Lorente García (2014) specifically addressed the motivation of students to choose an itinerary within Primary Education, concluding that students' motivation is influenced by their assumption that it will be beneficial for their professional careers: students consider specialization promotes employability. This finding underlines that students choose their specialization according to extrinsic elements (entering the labour market) rather than intrinsic ones (their attachment to the field of study). In line with the study by Herrada Valverde and Herrada Valverde (2012), this paper stresses the influence of parents in the choice of pre-service teachers, as 18.8% of participants decided on their specialization following the advice of others. This study found no differences according to age, gender, or the SES in the students' choice of specialization.

2.4. Minority languages and English as the international lingua franca

For the scope of this paper, it is important to reflect on the possible differences in motivation towards international and local languages, as students' desires may be driven by the relevance and social implications of the language being learned/taught. The pervasiveness of English may have had some consequences on the perception of the language by non-native speakers (Pennycook, 2017). It has been argued that the global identity of English may help explain the "frequently observed blending of integrative and instrumental motives" to learn the language (Dörnyei, 2005: 97). In other words, the effects of globalization (the development of a global identity) and the association of English with key sectors such as technology, or economy, may result in the modelling of a blended motivation towards the language. Also, the value of English as the tool for international communication, and the role media and English training may better facilitate students, are "closer to other cultures beyond that of native speakers" (Lasagabaster & López, 2015: 44). Moreover, it could be claimed that the pervasiveness of English does not facilitate the identification of non-native speakers with the origin culture and the speech community: today English is not (exclusively) regarded as the language of the United Kingdom or the United States, but rather as a tool for intercultural exchange (McKenzie, 2010: 2; Lamb, 2004; Warschauer, 2000). Conversely, a language like Asturian, which is basically regarded as a tool for local communication, should have a stronger emotional component and speakers are mostly driven by their personal attachment to the language (i.e., integrative/intrinsic motivation).

In multilingual settings in Spain, studies analysing language attitudes towards the official languages and a foreign language are scarce (Lasagabaster, 2004); in the Basque Country, Cenoz (2001) investigated the perception of English in three groups of students of different ages. The most salient finding of her study reveals a decline in attitudes towards the foreign language associated with the age of the participants: Educational and psychological factors may lead to a decrease in students' appreciation of English as they get older. Lasagabaster (2003) provides an extensive review on language attitudes in his study on students of higher education: relying on a sample of 1,087 participants, his research examines language attitudes towards Basque, Spanish, and English and their relation to the language competence in the foreign language. Contrary to Cenoz (2001), the study does not report age-related differences in attitudes towards English. Instead, Lasagabaster accentuates a strong instrumental component of attitudes of university students towards the L3.

In the Catalan context, research revealed that learners have better attitudes towards English and Spanish than towards Catalan (Bernaus *et al.*, 2004). This study concludes that the instrumental value of English (i.e., its importance in the labour market) is the driving force underlying the positive attitudes and the willingness to learn this language. This finding partially contradicts Gardner's integrativeness model (1985), since Bernaus *et al.* conclude that differences in integrative motivation are language-specific and do not apply to any language.

Although the studies presented in this section report on relevant findings on attitudes and motivation of speakers towards regional, national, and international languages, the motivation of pre-service teachers to specialize in teaching a particular language remains unexplored.

3. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The adaptation of Spanish university degrees to the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010 led to the reorganization of study plans in the Faculties of Education throughout the country. The old *Diplomaturas*, or Diplomas, gave way to the current system of *Grados*, or Degrees, which qualify graduates to teach in Primary Education. The previous degrees offered a range of 7 possible specialization tracks (Elementary Education, Primary Education, Physical Education, Musical Education, Foreign Languages, Special Education, and Hearing and Language), which have been reformulated into the current choice of Elementary and Primary Education. The adapted degree in Primary Education at the University of Oviedo offers several tracks or *menciones*: Special Education, Physical Education, Musical Education, Foreign Language (English or French), and Asturian Language.

The specialization in English Language is intended to provide the skills and competences for students to become teachers of English as a Foreign Language in Primary Education: students have to take 4 subjects (30 ECTS credits) to complete the track (see Table 1). The specialization in Asturian trains students to be able to teach Asturian language in the schools of Primary Education in the Principality of Asturias. Students have to take 5 subjects (30 ECTS credits) to complete the track. In both cases, students take the specialization subjects in the third and fourth years of their degree. The specialization tracks have been offered since the adaptation of the degree to the EHEA in 2010.

Table 1. Summary of the specialization programmes in English and Asturian.

English	Asturian
English Language I (12 ECTS)	Asturian Language I (12 ECTS)
English Language II (6 ECTS)	Asturian Language II (6 ECTS)
Language Teaching (English) I (6 ECTS)	Language Teaching (Asturian) I (6 ECTS)
Language Teaching (English) II (6 ECTS)	Language Teaching (Asturian) II (6 ECTS)
	Asturian literature
Total: 30 ECTS	Total: 30 ECTS

4. METHODOLOGY

This study follows a quantitative methodology; a survey has been designed to collect data from participants regarding their motivation when choosing a language specialization. Students answered the survey anonymously in January 2017, and data were analysed with SPSS v.24. Variance analyses (one-way ANOVA) were performed, together with descriptive statistics.

4.1. Sample

The sample of the study comprises all the students (N=89) enrolled in the specializations of English and Asturian of the Degree in Primary Education in 2016/2017: 49 students belong to the English track, while 40 are studying to become teachers of Asturian. A total of 58 participants were women (65%) and 31 were men (35%); their average age was 23.06. Table 2 summarizes the characteristics of the sample:

Table 2. Characteristics of the participants.

Variable	English (49)	Asturian (40)
<i>Gender</i>	Female: 35/Male: 14	Female: 23/Male: 17
<i>School</i>	Public: 36/State-subsidised: 13 Private:0	Public: 30/State-subsidised: 10 Private:0
<i>Stays abroad (1 month)</i>	Yes: 14 (28,5%)/No: 35 (71,4%)	Yes: 4 (10%)/No: 36 (90%)
<i>Previous training in Austran</i>	Yes: 21 (42,9%)/No: 28 (57,1%)	Yes: 23 (57,5%)/No: 17 (42,9%)
<i>Parent's profession</i>	High: 27 Medium: 22 Low: 41	High: 8 Medium: 6 Low: 63
<i>Place of birth</i>	Urban: 33 Semi-urban: 6 Rural: 10	Urban: 19 Semi-urban: 8 Rural: 13

Our study concurs with previous research on the choice of the teaching profession (see Gratacós, 2014: 20–25), as the variables which have been recurrently analysed are the gender of the participants, their SES (assessed by the parents' profession), and their motivation to teach (which has been assessed by several items in our questionnaire). In our study, two variables have been added to analyse their possible influence on the choice to specialize in the international language (stays abroad in an English-speaking country for more than one month) or the regional language (having received previous training on Asturian in Primary or/and Secondary Education).

The sample shows a balanced distribution as regards the type of school participants attended before entering the university. It is worth noticing that there are differences between both groups as regards other variables: students choosing the English track have travelled to other countries more often than those taking Asturian; on the other hand, participants specialising in Asturian language have received previous training in Asturian. Also, there are differences in the SES of the families, as the profession of the parents seems to be higher in participants taking the English track³.

4.2. Research tool and data collection

The questionnaire includes two sections comprising 60 items (30 in each section), intended to collect data from participants' extrinsic and intrinsic motivation; the block focusing on intrinsic motivation surveyed students about their grounds to teach the language, their cultural links with the target language, or their possible contribution to develop attitudes and behaviours of their students. The section on extrinsic motivation asked participants about their perceptions on career prospects, job conditions, or difficulty of the degree, among other aspects. The survey has been specifically designed for the current research and it allows respondents to answer with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree," with "Not sure" as the midpoint.

The tool was validated by a group of 6 experts composed of university lecturers working in English Studies, Research Methods, and Psychology, who were directly engaged in the design of the new degrees adapted to the EHEA. After the experts' approval, a final validation was carried out through a pilot study with a group of students with similar characteristics to the research sample. The results obtained were satisfactory, and the tool was accepted as valid for the current research. To assess the reliability of the survey, Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha=0.79$) was estimated, showing a good level of homogeneity in the items of the questionnaire.

5. RESULTS

5.2. Result according to students' motivation

Table 3 shows the grouped means and standard deviations measuring the extrinsic and intrinsic motivation of participants.

³ Both parents' profession has been taken into account: parental profession has been clustered into "High", "Medium", and "Low" for the analysis. The number of parents is dissimilar, as some of the students reported having one parent only.

Table 3. Results according to students' motivation.

Type of motivation	English		Asturian		ANOVA	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	Sig
<i>Intrinsic</i>	59.10	7.51	59.57	6.55	0.98	.755
<i>Extrinsic</i>	42.53	6.68	41.65	6.84	.374	.542

According to the results, it can be stated that participants are mostly driven by intrinsic motivation irrespective of their language specialization. The variance analysis shows that there are no statistically significant differences between students choosing English and Asturian.

As regards intrinsic motivation, it is worth mentioning that the item with the highest mean value referred to their desire to promote positive language attitudes towards languages ($x=4.57$ for the English track; $x=4.65$ for the Asturian specialization). As for extrinsic motivation, the highest value in students taking the English specialization referred to the access to other training opportunities ($x=4.06$), while the highest score in the Asturian track is for fast access to the teaching profession ($x=4.05$).

5.2. Results according to type of school

When analysing the influence of the type of school on participants' motivation, having attended public or state-subsidized schools does not render statistically significant differences on students' extrinsic ($F=2.65$, Sig=.107) or intrinsic motivation ($F=.021$, Sig=.886).

5.3. Results according to prior language training in Asturian

Having received Asturian training before joining the university does not have an impact on participants' extrinsic ($F=2.41$, Sig=.124) or intrinsic ($F=.092$, Sig=.762) motivation. When analysing intragroup variance, no differences can be observed in the answers to the items of the survey in the English group; however, examining the individual response to the items of the questionnaire by Asturian participants, having attended Asturian lessons shows there are statistically significant differences on items 6 ("I consider the Asturian specialization is socially recognized and has prestige"; $F=4.35$, Sig=.044), 8 ("As a teacher of Asturian I will be able to contribute to promote the cultural dimension of society"; $F=4.91$, Sig=.033).

5.4. Results according to stays abroad

Students who stayed more than 1 month in English-speaking countries render statistically significant differences when it comes to intrinsic motivation ($F=4.41$, Sig=.039), with students specializing in English language being more influenced by having visited other countries where Spanish is not the vehicular language. However, no differences were observed as regards extrinsic motivation ($F=.20$, Sig=.256).

5.5. Results according to parental socio-professional status

Statistically significant differences can be observed according to the profession of the parents on students' motivation (Table 4).

Table 4. Results according to grouped parental professional status.

Type of motivation	Parental status	Mean	Standard Error	ANOVA	
				F	Sig
Intrinsic	High	61.30	2.11		
	Medium	56.77	1.45	2.16	.121
	Low	59.87	.93		
Extrinsic	High	46.76	1.51		
	Medium	40.18	1.21	4.38	.015
	Low	41.81	.94		

The results of Table 4 show there is an impact of parental profession on participants' extrinsic motivation, although this variable does not render statistically significant differences when it comes to students' intrinsic motivation.

5.6. Results according to students' gender and age

No statistically significant results were obtained for the age or gender of participants.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The first objective of the current research was to determine if student's motivation is modelled by intrinsic or extrinsic elements. Our results confirm that the students in the 3rd year of Primary Education are mostly driven by intrinsic elements, which overcome extrinsic factors in most cases. Pre-service teachers participating in the study pursue a personal satisfaction when choosing their specialization and not a return on investment. In this sense, our results concur with previous studies analysing the motivation of pre-service teachers and concluding that intrinsic/integrative motivation is more relevant than extrinsic/instrumental motivation in the decision to become teachers (Bertomeu, Canet, Gil & Jarabo, 2007; González López, 2005; González Sanmaned, 1995; Gratacós, 2014; Sánchez Lissen, 2009). However, our findings do not tally with the conclusions of the studies in Spain analysing the motivation of students to choose a specialization in the new degrees, which established that they were mainly driven by extrinsic factor -i.e., employability- (García Jiménez & Lorente García, 2014). Our results also contradict the findings of Herrada Valverde and Herrada Valverde (2012), who reported that foreign language teachers showed the highest

values in extrinsic motivation. However, it should be noted that our research analyses two groups of language teachers and does not establish a comparison with other non-language specializations (Physical Education, etc.).

The second objective was to examine possible differences between pre-service teachers specializing in the international language and the regional one. Pre-service teachers of English and Asturian are committed towards promoting positive language attitudes towards their respective target language, they enjoy teaching socio-cultural elements, and consider that they can contribute to the social, cultural, intellectual, and personal development of their future students. Specifically, they enjoy working with children, and consider that by teaching English/Asturian they will contribute to the well-being and progress of society, two clear indicators of intrinsic motivation (Gratacós, 2014; Herrada Valverde & Herrada Valverde, 2012).

Surprisingly, when examining the performance of each group separately, the analysis does not render statistically significant differences. This fact leads us to dismiss our initial hypothesis, where we predicted that participants studying to become teachers of Asturian would report a more intimate and emotional connection with the local language of their region, showing higher levels of intrinsic motivation. Our findings underline that students in both groups show high degrees of intrinsic motivation and no differences can be established between pre-service teachers specializing in the global and the regional language. This result partially contradicts Lasagabaster (2003), and Bernaus *et al.* (2004), who report on a clear instrumental motivation of Basque and Catalan learners towards English; however, it has to be noted that our study does not specifically address language attitudes towards the international/regional language, but rather the motivation of pre-service teachers to specialize in the teaching of the language. All in all, our results support Dörnyei's claim that a blending of integrative and instrumental motivation towards English may be rising as a result of globalization (2005: 97).

The rationale to explain the lack of dissimilarities may be found in the way English is perceived today by many non-native speakers. Clearly, the global presence of English and its influence in key strategic areas such as economy, education, and technology have contributed to reinforce its position of supremacy in the 21st century and its role as the language to be learned for international communication (Jenkins, 2009; McKenzie, 2010; Seidlhofer, 2004). Furthermore, English is nowadays *understood* by many citizens as the *global* language, and there is progressive disassociation to a particular culture or country - mainly, the US and the UK - to become an international language (so native speakers no longer *possess* the language, and non-native speakers can develop integrative motivation towards it). Second, since we are dealing with a young population, the pervasive presence of English in the audiovisual/entertainment industry, and the technological possibilities available to citizens today, make it easier to consume products in an original version (e.g., video-on-demand), a habit that could have an impact on the development of attitudes towards the language.

Our third objective concerned students' motivation with the established variables: gender, age, SES, type of school, stays abroad, and previous training on Asturian. Contrary to prior studies (see, for instance, Gratacós, 2014: 273), our results do not relate students intrinsic

or extrinsic motivation with the age or the gender of the participants (which agrees with García Jiménez & Lorente García, 2014); similarly, the type of school of participants does not seem to have an impact on their motivation to select a particular language track. However, visiting other countries is a determining factor that seems to stimulate the development of intrinsic motivation in pre-service teachers of English, with participants having spent more than 1 month in an English-speaking country consistently showing better results. This fact suggests that the real contact with the target language (and culture) boosts the emotional and personal linkages of prospective teachers with the L2.

As regards attendance in Asturian classes in Primary or Secondary Education, our findings do not render significant differences in students' motivation; however, it should be noted that participants having received training on Asturian do have a better perception on the social prestige of the profession of Asturian teaching.

It is worth mentioning that the SES of the participants' parents may contribute to model the extrinsic motivation of some of the future teachers; in particular, subjects coming from more favoured social groups report higher levels of extrinsic motivation than their counterparts belonging to middle or lower classes. This result may suggest that parents from higher social status instruct their children to award more relevance to instrumental elements (e.g. career prospects and the professional future) when choosing their specialization.

The uniqueness of the present study is that it explores the motivation of pre-service teachers in the new degrees of Primary Education adapted to the EHEA; moreover, our research focuses on the language tracks, analysing the grounds to choose between the foreign language and the regional one, concluding that no differences can be determined since both groups pursue intrinsic motivation elements: pre-service teachers' decisions are based on intrinsic motivation, and language teachers make their choices according to their vocation over other instrumental factors, irrespective of the language they are intended to teach.

As in any research, the results of our study should be taken with caution, since the sample of our research is limited (although it covers the population under study); also, the fact that no statistically significant differences were found according to the age or gender of students should be replicated by longitudinal investigations, or research scrutinizing larger samples (and less heterogeneous groups, since the sample of the paper was rather homogeneous as regards the age of the participants).

Prospective research lines may include longitudinal studies, and qualitative research analysing the narratives of pre-service teachers, in-depth interviews, and focus groups aiming to progress in the understanding of the motivations of students willing to become language teachers.

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