realia
Research in Education and learning Innovation Archives

Spring (January - June) No. 32. Pp. 36–56 / eISSN: 2659-9031 / DOI: 10.7203/realia.32.27546

ARTICLE/ OPEN ACCESS

Language learning among higher education students: an analysis on motivation

El aprendizaje de idiomas entre los estudiantes de enseñanza superior: un análisis desde la motivación

L'aprenentatge d'idiomes entre els estudiants d'ensenyament superior: una anàlisi des de la motivació

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Received: 10/20/2023 | **Accepted**: 01/08/2024 | **Published**: 01/22/2024

ABSTRACT: Intrinsic motivation in language learning is ideal to attain successful foreign language learning according to experts (Del-Castillo, 2010; Gilakjani, Leong, & Sabouri, 2012). In order to measure its impact at university level, this paper shows the results of a quantitative study conducted at KU Leuven during the academic year 2021-2022 on motivation in foreign language learning. A total of 479 students participated in a survey designed for this purpose. The methodology was based on a multivariate analysis using the statistical package SPSS v. 25. The research findings show that university students have essentially instrumental motivation for learning foreign languages (FL), which implies that their desire to acquire a second language (L2) is limited to practical purposes. On the other hand, the study has identified a representative segment of students, referred to as "incidental students", who are characterised by not having any clear motivation (neither instrumental nor integrative) for FL. The results lead to recommendations for curricular adaptation to enhance intrinsic motivation in foreign language teaching and learning at university level.

KEYWORDS: motivation; survey; language learning; second language; university education

RESUMEN: La motivación intrínseca en el aprendizaje de idiomas extranjeros es la más deseable para su éxito según los expertos (Del-Castillo, 2010; Gilakjani et al., 2012). Para medir su impacto en el nivel universitario, este trabajo muestra los resultados de un estudio cuantitativo realizado en la KU Leuven durante el curso 2021-2022 sobre la motivación en el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras en el que participaron 479 estudiantes que fueron encuestados. La metodología de estudio se basó en un análisis multivariante utilizando el paquete estadístico SPSS v. 25. Los resultados de la investigación muestran que los estudiantes universitarios tienen una motivación esencialmente instrumental para aprender lenguas extranjeras (FL), lo que implica que el deseo de adquirir una segunda lengua (L2) se limita a fines prácticos. Por otra parte, el estudio ha identificado un segmento representativo de estudiantes, denominados "estudiantes incidentales", que se caracterizan por no tener una motivación clara (ni instrumental ni integradora) para la FL. Los resultados permiten realizar recomendaciones de adaptación curricular para fomentar la motivación intrínseca en el aprendizaje de

Citation: Rodríguez Muñoz, M. L., Buyse, K. & Pérez Gálvez, J. C. (2024). Language learning among higher education students: an analysis on motivation. *Research in Education and Learning Innovation Archives*, 32,36–56. 10.7203/realia.32.27546

Funding: None informed

idiomas en este nivel de la enseñanza-aprendizaje.

PALABRAS CLAVE: motivación; encuesta; aprendizaje de idiomas; segunda lengua; educación universitaria

RESUM: La motivació intrínseca en l'aprenentatge d'idiomes estrangers és la més desitjable per al seu èxit segons els experts (Del-Castillo, 2010; Gilakjani et al., 2012). Per a mesurar el seu impacte a escala universitària, aquest treball mostra els resultats d'un estudi quantitatiu realitzat a la KU Leuven durant el curs 2021-2022 sobre la motivació en l'aprenentatge de llengües estrangeres, en què van participar 479 estudiants que van ser enquestats. La metodologia d'estudi es va basar en una anàlisi multivariant que va usar el paquet estadístic SPSS 25. Els resultats de la investigació mostren que els estudiants universitaris tenen una motivació essencialment instrumental per a aprendre llengües estrangeres (FL), cosa que implica que el desig d'adquirir una segona llengua (L2) es limita a fins pràctics. D'altra banda, l'estudi ha identificat un segment representatiu d'estudiants, anomenats "estudiants incidentals", que es caracteritzen per no tenir una motivació clara (ni instrumental ni integradora) per a la FL. Els resultats permeten fer recomanacions d'adaptació curricular per fomentar la motivació intrínseca en l'aprenentatge d'idiomes en aquest nivell de l'ensenyament-aprenentatge.

PARAULES CLAUS: motivació; enquesta; aprenentatge de llengües; segona llengua; educació universitària

Practitioner Notes

What is already known about this topic

- Many studies underline the importance of intrinsic motivation for success in learning a foreign language, since intrinsically motivated students tend to choose creative tasks that involve a greater challenge. Nevertheless, many studies show a markedly extrinsic nature of motivation in the higher education classroom consubstantial with the university environment that is focused on the students' employability.

What this paper adds

- This paper applies a quantitative survey-based methodology to identify clusters differentiated by the kind of motivation of university students in the Foreign Language (FL) classroom.
- This paper determines the most important characteristics of students in KU Leuven (Belgium) in relation to FL learning.

Implications for practice and/or policy

- This study allows future curricular adaptations depending on the behaviour and real needs of different groups of university students regarding FL learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of foreign languages (FL) is not just an educational complement but a requisite to achieve full professional and personal development. In this vein, Randstad (2017) reveals that knowledge of English increases the possibilities of getting a job and that 70% of executive jobs demand mastery of a second language (L2), generally English. Indeed, knowledge of a L2 has become a key distinguishing factor in the selection procedure, exponentially increasing the possibility of getting a job for all kinds of profiles all over the world. In particular, studies such as the one by Chávez-Zambano, Saltos-Vivas, and Saltos-Dueñas (2017) recognise the vital importance of learning English at the university stage, considering the international context in which we work.

Furthermore, the European Union itself imposes an educational model based on competences, noticeably communication in a FL (EC, 2009). This factor is considered so important for overcoming international barriers that in 2001 said institution unified FL learning levels via the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

in order to streamline mobility and recognition of certain linguistic skills without the need for validations in different countries. Hence, in 2015, experts of the European Commission, published a report on the link between languages and employability (de Sousa, Costa, Flisi, & Calvo, 2015) and in 2018 the Council of the EU launched a recommendation insisting on the importance for all students of "multilingual competence" for employment, so that young people would be able to "contribute to cross-border communication and mobility" (EU, 2018). Apart from the standard of the Common Framework, it underlined the concept of "raising awareness of language" in education and training, the need for mobility for FL teaching staff and encouragement of innovative, inclusive and multilingual pedagogies. Nevertheless, many authors (see (Gal, 2012; Moore, 2011, 2015)) claim that the concept of "normatively promoted multilingualism" hides a strong commitment to the teaching of English as the only demanded foreign language as previously shown by Randstad (2017) and Chávez-Zambano et al. (2017). In fact, some researchers such as Kubota (2020) show that the discussion on translingualism and plurality does not correspond to the practice of real multilingualism and the fact that English is a symbol of prestige and professional status hinders the multilingual richness of multicultural societies such as the United States. That can also be applied to the European Union.

Moreover, it can be seen that the European education system has become "commercialised" and aims to "adapt the supply of competences to the needs of the job market" (Nowicka, 2009, as quoted in Santos Ortega & Muñoz-Rodríguez, 2015). Furthermore, the idea of "employability" puts the burden of job creation on young people: it is no longer about getting into an external job market, but taking up a role in the market and creating the conditions for employment. To do so, young people have to be "cosmopolitan"(Nowicka, 2009, as quoted in Santos Ortega & Muñoz- Rodríguez, 2015), open to contact, try out new things and emigrate to foster their cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) as the idea of "multilinguism" and "linguistic diversity" promoted by the Council of Europe (2018) is very much linked to employability. Beyond the structural plans that the European policy sets out for fostering FL learning, especially in English, and beyond the characteristics typical of the global economy that make cross-border movement of labour necessary, it is the citizen's view of acquiring a new language and their motivation to do so that is of paramount importance.

So, in order to identify the type of motivation shown by university students in learning foreign languages and adapt didactic methodologies to enhance this vital competence linked to employability, a quantitative study on motivation in KU Leuven was conducted.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

One way of making European foreign language policies and recommendations connected to employability effective is to increase young citizens' motivation (Dörnyei, 1998; Gilakjani et al., 2012). In fact, numerous studies show that personal factors "that affect students to a greater or lesser extent" affect their learning (Dörnyei, 2005), such as personality, aptitude, attitude, motivation, and learning styles and strategies (Fielden-Burns & Rico-Garcia, 2017). In fact, motivation itself can be broken down into cognitive, affective, conative and evaluative components (Uribe, Gutierrez, & Madrid, 2008). Moreover, the literature points to the affective aspect favouring acquisition of cognitive skills in FL learning (Saito, Dewaele, Abe, & In'nami, 2018; Saito, Dewaele, & Hanzawa, 2017). Although new qualitative proposals have appeared, motivation has been one of the most fertile areas in quantitative research (Boo, Dörnyei, & Ryan, 2015). Moreover, the opposite negative motivational force is known as demotivation. This phenomenon has shown strong enough to difficult and even prevent students from learning a foreign languages as shown by authors such as Kikuchi

and Sakai (2009) and Santos (2019, 2020) . So, to promote motivation and avoid demotivation it is a legitime interest.

Regarding motivation, different types have been identified such as intrinsic as opposed to extrinsic (Brown, 2000; Matsuzaki-Carreira, 2005), and the instrumental as opposed to integrative kinds. Both pairs of concepts obey a social psychological model that has inspired numerous studies on motivation throughout the 20th century (Boo et al., 2015) and set out the basis for more sophisticated motivation approaches in the 21st century such as the Directed Motivational Current (DCM) (Dörnyei, Macintyre, & Henry, 2014; Dörnyei, Muir, & Ibrahim, 2014; Muir, 2020) that includes positive emotionality (linked to integrative motivation) among the 4 dimensions composing this motivation framework.

The intrinsic (integrative) and extrinsic (instrumental) motivations are defined in different ways. Kruglanski (1975) considers them to be similar to "endogenous or exogenous motivation", in other words, the kind for learning a foreign language as an end in itself or to achieve a different objective. Heider (1958), on the other hand, defined a "scale of the perceived locus of causality" or PLOC), referring to the actions or results that may be perceived as being produced by one's own free will (intrinsic motivation) or as a result of impersonal causes (extrinsic motivation). Put another way, intrinsic motivation is the natural tendency to overcome challenges to achieve personal interests using our capacities (Woolfolk, 2007).

Many studies underline the importance of intrinsic motivation for success in learning a foreign language, since intrinsically motivated students tend to choose creative tasks that involve a greater challenge. They experience more pleasure and are more actively involved in the learning both in and outside the university (Ryan and Powelson 1991 quoted in Merlin 2003; Merlin, 2003; Ryan and Deci, 2000; Stipek, 2002, quoted in Merlin, 2003; Del-Castillo, 2010; Gilakjani et al., 2012)).

Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, also known as "instrumental" since it is a "means" to achieve a social or occupational end, depends on external rewards such as gaining access to certain study materials, passing an exam, attaining an academic level or job promotion. This type of motivation is consubstantial with university study itself, since the skills obtained will allow for a better professional and personal future (Gardner and Lambert, 1972, quoted in Williams and Burden 1997; Bañuelos-Márquez 1990). Once the end is achieved, this motivation ceases, though the importance of the motivation per se in a student will help them persevere in studying languages: a motivated student learns better than one without motivation (Harmer, 2007).

3. REVISITING METHODOLOGIES OF STUDY

Many experiments have been carried out on the importance of motivation and the kinds of motivation in FL teaching via different materials such as surveys, semantic differential questionnaires, interviews, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies, mixed questionnaires with closed questions and a Likert scale, questionnaires before and after an intervention, complementary quantitative and qualitative tests (e.g. questionnaire and diary or interview).

Surveys, for example, have been carried out with university students (Kaneko & Kawaguchi, 2010; Kouritzin, Piquemal, & Renaud, 2009; Santos-Ortega & Muñoz-Rodríguez, 2015; Taguchi, Magid, & Papi, 2009), secondary school students (Gonzalez, 2010; Huguet & Janés, 2008; Hussain & Masum, 2016), primary school students (Adachi, 2015; Matsuzaki-Carreira, 2005), students of English for specific purposes (Cotterall, 1999; McEown, Sawaki, & Harada, 2017; Trinder, 2013) and even with the teachers themselves (Pourfeiz, 2016; Ruesch, Bown, & Dewey, 2012), but with different bases and focuses. It should be noted that the one by Buyse, Barrientos-Báez, and Sánchez-Verdejo (2019) was carried out in the institution that is the subject of

our study, researching the effect of motivational matters on students on a course on mastering internal communication in a FL to measure the impact of their "future me" (adopted by KU Leuven in its 2014-2017 strategic plan) to motivate the students.

On the other hand, questionnaires such as the one by Franco (2006) are more qualitative and serve to delve into the perception of the FL culture and community through each student's own beliefs. Though it is based on the psychological test by Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum (1957), it was taken up again by Dörnyei and Taguchi (2009).

Finally, a mixed method allows the matter of motivation in the FL classroom to be tackled with an integrating approach. Hence, in Busse and Walter (2013) and Öztürk and Gurbuz (2013), the interview and the questionnaire are combined, whereas Sundqvist and Sylvén (2014) merge the questionnaire with a diary to measure FL students' motivation and attitudes in Sweden.

Given this background, the fundamental goal in this work is to show the results of a study intended to determine the most important characteristics of university students in relation to FL learning. The intention is to identify clusters differentiated by the kind of motivation the students show as regards FL learning as the cornerstone in interpreting quantitative results and future curricular adaptations depending on the behaviour and real needs of different groups of students. To do so, a quantitative survey-based methodology was applied to use multivariate statistics to obtain a significative segmentation based on the different types of motivation identified in the foreign language classroom. The research was based on a case study conducted on students from KU Leuven (Belgium).

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Given this background, the fundamental goal in this work is to show the results of a study intended to determine the most important characteristics of students in KU Leuven (Belgium) in relation to FL learning. The intention is to identify clusters differentiated by the kind of motivation the students show as regards FL learning as the cornerstone in interpreting quantitative results and future curricular adaptations depending on the behaviour and real needs of different groups of students.

5. MATERIALS AND METHODS

5.1. Design of the survey

The analysis is based on a questionnaire (Appendix A) carried out with 479 bachelor's degree students in KU Leuven. Using an initial survey, a pilot study was carried out with an initial sample of similar characteristics to the final sample, and the definitive format was achieved.

The survey used is based on previous studies mentioned in the bibliography, but with a greater level of concentration as regards the profile in the sample (only one institution and country) and fewer questions. It is designed with five themed blocks: FL preferences (question 2), language motivation in studying FL (question), learning strategies (questions 1, 4, 5 and 9), perception on linguistic competences and CEFR level officially accredited (questions 6 and 7) and FL learning usefulness (question 8). Questions 3 ("Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 the main reasons why you are studying and/or want to improve your knowledge of a foreign language") and 8 ("Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how useful it is for you to know and/or learn a foreign language") were key to clusterise the sample on the basis of motivation types as indicated inTable 3. In particular, closed answers to question 8 are divided in instrumental motivation type ("to get around when travelling abroad", "it's a requirement to obtain a university degree" and "it's useful for my future professional career") and integrative motivation

one ("I like knowing and speaking other languages", "to be able to talk and interact with people from other countries", "as a hobby").

The remaining questions were aimed at obtaining data from each subject's profile[1], namely: sex (question 10), age (question 11), work and study balance (question 12), budget for leisure (question 13) and city of residence (question 14). In total, 14 questions were made (Table 1).

Table 1. *Questions broken down in theme blocks. Source: authors*

Themed blocks	Question number
FL preferences	2
Motivation in studying FL	3
Learning strategies	1, 4, 5, 9
Perception on linguistic competences and CEFR level officially accredited	6, 7
FL learning usefulness	8
Sex	10
Age	11
Work and study balance	12
Budget for leisure	13
City of residence	14

In addition to closed questions, instructions were included so that the respondents could quantitatively evaluate (scoring from 1 to 5) the different items about FL study preferences, reasons for studying or perfecting the FL, perception of the importance of each of the linguistic skills, usefulness of learning the FL from the personal point of view and frequency of use or annual consumption of products aimed at practising the FL.

5.2. Gathering data

The participants in this study were bachelor's degree students from the campuses of Leuven (91.5%) and Cortrique (8.5%). In 2018-2019 KU Leuven did not have bachelor's degree programmes taught entirely in English, but they did have such master's and postgraduate ones, so the participants in the study had classes for their degrees in Dutch, the official language in Flanders. Nevertheless, English was a compulsory or optional course in many programmes.

A convenience sample was used: the subjects in the sample were available to complete the survey within a specific time and place (Finn, Elliott-White, & Walton, 2000). It was not stratified by gender, age or any other variable; the selection procedure was to survey those available to reply within 10 minutes. The rate of rejections of the questionnaire was low and insignificant for any variable. A total of 479 people (226 men/ 253 women) completed the survey in December 2018 on the official schedule for regular classes. They were young: 410 were 17-19 years old (85.9%); 58 were 20-22 years old (12.1%), 8 were 23-25 years old (1.7%) and 2 were 26 years old or older (0.4%). These data indicates that they mostly were 1^{st} and 2^{nd} year undergraduate programme students. The total number of students enrolled in the institution in the former academic year 2017/18 was 57,181 (see Table 2 and Table 6 for further information on the sample).

[1] Taguchi et al. (2009) also included this second section on the personal data of the participants in their survey in China, Japan and Iran with L2 adult students.

5.3. Data analysis

The following statistics were applied (SPSS v. 25): Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the questionnaire's internal consistency; a factorial analysis to find homogeneous groups from the point of view of motives for studying a language; hierarchical clustering and K-mean clustering to analyse the similarity or likeness between the participants; association statistics and measurements to study possible association patterns between variables based on a two-way contingency table; and post-hoc univariate ANOVA to contrast hypotheses about the means based on the variance analysis (post-hoc univariate ANOVA), making it possible to judge what mean specifically differs and thus keep a check on the error rate.

5.4. Sampling and sampling error

The specific context of our study was the students enrolled in the 2018/19 academic year. With 57,181 students registered for 2017/18, and approximating, if random probability sampling had been used in this study, the sampling error for a level of confidence of 95% would be ±4.46% (Table 2).

Table 2. Study specifications. Source: authors

Elements	Data
Students enrolled (2017/18 academic year)	57,181 students
Sample	479 surveys
Procedure	Convenience sampling
Period carried out	December 2018
Sampling error	± 4.46%
Level of confidence	95.0% p=q=0.5
Sampling control	Work supervised by the study's authors

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the final scale reached an acceptable value of 0.636. Morales-Vallejo, Urosa-Sanz, and Blanco-Blanco (2003) consider a value of 0.5 as the minimum for basic research, as in our case, and over 0.85 if it is a diagnostic study.

6. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

6.1. Motives or reasons for studying a FL

A study was carried out using a total of 479 valid surveys. In order to analyse and characterise their reasons for studying a FL, the subjects in the sample were asked to evaluate their preferences regarding different reasons on a 5-point Likert scale.

Using the preferences given, a factor analysis was carried out to extract two motivational dimensions related to studying a language as measured in question 3 on the basis of the opposition between intrinsic-integrating motivation and extrinsic-instrumental one as described in section 2. The two factors extracted explain 57.35% of the total variance. The satisfactory percentage of total variance is not determined precisely, though in social sciences a minimum threshold is usually established of 60% (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010) or 70-80% (Rietveld & Van Hout, 1993). In our case, the percentage is near the minimum threshold. Although the interest lies in the factorial scores arising from the components as a tool to establish the strength of the different motives or reasons, it is useful to characterise each one of the factors extracted.

Table 3. *Rotated component factor matrix: Motives for learning a foreign language. Source: authors*

Motives for learning	Components		Motivational dimensions
	1	2	
	0.814		
	0.806		Intrinsic - Integrating
	0.730		
		0.798	
		0.639	Extrinsic – Instrumental
		0.536	
Eigen values	2.800	1.161	
% explained variance	33.585	23.769	
% accumulated variance	33.585	57.354	
KMO	0.696		
	Chi-square = 453.446 sig < 0.001		

Extraction method: Principal component method. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser

The first of the factors explains 33% of the total variance of the matrix of motives for studying a FL. This factor has been catalogued in the literature as an intrinsic and integrating dimension on grouping together reasons that encourage students to act of their own accord and to integrate the language into their way of being and thinking. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient (0.722) for the three items in this dimension show the reliability of the subscale. The second factor shows greater preferences towards motives with the intention to achieve a skill that provides a practical benefit. This dimension has been called extrinsic-instrumental, and explains 23% of the total variance of the matrix of motivational preferences, also giving a reliable subscale—Cronbach's alpha (0.611).

The results obtained enable the university students' motives for studying a FL to be elucidated, which are diverse and make it possible to segment the students. As it is advisable to use a hierarchical grouping method followed by a non-hierarchical method (Hair et al., 2010), the complete linkage and Ward method were used—both techniques are predominant in the literature on segmentation (Dolnicar, 2002) —initially using squared Euclidean distances to identify possible data clusters. The aim is to identify groups of students who are very similar in terms of the two motivational dimensions extracted. An examination of the resulting timeline clusters and dendrograms suggests up to five different cluster solutions (Figure 1). A more detailed examination of the group assignation and size of the group, in addition to the subsequent analysis via a non-hierarchical K-means clustering algorithm, confirmed that the solution of three clusters was the most suitable one.

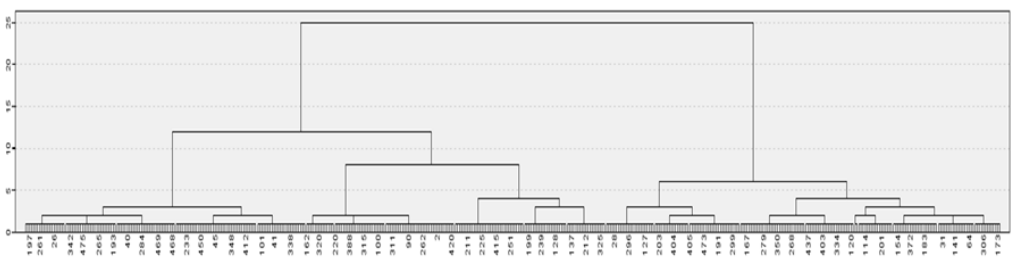

Figure 1. *Ward's linkage dendrogram. Source: authors*

Table 4 shows the characterisation of the clusters based on the means of the students' reasons for studying a language as indicated in question 3 (themed block "Motivation in studying a FL"). The F statistic from ANOVA shows compares the means and shows they are not equal—the critical level associated with this statistic is lower than 0.05—but does not clarify where the detected differences lie. In order to know which mean differs from another, a particular type of contrast was applied called "post-hoc multiple comparisons" or "a posteriori comparisons" (Bonferroni test). The F statistic from ANOVA is based on meeting two suppositions: normality and homoscedasticity; while the robust Levene homogeneity test allows for the assumption that population variances are the same for each of the motives for studying languages.

Table 4. *Characterisation of clusters using the mean of items of motives for learning a foreign language. Source: authors*

Motives for learning	Clusters of belonging			ANOVA	
	Instrumental	Integrative Instrumental	Incidental	F	Sig.
	Mean	Mean	Mean		
1. I want to know and speak other languages	3.72(*)	4.76(*)	3.08(*)	134.640	< 0.001
2. Hobby	1.89	3.48(*)	1.73	161.836	< 0.001
3. Converse and interact with people from other countries	4.15(*)	4.85(*)	3.58(*)	104.267	< 0.001
4. Requisite to obtain a university degree	4.30(*)	3.27(*)	2.97(*)	102.633	< 0.001
5. Useful for my future career	4.64	4.54	3.72(*)	84.355	< 0.001
6. Cope on travels abroad	4.35	4.35	3.45(*)	56.060	< 0.001

(*) The values show significant differences in two of the means of the three post-hoc analysis clusters from ANOVA. In order to compare the significant differences between the different means, the Bonferroni test was applied.

Table 5 was drawn up in order to help characterise the clusters. It summarises the information and the statistical analyses based on different dimensions.

Table 5. *Characterisation of clusters using the mean of motivational dimensions for learning a foreign language. Source: authors*

Motivational dimensions	Clusters of belonging			ANOVA	
	Instrumental	Integrative Instrumental	Incidental		
	Mean	Mean	Mean	F	Sig.
Intrinsic - Integrating	3.25(*)	4.37(*)	2.80(*)	271.977	< 0.001
Extrinsic – Instrumental	4.43(*)	4.05(*)	3.38(*)	205.296	< 0.001

(*) The values show significant differences in two of the means of the three post-hoc analysis clusters from ANOVA. In order to compare the significant differences between the different means, the Bonferroni test was applied. In order to compare the significant differences between the different means, the Games-Howell test was applied.

The first of the clusters is the most numerous one. It is characteristic for being linked to the extrinsic-instrumental dimension, which accounts for 46.8% of the sample size. As a result, this segment has been catalogued as "instrumental students". The second cluster accounts for 28.4% and is characterised by showing high values for the items linked to the two dimensions. This group has been catalogued as "integrative-instrumental students". The third cluster takes up 24.8% and shows medium or low scores in each of the motivational items. This group has been named "incidental

students", in other words, those with a "non-intentional" FL learning process.

Hence, the segments identified enable it to be determined that, taking into account the motives for learning a language, there are three types of student: instrumental, integrative-instrumental and "incidental".

6.2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample and motivation clusters

Table 6 gives the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants globally and by identified segments. Out of the 479 people interviewed, 47.2% were men and 52.8% women, with no significant differences in terms of the groups or segments identified. The participants are very young. Indeed, eight out of ten students are aged under 20 years, with significant differences by segments (F-Snedecor coefficient ANOVA = 7.073; p = 0.001). These differences can be seen in the integrative-instrumental cluster, where the mean age is significantly higher than in the other groups. The level of insertion in employment among the students interviewed is very low: only three out of ten students stated that they combine their studies with a remunerated activity.

Table 6. *Socio-demographic profile of the participants. Source: authors*

Variables	Categories	Clusters of belonging			Total
		Instrumental	Integrative Instrumental	Incidental	
Sex (N = 479)	Man	47.3%	36.0%	59.7%	47.2%
	Woman	52.7%	64.0%	40.3%	52.8%
Age (N = 479)	17-19 years	88.9%	77.9%	89.1%	85.8%
	20-22 years	10.7%	16.9%	9.2%	12.1%
	23-25 years	0.4%	3.7%	1.7%	1.7%
	26 years or more	—	1.5%	16.9%	0.4%
Job market insertion (N = 479)	Does not work	66.1%	69.2%	69.7%	67.9%
	Only weekends	30.8%	27.9%	26.9%	29.0%
	Part-time	3.1%	2.9%	3.4%	3.1%

6.3. Study preferences

In order to analyse the students' preferences as regards studying or learning a FL, the students were asked to give an evaluation for eight languages in question number 2 (as indicated in Table 7). Cronbach's alpha for the final scale gave a value of 0.626, indicating a meritorious internal consistency among the elements. The critical level (p) associated with the F statistic (1,575.174) is lower than 0.001, so the hypothesis that the means of the elements are equal can be rejected. Among the languages proposed, English stands out as the most highly valued, followed by far by French and Spanish. The other languages (Russian, Chinese and Arabic) received lower evaluations.

The integrative-instrumental segment is characteristic for giving the highest scores in each of the languages considered, significantly greater than the other two segments in the cases of Spanish, Italian and German.

The results show that the students' preferences for studying one language or another are significantly different, with the highest preferences among students whose motivations for studying a FL are more heterogeneous.

Table 7. Preferences for languages to study or learn. Source: authors

Languages	Clusters of belonging			ANOVA	
	Instrumental	Integrative Instrumental	Incidental	F	Sig
	Mean	Mean	Mean		
English	4.52	4.52	4.16(*)	9.091	< 0.001
French	4.00	4.11	3.41(*)	18.892	< 0.001
Spanish	3.15	3.63(*)	2.87	11.711	< 0.001
Italian	2.86	3.42(*)	2.62	13.740	< 0.001
German	2.75(*)	3.12(*)	2.39(*)	11.433	< 0.001
Russian	1.86	2.25	1.94	4.265	< 0.015
Chinese	1.85	2.12	1.69	4.662	< 0.001
Arabic	1.56	1.80	1.66	2.289	< 0.103

(*) The values show significant differences in twoof the means of the three post-hoc analysis clusters from ANOVA. In order tocompare the significant differences between the different means, the Bonferronitest was applied.

6.4. Study time and learning options

The weekly time the participants dedicate to studying a language is quite low (Table 8): only two out of ten interviewees say they spend more than four hours a week, with the integrative-instrumental students showing the greatest, significant dedication (F. Snedecor coefficient ANOVA = 11.374; p = 0.001). As for options for learning or perfecting the language, the students' preferred option is for travel or periods abroad, followed by far by conversation with friends and acquaintances, and self-study—this question has multiple options, with the result greater than 100.

Table 8. Data on studying and learning languages from the sample. Source: authors

Variables	Categories	Clusters of belonging			Total
		Instrumental	Integrative Instrumental	Incidental	
Weekly hours of study (N = 479)	None	1.3%	3.7%	6.7%	3.3%
	Less than 1 hour	16.1%	11.8%	20.2%	15.9%
	From 1 to 2 hours	35.2%	25.6%	31.1%	31.5%
	From 2 to 4 hours	29.9%	22.1%	26.9%	26.9%
	From 4 to 6 hours	4.5%	8.1%	6.7%	6.1%
	From 6 to 8 hours	3.6%	5.9%	2.5%	4.0%
	More than 8 hours	9.4%	22.8%	5.9%	12.3%
Learning method (N = 479)	Travel or periods abroad	62.1%	68.4%	57.1%	62.6%
	Talking with friends and acquaintances	45.5%	60.3%	43.7%	49.3%
	Studying alone	38.4%	52.9%	47.1%	44.7%
	Academy or language centre	34.4%	47.1%	35.3%	38.2%
	Private teacher with a group	30.4%	22.8%	32.8%	28.8%
	Private teacher individually	5.4%	8.1%	5.0%	6.1%
Monthly spending on learning (N = 479)	Less than €50	78.6%	72.8%	84.0%	78.2%
	From €51 to €70	7.1%	4.4%	5.9%	6.1%

Continued on next page

Table 8 continued

Variables	Categories	Clusters of belonging			Total
		Instrumental	Integrative Instrumental	Incidental	
	From €71 to €90	4.9%	6.6%	4.2%	5.2%
	From €91 to €110	2.7%	5.9%	3.4%	3.8%
	From €111 to €130	1.8%	4.4%	0.8%	2.3%
	From €131 to €150	0.9%	—	—	0.4%
	More than €150	4.0%	5.9%	1.7%	4.0%

Regarding the learning options, participants were asked to indicate their approximate monthly spending. The mean amount they stated they spent on language learning is low, coming to €53 a month on average. Even so, there are significant differences by cluster of belonging (F-Snedecor coefficient ANOVA = 3.903; p = 0.021).

6.5. Components and dimensions of the language

In order to know the students' perception of the greater or lesser usefulness of the components or dimensions of the language, participants were asked to evaluate five language components and skills, namely: conversation, oral comprehension, reading comprehension, writing and grammar in question number 8 (as indicated in Table 9). Cronbach's alpha for the final scale gave a value of 0.650, indicating a meritorious internal consistency among the elements in the scale. Among the most noteworthy dimensions, conversation and oral comprehension stand out. The components least valued by the participants were grammar and writing. The analysis by segments reveals a different perception among incidental students, however.

Table 9. *Perceptions of dimensions of the language. Source: authors*

Dimensions of the language	Clusters of belonging				ANOVA	
	Instrumental	Integrative Instrumental	Incidental	Total	F	Sig.
Conversation	4,76(*)	4.82(*)	4.51(*)	4.72	10.732	< 0.001
Oral comprehension	4.32(*)	4.38(*)	4.01(*)	4.26	8.565	< 0.001
Reading comprehension	4.02(*)	4.18(*)	3.66(*)	3.97	13.963	< 0.001
Writing	3.67(*)	3.97(*)	3.29(*)	3.66	17.292	< 0.001
Grammar	3.57(*)	3.96(*)	3.10(*)	3.57	23.784	< 0.001

(*) The values show significant differences in two of the means of the three post-hoc analysis clusters from ANOVA. In order to compare the significant differences between the different means, the Bonferroni test was applied.

The results show that the perception of components or dimensions of the language is much higher among students whose motivations for studying the language are more heterogeneous.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Taking into account the results arising from the analysis, we can conclude the following.

The students that participated in the present study from KU Leuven show an essentially instrumental motivation for learning a foreign language: the most numerous cluster (46.8%) is characteristic for a clear extrinsic-instrumental motivation; the second (28.4 %) for having both instrumental and intrinsic-integrating motivations; and

the third (24.8%) for giving medium or low scores in each of the motivation dimensions. This group has been named "incidental" students: in other words, their FL learning process is non-intentional. Hence, the desire to acquire a L2 is limited to practical ends, whether using other the language as a tool for study or to get a better job. For this reason, the desire to know and speak other languages, converse and interact with other people or simply as a hobby are all minority motives for studying a FL among these students. These results are in line with the dominant neoliberal ideologies as established in studies described in section 1 such as Shin and Park (2015).

No noteworthy differences have been detected among the groups identified with the following variables: gender, insertion into employment (little), stated spending on language learning (low), preferential order in studying languages (the highest scored is English, followed by far by French and Spanish), and options for learning or perfecting the language (the preferred option being travel or periods abroad, followed by far by conversation with friends and acquaintances, and self-study). However, the students in the integrative-instrumental cluster are significantly older, which may be why they also give the highest scores for each of the languages considered (being significantly greater than the other two clusters for Spanish, Italian and German) and in hours of study (which are relatively few in general).

On the other hand, conversation and oral comprehension stand out among the most highly valued language components and skills, with grammar and writing being the least valued. The analysis by segments reveals that all of the components considered are significantly much less valued by the segment of incidental students, with no sharp differences between the other two segments.

The results back those obtained by other studies such as the one by Bañuelos-Márquez (1990) and Gardner & Lambert (1972 quoted in Williams and Burden, 1997), since they show a markedly extrinsic nature consubstantial with the university environment. On the other hand, the hypothesis at the outset based on the work by Masgoret and Gardner (2003) is refuted, which pointed to a predominance of intrinsic or integrative motivation in multilingual environments. The participants belong to bachelor's degree study levels, so they are taught completely in Dutch in a monolingual environment. More than a vital necessity, languages respond to instrumental aspects such as attaining a university education level or access to jobs in the country's capital city, with a heavy francophone component. Thus, multilinguism is not practised as a purpose in itself but as a key requirement to employability. Some author considers that this instrumentalization of a so-called multilingual society just serve to protect the linguistic statu quo as Kubota (2020) pointed out in his study on the notion of non-performativity of diversity work and "the tendency of discussing translingual practices without enacting them".

Nevertheless, the rate of students that show both types of motivation is not to be disdained, coming to 28.4%, so endogenous factors also play a role in learning. As indicated by previous studies (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Stipek, 2002, quoted in Merlin, 2003; Ryan & Powelson, 1991 quoted in Merlin, 2003; Del Castillo, 2010; Gilakjani et al., 2012) intrinsically motivated students tend to choose more creative and complex activities, so linguistic growth is greater. This explains why students in this cluster, who are older, increase their range of languages, as well as the hours of study. This type of motivation is the most noteworthy in the FL classroom, so the policy of "future me" stated in KU Leuven and found in the study by Buyse et al. (2019) should be developed with greater determination in that institution's language classrooms so as to improve the results of the learning. One option would be to share the results of this survey with the teachers involved and draw up a coordinated strategic plan that includes a prior study on the affective relationship and prejudices held by the students regarding FL acquisition in order to adapt the curricular and extracurricular methods accordingly. For example, greater emphasis could be placed on aspects more highly valued by the

students such as oral comprehension and expression (point 6.5 andTable 9) and the desire to acquire active communication skill in realistic situations, such as special days or trips that generate new, contextualised personal learning experiences.

It would also be worth carrying out a second, more cultural and qualitative study to complement this one such as the one by Franco (2006) to learn the reasons holding back the incidental group's learning or the reasons that drain internal motivation from 46.8% of all those participants, in order to determine what negative aspects of the present me and prospective me hinder the involvement of the desire to learn languages.

Finally, we consider that future research should indicate if such relationships between attitude and motivation bear a direct relationship with linguistic competence and if they could be generalised to slightly different populations such as from other campuses, universities or even European countries. In this sense, by replicating this quantitative survey-based study in other contexts and triangulating it with a qualitative one could help to determine FL students' needs and real motivational dimensions in a more precise form and adjust teaching interventions accordingly.

A. APPENDIX

KU LEUVEN

UNIVERSIDAD D CORDOBA

Foreign Language Learning

The KU Leuven in Belgium and Universidad de Córdoba in Spain are conducting a research study on foreign language learning among students at the KU Leuven

Date: / / 2018

1. **How many hours a week do you usually spend learning a foreign language?**

1 ❑ I don't spend any time at all learning a foreign language

2 ❑ Less than 1 hour **4** ❑ 2–4 hours **6** ❑ 6–8 hours

3 ❑ 1–2 hours **5** ❑ 4–6 hours **7** ❑ More than 8 hours

2. **Indicate on a scale of 1-5 which of the following foreign language(s) you prefer to learn (1=*very low* and 5=*very high*).**

Foreign languages	1	2	3	4	5
German					
Arabic					
Chinese					
French					
English					
Italian					
Russian					
Spanish					
Other (indicate one):_____					
Other (indicate one):_____					

3. **Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 the main reasons why you are studying and/or want to improve your knowledge of a foreign language (1=*strongly disagree* and 5=*strongly agree*).**

Reasons for learning a foreign language	1	2	3	4	5
To get around when travelling abroad					
It's a requirement to obtain a university degree					
I like knowing and speaking other languages					
To be able to talk to and interact with people from other countries					
As a hobby					
It's useful for my future professional career					

1

Other (indicate):_____						
Other (indicate):_____						

4. **What do you do/have you done to study or improve your knowledge of a foreign language? <u>You can mark more than one option.</u>**

1 ❑ Attend a language school
2 ❑ Private lessons with a tutor
3 ❑ Group lessons with a tutor
4 ❑ Trips and/or stays abroad
5 ❑ Speak with friends and acquaintances
6 ❑ Self-taught
7 ❑ Others (indicate):_____

5. **If you attend a language school or have a tutor to study and/or improve a foreign language, indicate approximately <u>how much you spend each month on learning a language</u>.**

1 ❑ Less than €50
2 ❑ €51–€70
3 ❑ €71–€90
4 ❑ €91–€110
5 ❑ €111–€130
6 ❑ €131–€150
7 ❑ More than €150

6. **Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 <u>how important the following components</u> are in learning a foreign language (1=*not at all important* and 5=*very important*):**

Components to learn a foreign language	1	2	3	4	5
Reading					
Listening					
Speaking					
Writing					
Grammar					

7. **If you have an official certificate accrediting your competence in a foreign language, please indicate the language and certified level:**

Foreign languages	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
German						
Arabic						
Chinese						
French						
English						
Italian						
Russian						
Spanish						
Others (specify):_____						

8. Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how useful it is for you to know and/or learn a foreign language (1=*not at all useful* and 5=*very useful*):

Usefulness of Learning a Foreign Language	1	2	3	4	5
In the academic and/or professional sphere					
In the personal sphere					

9. Please indicate on a scale of 1-5 how often a year you use the following products (1=*never* and 5=*a great deal*):

Products	1	2	3	4	5
Printed books in foreign languages					
Films in their original version					
Foreign press and magazines					
Others (specify):_____					
Others (specify):_____					

10. Sex:

1 ❑ Male
2 ❑ Female

11. Age:

1 ❑ 17–19 years 2 ❑ 20–22 years 3 ❑ 23–25 years
4 ❑ 26–28 years 5 ❑ 29–31 years 6 ❑ 32 and over

12. Do you work or do some other paid activity while studying?

1 ❑ No 3 ❑ Yes, part-time job during the week
2 ❑ Yes, only at weekends 4 ❑ No, full-time job during the week

13. Please indicate your weekly budget for leisure activities (cinema, going out, etc.)

1 ❑ Less than €20 2 ❑ €21–€40 3 ❑ €41–€60
4 ❑ €61–€80 5 ❑ €81–€100 6 ❑ More than €100

14. Please indicate your city and country of residence:

City_____

3

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