

The influence of the foreign language certificate regulation on motivation among undergraduates

La influencia de la normativa sobre certificados de lenguas extranjeras en la motivación de los estudiantes universitarios

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyse the extent to which the latest changes to the foreign language certificate regulation have influenced undergraduates' motivation to learn English, especially among final year students at the Centro de Magisterio La Inmaculada. The main reason why we focused on the students in question is the fact that they are divided into different groups depending on their major subject (Science, English, Physical Education and Attention to Diversity), which has enabled us to observe four different profiles. Furthermore, we wanted to explore the possible differences between them regarding two main issues: their motivation to study English as a Foreign Language and their opinions about the change in foreign language regulation at the University of Granada. In order to examine these questions, we created a questionnaire that gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. The results confirmed our hypothesis: the latest regulation has affected students' motivation towards EFL learning. Now, more than ever, undergraduates opt for learning English to obtain a B1 certificate that will allow them to graduate from University. Moreover, there have been some significant differences between the groups, especially in the case of future English teachers and the rest of specialities.

Keywords: EFL, motivation, foreign language certificate regulation

RESUMEN

El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar la influencia que ha tenido el último cambio de normativa acerca de la certificación de las lenguas extranjeras en la motivación para el aprendizaje de inglés entre los estudiantes, especialmente los alumnos del último curso en el *Centro de Magisterio La Inmaculada*. La principal razón por la que nos centramos en los alumnos en cuestión es el hecho de que están divididos en diferentes grupos dependiendo de la mención (Ciencias, Inglés, Educación Física y Atención a la Diversidad), lo que significa que hemos podido observar cuatro perfiles de alumnado distintos. Asimismo, hemos querido explorar las posibles diferencias entre ellos con respecto a dos problemas fundamentales: su motivación para estudiar inglés como lengua extranjera y su opinión en cuanto al cambio de la normativa de las lenguas extranjeras en la Universidad de Granada. Para contestar estas preguntas, hemos creado un cuestionario que recoge tanto datos cuantitativos como datos cualitativos. Los resultados confirman nuestra hipótesis: las últimas regulaciones han traído cambios acerca de la motivación de los alumnos para el aprendizaje de inglés como lengua extranjera. Ahora, más que nunca, los estudiantes optan por estudiar inglés para obtener el certificado del nivel B1, lo que les permite terminar la carrera universitaria. Además, ha habido diferencias significativas entre los grupos, sobre todo entre los futuros maestros de inglés y el resto de las especialidades.

Palabras clave: Inglés como Lengua Extranjera, motivación, normativa de la certificación de lengua extranjera

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1. Introduction

It is a well-known fact that English is the first foreign language which is taught within the Spanish Education System². Also, we have been able to witness the general attitude change towards this language on many different levels apart from Education, especially over the recent years. As a result, having an expertise in this language is currently becoming a compulsory task which many future professionals especially in education need to face on a daily basis.

In spite of the fact that general interest that stands behind English learning is increasing rapidly, we feel that it is essential to examine the reasons that underlie such interest and observe the motives that trigger learners' willingness to study English as a Foreign Language (EFL from now on). For that reason, we could say that the main goal of this paper is to analyse undergraduates' motivation for EFL learning, that is, to examine the reasons why undergraduates study EFL in the first place, and see if and to which extent the new regulation that was brought in regarding students' level of proficiency of EFL has had influence over it. In other words, we want to observe whether the new requirements for a B1 level certificate among undergraduates (with the special focus on the students that belong to the University of Granada) has introduced positive or negative changes with regards to the levels of instrumental motivation for EFL learning.

Moreover, we want to provide a deeper insight into undergraduates' opinion about this new regulation and examine how satisfied or dissatisfied they are about the fact that they cannot graduate from university unless they possess an official FL certificate. There is a common belief that requiring such certificate allows students to improve their level of English and to be aware of the importance of knowing this (or any other) foreign language. Nevertheless, we consider that students' opinion on this matter can actually confirm or reject this generally agreed claim and offer a more personalised point of view including some possibilities for enhancement of the whole procedure.

For all that, having a varied group of students with different profiles was of huge importance to the study as one of the hypotheses is based on the idea that those students who will closely work with English in this case, that is, future English teachers in primary schools, will have a different approach to studying English and will have a positive attitude towards the regulation in question. On the other hand, we believe that those students who will not necessarily have to use English, at least not professionally, will have a more biased opinion, which will mainly be negative. Additionally, future English teachers' motivation for studying English will differ from the rest of the students and will be qualified as more intrinsic than instrumental, as could be the case of the rest of the students. Furthermore, we were driven by the idea that the main reason for studying English for most students would be to obtain a B1 certificate and be able to finish their degree with the exception of future English teachers who, as stated previously, would have other reasons for such thing. Essentially, we could say that our hypothesis is based on the idea that the fact that the students are required to present an FL certificate to graduate from university has had a significant impact on their overall motivation for EFL learning, especially among those undergraduates who will not have to use English professionally in their future.

² According to the Ministry of Education, in 2017/2018 in Spain, 83.4% of pre-school children were studying English (vs. 0.5% studying French, the second most studied FL in schools), in primary schools the number of those studying English was 99.1% (vs. 0.6% studying French), in *ESO* there was 98.3% English learners (vs. 1.3% studying French) and, finally, in *Bachillerato* 94.6% of students were English learners as opposed to 1.6% French learners.

In order to address all the aforementioned issues, we will start with a brief revision of the bibliographical material on the topic followed by the details about the methodological procedures carried out in the study. Subsequently, we will analyse the data obtained in the research and clarify its meaning, which will further lead to the main conclusions of the research and to checking whether we can corroborate its hypotheses.

2. Motivation for EFL learning

Motivation in foreign language learning has been a widely discussed matter in education and a very common issue among researchers, who have tried to discover and describe all those factors that can enhance students' willingness to engage in the learning process. Talking about motivation is a rather complicated subject because, as Navarro and García (2018) claim, "there is no consensus regarding the definition and nature of motivation" adding that sometimes it is spoken of as abstract since "there are different kinds of motivation that are likely to affect students' commitment and outcomes in second language learning differently" (2017: 72). Nevertheless, there have been countless attempts to address this question in general, but also in more specific terms. For instance, recently many new papers have emerged on the relationship between numerous elements such as technology, materials used in the classroom, cooperative learning, *CLIL*, etc. and motivation. For example, Genc (2009) claims that "there is a great relation between language-learning motivation factors and using technology" adding that technology inside an EFL classroom "provides meaningful and interesting process in language learning and students can be more motivated" (2009: 155). For his part, Peacock (2007) suggests using authentic materials in the classroom since they may enhance learners' "levels of on-task behaviour, concentration, and involvement in the target activity" in a much more effective way than when the teacher opts for using artificial materials (2007: 152). In the same way, Pan and Wu (2013) affirm that, apart from numerous benefits that cooperative learning has in general, it may affect the levels of extrinsic motivation due to the fact that, when cooperating with peers, students obtain more "encouragement, support and achievement" (2013: 22). Finally, Navarro and García (2018) corroborate Pfenniger's (2016) findings according to which *CLIL* instructions and environment "has a positive effect on students' language achievement" (Pfenniger's (2016) *apud* Navarro and García 2018: 88) while verifying that "motivation is [...] an unequivocally important factor for the learning of a second language, and it plays a more important role in *CLIL* than in non-*CLIL* settings" (2018: 87).

Due to the fact that our research is not focused on providing new insights into the general concept of motivation in EFL contexts, but rather on a specific aspect of it, we would like to select those papers whose main domain is motivation in relation to the Spanish Education System, more precisely EFL among undergraduates³. It is important to add that it would be somewhat implausible to discuss all the bibliographical material that exists on the matter of motivation owing to its vastness.

Nonetheless, we feel that it is relevant to mention what many scholars would agree to be probably the first important study on this question: Gardner's (1972, 1985, 2007). His concept of motivation has been considered a cornerstone of EFL and is still a starting point for new research. One of the most famous quoted definitions of motivation was actually proposed by this author, who claims that motivation is "the extent to which the

³ A similar topic has been treated within Education Systems of other Spanish-speaking countries. For instance, Delfín de Manzanilla (2007) talks about "Attitudes towards English in Higher Education Students" (Venezuela), España Chavarría (2010) analyses "The English Language in University Curriculum: Importance, Challenges and Achievements" in Costa Rica, whereas Chávez-Zambano, Saltos-Vivas and Saltos-Dueñas (2017) discuss "The importance of learning and knowledge of the English language in higher education" in Ecuador. Despite their approach and contributions, we have deliberately decided to exclude them from any further analysis in the present paper.

individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity” (Gardner 1985: 10), but warns that it does not simply mean “wanting to learn a language”, it is in fact much “more complex” than that, since “it cannot be measure by one scale” (Gardner, 2007: 10). For that reason, together with Lambert, Gardner came up with the *AMTB (Attitude/Motivation Test Battery)*, a complex test which measures several components such as attitudes towards learning, interest, orientation, etc. It is a widely used questionnaire and it is one of the most common ones when it comes to research on motivation in FL environments.

Along with him, Dörnyei’s theory (1990, 1994, 1998) represents “the second influential theory”, according to Navarro and García who remind us that “L2 motivation is conceptualized within a framework of three distinct levels: language, learning and learning situation” (2018: 74). Additionally, the author claims that motivation in language learning is complex due to the fact that the language itself has “multifaceted nature” and many roles adding that we must refer to it in terms of environmental and cognitive, but also by taking into account “personality and social dimensions” (Dörnyei, 1998: 118). One of the key concepts of his proposal or “the direction and magnitude of human behaviour” in fact answers the questions “why people decide to do something”, “how long they are willing to sustain the activity” and “how hard they are going to pursue it” as reiterated by Navarro and García (2018: 73). It is worth saying that the first question will be one of the research premises of this paper and will allow us to inquire into the main reasons why undergraduates study English.

Some other scholars like Minera Reyna (2010: 93) remind us that, together with anxiety, beliefs, attitudes and self-esteem, motivation is one of the fundamental affective factors in learning. Additionally, Ushioda (2013: 1) claims that “motivation is widely recognised as a significant factor influencing success in second or foreign language (L2) learning, and is perhaps one of the key variables that distinguishes first language acquisition from second language acquisition”. Saravia and Bernaus (2008: 164) summarise the whole idea by saying that “there is no learning without motivation”.

Another issue which is very commonly discussed among researchers and which is of great importance to the questionnaire we have used in this study has to do with the type of motivation, usually brought down to three: instrumental, integrative and intrinsic motivation. Lahuerta Martínez (2015) reminds us that the concepts of integrative and instrumental motivation were introduced by Gardner and Lambert (1972). Integrative orientation is closely related to the idea of studying a foreign language in order to be part of the community in which that language is spoken through interaction, customs, tradition, etc. On contrary, instrumental orientation assimilates the pragmatic and professional reasons (Lahuerta Martínez 2015:2). On his part, Matsuzaki Carreira (2005) defines integrative motivation as “a positive attitudes and feelings toward the target language group”, whereas instrumental motivation is seen as “the potential utilitarian gains of L2 proficiency, such as getting a better job or higher salary” (Matsuzaki Carreira 2005: 39-40). On the other hand, Richard and Schmidt (2002) provide us with a definition of intrinsic motivation (as opposed to extrinsic motivation), which can be summarised in the following way: “enjoyment of language learning itself” (Richard and Schmidt (2002: 343-344). Dörnyei (1994) claims that “instrumental motives significantly contribute to motivation in FLL contexts adding that affective factors “were found to contribute to motivation in foreign-language learning as well” (Dörnyei 1994: 67, 69). Taking into account that there seems to be a lack of general agreement on the dichotomy used in description of motivation and its possible taxonomy, we have decided to deal with three different types of motivation: integrative, instrumental (both of them could be classified as extrinsic) and intrinsic.

Taking a closer look into our research question, we found three main papers that could be regarded as the basis for the theoretical development of our study. In the first place, Saravia and Bernaus (2008) investigate into motivation and attitudes for language learning among university students in Spain, but in a multilingual context such is the case of Catalonia. The main focus of this paper is the relationship between the students' self-assessment on four languages in question (Spanish, Catalan, English and French) and their attitude and motivation towards those languages. Among other things, the findings clearly show that there is a clear positive correlation between these two factors and, at the same time, the extent to which this correlation exists is larger among future language teachers than among nurses or physiotherapists (another two groups involved in the study).

Another significant paper to our study revolves around motivation among nursing degree students (University of Huelva) towards English Language Learning. Camacho, Barquero, Mariscal and Merino (2012) take into account many factors related to EFL and explain its relatively "sudden" popularisation (European Higher Education Area, *The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* and *The Bologna Declaration*). In the same way as the previous study, the authors tested students' self-assessment level, but also the importance the students attach to the knowledge of English, which is closely related to future professional careers (science and research) and to possible job opportunities abroad. In terms of motivation, the study shows that students are highly motivated (the reasons are numerous), but they believe that the university does not provide enough courses for them. In addition to this, they believe that the fact that there are no specialised courses for scientific purposes provided is rather negative. We also have to emphasise that this study is the only one that mentions the compulsory B1 accreditation for undergraduates, but fails to draw conclusions on the relationship between that and instrumental motivation levels or any kind of repercussions it might have had on students' motivation in general terms.

Lastly, Lahuerta Martínez (2015) analyses the reasons why university students in Spain study a foreign language and examines the motivational factors (later on reduced to several "orientation factors") with regards to it. The study basically confirms that there is a wide range of reasons for EFL learning and it "confirma la importancia no solo de la orientación instrumental sino también de orientaciones ligadas a la cultura, a las relaciones internacionales y a los aspectos académicos" (Lahuerta 2015: 5). Furthermore, it means that all these factors are relevant to the motivation, in other words, the higher the orientation, the higher the motivation will be.

3. Foreign language certificate regulation at the University of Granada

As stated before, this paper focuses on the FE certification at the University of Granada although we may assume that it may be applicable to the rest of the Spanish universities in a more or less similar way bearing in mind the general linguistic policy proposed by the Council of Europe⁴.

In case of the public universities in Andalusia, the most significant change regarding foreign language certification occurred in 2011 when it was agreed to require a minimum level of B1 (in other words, B1, B2, C1

⁴ Up to this date, we have been unable to find an overall description with unified criteria of this regulation regarding all the public universities on a national level, but some particularized policies depending on the university or the linguistic policy of a specific autonomous community. In some cases, even the level that is required is different. For instance, the University of Castilla-La Mancha, the University of Zaragoza or the University of Vigo, among others, require a minimum level of B1 to graduate from university, whereas the Polytechnic University of Valencia or the Complutense University of Madrid require a B2 level for the same purpose.

or C2 levels) of any foreign language⁵, according to level nomenclature proposed by the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*. This was the consequence of the activity carried out by *Comisión Académica del Consejo Andaluz de Universidades* and *Dirección General de Universidades de la Junta de Andalucía*, which followed the guidelines that had been put forward by the Council of Europe (*Declaración sobre multilingüismo 1934/2000/CE* and *Multilingüismo: una ventaja para Europa y un compromiso compartido 2008*). In accordance with this final regulation, students are not allowed to graduate from university unless they provide an official language certificate.

The University offers a list of all the valid certificates for this purpose. In case of English, there are many available options, each one of them with specific grade and mark requirements⁶. Despite the fact that the regulation is specially designed for undergraduates (as stated above, mainly in order to graduate, but also to apply for any international study program or to apply for master's studies, among others), in fact it could be applicable to the staff of the University in case they need to teach in a foreign language or for some specific procedures in which a foreign language is accounted for.

Moreover, there are cases in which students are entitled to exemption from this regulation. For instance, if they have studied Philology of one of the languages from the list, if they have studied Translation and Interpreting, if they have studied abroad or if they have studied *Bachillerato* in a foreign language. Nevertheless, the vast majority of students are obliged to comply with this regulation.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning that the University of Granada offers a free examination for B1/B2 level through *Centro de Lenguas Modernas*, an official centre for foreign languages. Each student has the right to opt for this exam providing he or she fulfils all the requirements and is still enrolled in a course. Additionally, *Junta de Andalucía* has come up with a financial help program so as to provide scholarships for those students whose family income is low. This way, *Junta de Andalucía* guarantees “equal access to language studies”⁷, one of the questions of this paper, which we will try to shed light on.

4. Methodology

4.1. Participants

This study was carried out at the Centro de Magisterio La Inmaculada, a private Faculty of Education in affiliation with the University of Granada. We chose students in their final year of studies (2019-2020). In total we dealt with 80 undergraduates who were divided into four different groups, according to their main subject: English, Physical Education, Science and Attention to Diversity. We disregarded students who were majoring in French since we wanted to focus on EFL learning.

⁵ The University of Granada accepts the following languages: German, Arabic, Czech, Chinese, Korean, Spanish (in case of foreign students), Finnish, French, Greek, Hebrew, English, Italian, Japanese, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian and Swedish.

⁶ The full list of diplomas is available on <https://internacional.ugr.es/pages/politica-linguistica/tablasdecertificadosaceptadosporlaugr>.

⁷ Junta de Andalucía: <https://www.juntadeandalucia.es/organismos/economiaconocimientoempresasyuniversidad/areas/universidad/talento/paginas/ayudas-acreditacion-idiomas.html> [accessed on 19th February 2020 10:03]

It is important to say that the groups were not equally divided: In English group there were 26 students; in PE class there were 21, whereas in Science and Attention to Diversity groups we worked with 19 and 14 respectively. 37 of those were men and 43 women.

4.2. Research instrument

Since one of the main goals of this study was to examine the reasons why students studied English and that way approach motivation among students of different educational profiles and preferences, we opted for a questionnaire *MAALE* (*Motivación y Actitudes en el Aprendizaje de una LE*) created by Minera Reyna (2009, 2010), which combines parts of Gardner's *AMTB* (*Attitude/Motivation Test Battery*) (1985). According to the author, *MAALE* questionnaire is an instrument “para identificar a mayor escala [...] qué tipos de motivación predominan en los informantes” Minera Reyna (2010: 96).

In our case, we have used *MAALE* questionnaire with some modifications because we needed to adapt it to our environment and to meet our objectives in a more effective and comprehensible way. We have introduced several changes. Firstly, instead of “I study EFL because I need it for my studies” (as it is indicated in the original questionnaire), we have used “I study EFL because I need an official certificate in order to finish my degree”. This way, we have managed to avoid ambiguity since “learning EFL for (my) studies” may be quite broad. Secondly, we have added a section in order to obtain some qualitative data with regards to students' opinion on the matter. Finally, we have omitted some questions because they were irrelevant for our study.

In total, we had five main fields: *Personal Data*, *EFL*, *B1 Level Regulation*, *Reasons for Studying English* and *Foreign Languages*⁸. The first one provided information about gender, age, mother tongue and nationality. In the following section, the students had to assess their knowledge of foreign languages with a Likert scale (from ‘very good’ to ‘a little’) and also to answer some questions regarding EFL learning process and FL certificates. The section *B1 Level Regulation* contained questions for mainly qualitative data, whereas in section regarding *Reasons for Studying English*, we included the concepts of instrumental, integrative and intrinsic motivation – as discussed previously–, to which we paid special attention throughout the analysis. In total, the questionnaire consisted of 13 reasons representing different types of motivation organised randomly. Also, the students were offered a Likert scale with which the students had to answer how important those reasons were for them (from 1 –very important– to 5 –unimportant–). We did the same thing for the last field (Foreign Languages) but instead of values 1 –very important– to 5 –unimportant–, they had to answer from 1 –completely agree– to 5 –completely disagree.

4.3. Data collection procedures

The survey was carried out during the month of December 2019 at the Faculty with the previous permission of the teaching staff and the students themselves. Before that, a pilot testing was performed to assure the time and the accuracy of the questionnaire. The time that the students needed to complete the questionnaire was 15 minutes approximately.

⁸ Owing to the extension of this paper, we have decided to dismiss some of the information and data obtained after the analysis. For instance, the last section of the questionnaire as well as some specific questions will not be used in this study, but might be left for some future research.

The results recollected in the survey were later entered and analysed through *SPSS Statistical Package* (version 22) and calculations were made for Cronbach alpha in order to ensure internal consistency. Also, standard deviation and the mean score were calculated as well as an ANOVA (including *Post hoc*) because we wanted to see whether there were any significant differences between the four groups of students. In case of written responses and qualitative data, they were transcribed, analysed and organised through *Microsoft Excel*.

5. Results

5.1. Reasons for studying EFL

The first procedure that we employed was the calculation of the Cronbach's Alpha for the penultimate set of questions (13) (regarding "Reasons for Studying English") since it is the main focus of this research. The score obtained was $\alpha=0.879$, which indicated the internal reliability of the responses.

In order to address the main reasons why students study English, we have calculated the mean score and standard deviation, as it can be seen in the following table:

Reasons	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Because it makes my relationship with English speakers easier.	1	4	1.90	.857
Because I like English language.	1	5	2.80	1.197
Because I would like to live in an English speaking country.	1	5	3.13	1.369
Because I need it in my (future) career.	1	4	1.51	.800
Because I love learning new things.	1	5	2.27	1.004
Because I need an official certificate in order to finish my degree.	1	5	1.68	1.045
Because it allows me to participate in activities in other cultures.	1	5	2.11	.956
Because learning foreign languages is interesting.	1	5	2.10	.961
Because it allows me to be wiser and more educated.	1	5	1.74	.953
Because it allows me to better understand and appreciate literature, films, music and arts in English.	1	5	2.33	1.086
Because learning in general is rewarding.	1	5	1.99	.894
Because it is useful for travelling abroad.	1	4	1.65	.838
Because I feel fulfilled when I learn foreign languages.	1	5	2.31	1.095

Table 1. Reasons for studying EFL

The results reveal that the reasons for studying EFL which were qualified as the "most important" were "Because I need it in my (future) career" (1.51), "Because I need an official certificate in order to finish my degree" (1.68) and "Because it is useful for travelling abroad" (1.65), which clearly indicates a prevalence of instrumental motivation over intrinsic or integrative motivation. On the contrary, the mean scores show that the reasons that were assessed as less important were "Because I would like to live in an English speaking country" (3.13) and "Because I like English language" (2.80), that is integrative and intrinsic reasons respectively. The rest of the reasons were mainly described in terms of 'important' and 'moderately important'.

In order to validate our hypothesis about the difference between the groups, we ran an ANOVA analysis (See Appendix, *Table 4*). As we have been able to observe, there is a significant difference among the four groups of students, especially in four out of thirteen reasons for studying EFL:

- (1) Reason “Because it makes my relationship with English speakers easier”: $F(3,148) = 5.111, p = 0.002$;
- (2) Reason “Because I like English language”: $F(3, 148) = 7.888, p < 0.001$;
- (3) Reason “Because learning foreign languages is interesting”: $F(3, 148) = 6.505, p < 0.001$
- (4) Reason “Because it allows me to better understand and appreciate literature, films, music and arts in English”: $F(3, 148) = 8.351, p < 0.001$.

Additionally, a further *Post hoc* testing (*HSD Tukey*) revealed a great contrast between the following groups, as it can be seen in the next table:

HSD Tukey							
Dependent variable	(I) Major Subject	(J) Subject	Mean Major difference (I-J)	Std. error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower bound	Upper bound
Because it makes my relationship with English speakers easier.	PE		-,709*	,209	,005	-1,25	-,17
	Science		-,549*	,184	,018	-1,03	-,07
	English Diversity		-,868*	,269	,008	-1,57	-,17
Because I like English language.	PE		-1,137*	,290	,001	-1,89	-,38
	Science		-1,087*	,256	,000	-1,75	-,42
	English Diversity		-1,478*	,374	,001	-2,45	-,51
Because learning foreign languages is interesting.	PE		-,761*	,226	,005	-1,35	-,17
	Science		-,591*	,199	,018	-1,11	-,07
	English Diversity		-1,181*	,291	,000	-1,94	-,43
Because it allows me to better understand and appreciate literature, films, music and arts in English.	PE		-1,137*	,261	,000	-1,82	-,46
	Science		-,298	,230	,570	-,90	,30
	English Diversity		-,835	,336	,067	-1,71	,04
Because it allows me to better understand and appreciate literature, films, music and arts in English.	PE		,839*	,205	,000	,31	1,37
	English Diversity		,302	,320	,781	-,53	1,13
	English Diversity		1,137*	,261	,000	,46	1,82

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 2: Multiple comparison⁹

As it can be observed, the greatest significant differences were found in the following cases:

- (a) English and PE ($p = 0.005$),
- (b) English and PE ($p = 0.001$), English and Science ($p < 0.001$) and English and Diversity ($p = 0.001$),

⁹ Due to the length of this paper, we are providing the data which reflect significant differences between the variables, not the total data display.

- (c) English and PE ($p = 0.005$), English and Diversity ($p < 0.001$),
 (d) English and PE ($p < 0.001$), PE and Science ($p < 0.001$).

Consequently, we can report that the English group presents the most different results than the others, especially with respect to these four reasons. In the rest of the cases, the p value was > 0.005 , so we can confirm that there was no significant differences between them, not even regarding the reason “Because I need an official certificate in order to finish my degree”, which we expected to have been the most meaningful and to have had the most disparate values between the groups.

5.2. Students’ opinion

As for the students’ opinions about the new B1 certification requirements, we have opted for two sets of analysis. With the first one, we have summarised their opinions and divided them into positive/negative/neutral¹⁰ (by simplifying their answers to 1-pos, 2-neutral and 3-neg). According to that, we have perceived that the average value was 1.795/3, which shows that, on the whole, almost 60% of the students had a rather negative opinion about it and were dissatisfied with the change. Also, the most negative feeling towards this was distinguished among Science students (2.25/3), whereas the most positive was among English students (1.42/3). The PE and Diversity groups were also negative, but not as much as the Science group.

In accordance with the justification of the positive opinions provided by the students, we have made a summary of the most common and repeated ones, which are presented as follows in the next figure:

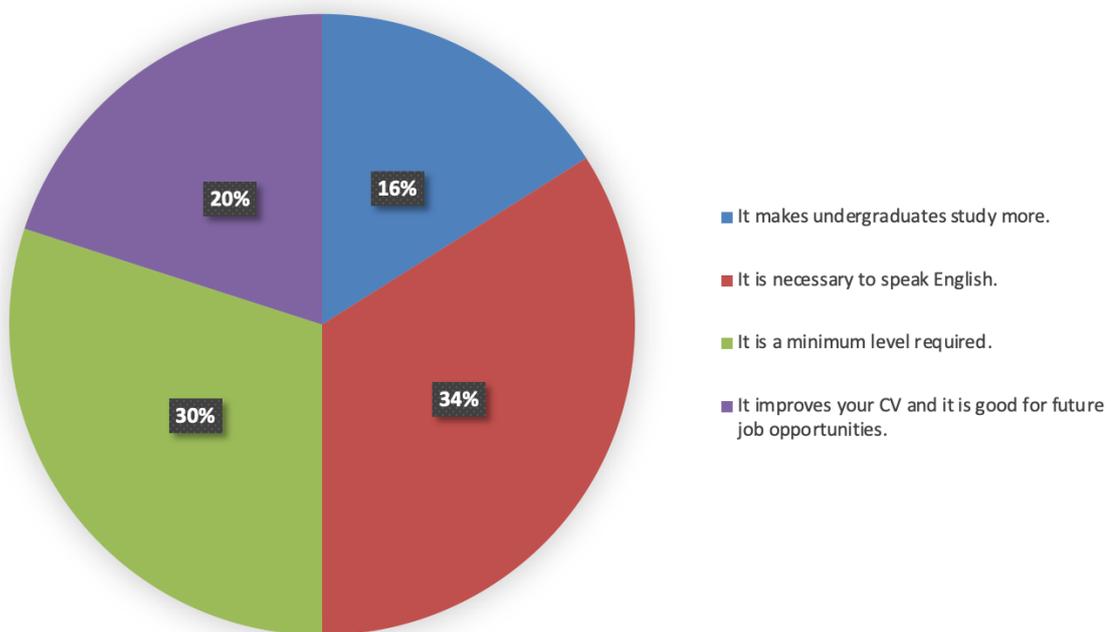


Figure 1. Justification of positive opinions

¹⁰ We labelled an opinion as *neutral* when the subjects included both positive and negative remarks in the same utterance and/or when they were not completely able to summarise their opinions. For example: “it is a good initiative, but it needs improvement” (subject n° 16) or “in general, it’s good, but the exams should be free” (subject n° 5).

If we take a closer look into the results, we can see that there are four main reasons detected. It is important to say that there have been more of them, but they have been quite similar and we have opted for uniting them. The most common one is “it is necessary to speak English”, which in fact does not represent a valid opinion since the students fail to recognise that ‘studying EFL’ and ‘having the obligation to pass a test to show B1 or higher level of competence’ are two different concepts.

The following reason for their positive opinion was “it is a minimum level required”, which the students have used to express that they believe that requiring B1 level is the least that can be done and that it is completely reasonable to expect undergraduates to possess this level when finishing their degree.

Additionally, “it improves your CV” has been a frequent answer because having a B1 certificate is regarded as a possible good tool for finding a job in the future. Finally, students believe that this regulation makes them study harder, which is basically seen as positive since that many think they would not study English as much if it were not for the certification.

In regard to the negative opinions (which were, as stated above, more common), we have found the following:

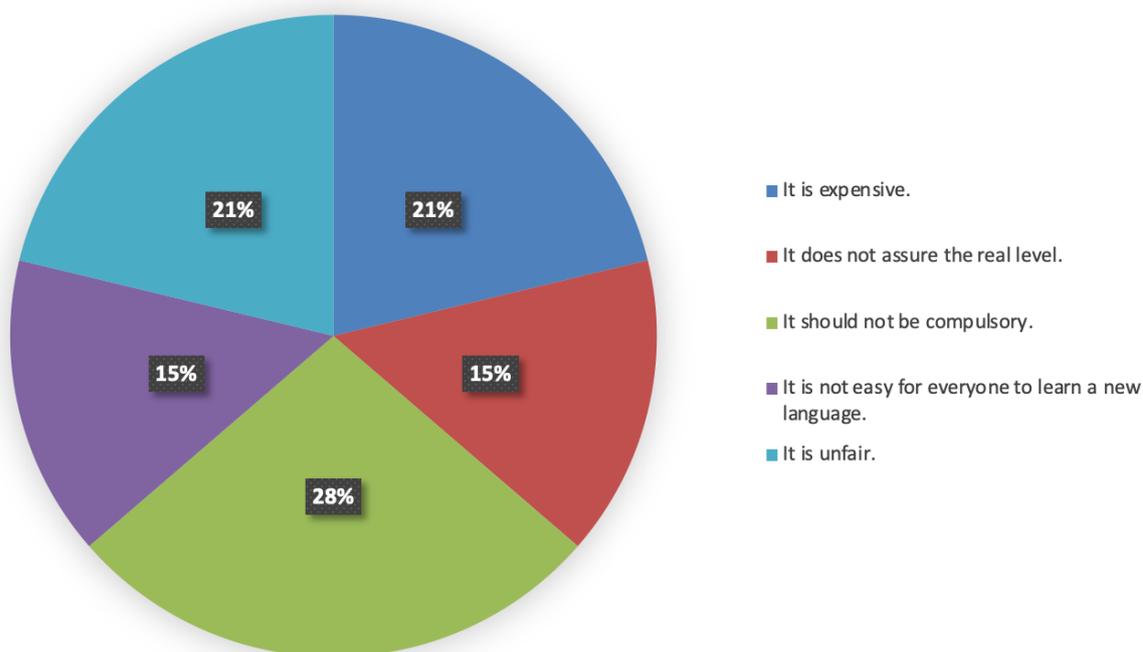


Figure 2. Justification of negative opinions

As the figure 2 clearly shows, there are five main reasons with relatively similar scores. The most common justification for the negative opinion about the regulation was the fact that it is an imposed and compulsory procedure. The students believe that requiring any kind of certification should not be obligatory. They also believe that it should be more economical because in many cases they are the ones that are expected to pay the full price of the exam and/or the preparation courses¹¹. Moreover, they qualify this norm as “unfair” mainly

¹¹ It is worth mentioning that almost 100% of the students hold that the University of Granada and *Centro de Magisterio la Inmaculada* should provide free courses for EFL students who need to obtain a B1 level. Also, when asked about whether they agree that the university offers

because they feel that they should be allowed to graduate after passing all their degree exams and not “depend on a FL diploma”. In the same way, they claim that it is not fair to require this from everyone because not everyone is good at FL and it may be a difficult matter to some. Lastly, some of them also believe that the mere fact someone possesses a certificate does not necessarily mean that it assures/reflects the real level of competence.

With the second set of analysis, we wanted to make sure the previous opinions are not biased and to see if there is some kind of connection between possessing a certificate or not and the positive/negative opinion (under the assumption that the students who already have a FL certificate will not show such negative opinions as those who still do not have any certificates).

Foreign language certificate	Opinion	English	P.E.	Science	Diversity
Yes	Positive	54%	29%	6.3%	36%
Yes	Neutral	7.7%	4%	6.3%	14.2%
Yes	Negative	15%	19%	6.3%	7.1%
No	Positive	19.2%	29%	19%	21.3%
No	Neutral	3.9%	0%	19%	0%
No	Negative	0%	19%	43%	21.3%

Table 3. Certificate possession vs. Positive/negative opinion

The results presented in Table 3 reveal that there is no clear pattern when it comes to the dichotomy in question. In other words, we cannot claim that the positive opinions come from those students who have already passed the exam and vice versa. Despite the fact that high values of positive opinions do come from the students with a foreign language certificate (such is the case of English 54% or Diversity 36%), in most cases negative opinions do not only belong to the students without one, except in Science group (43%) who, as we have highlighted before, tend to have the most negative opinion in general. Also, it is interesting to notice that in English group there is 15% of those who keep having a negative opinion about the regulation in spite of possessing a FL certificate and there is 19.2% of those who still do not possess it, but are more supportive of the norm.

6. Conclusions

This study gives a picture of the new situation regarding B1 certification among the students of the University of Granada, which emerged over the last years. Our primary hypothesis was based on the idea that the mere fact that the students have to present an FL certificate in order to graduate has had a significant influence on their motivation. After carrying out the survey with 80 students (future primary school teachers), we have been able to verify that there is a clear inclination towards instrumental motivational values over intrinsic and integrative values. Specifically, we have shown that the most important reasons for EFL learning are the ones in which English is a tool for graduating from university and for better future job opportunities (which partly corroborates previous studies like Camacho *et al.* (2012), which emphasises the importance of English mainly for future career prospects), whereas the least relevant ones are integrative (living in an English-speaking country) and

enough free EFL courses, they generally disagree. The Attention to Diversity group is the most dissatisfied, whereas the rest of them show similar values. As showed in the previous chapters, the study carried out by Camacho *et al.* (2012) show very similar findings on this matter.

intrinsic (I like English language). It further means that, despite not being the only fundamental factor, B1 regulation has indeed brought in considerable changes to the matter of motivation for EFL learning.

The second research question revolved around the possible differences between the groups. As we have evidenced, the most significant difference is established between future English teachers and the rest of the groups, which confirms our hypothesis: the reasons why English group students learn EFL are more varied and go from instrumental to integrative and intrinsic, unlike other students, who mainly study for practical reasons (which somewhat coincides with Saravia and Bernaus (2008)). To them, reasons such as “it makes my relationship with English speakers easier, “I like English language”, “learning foreign languages is interesting” and “it allows me to better understand and appreciate literature, films, music and arts in English” are far more important than to the students in other three groups. Nevertheless, we have to reject the idea that studying EFL to obtain a certificate and graduate is irrelevant to the English group; the results have shown that the certification is equally important to all the groups, without the exception of English students.

The results regarding students’ opinions about the regulation have shown that the most positive viewpoint is given by the English group as opposed to the Science group, who generally have a very negative feeling towards an EFL certification. We have also proven that it does not have any direct connection with the FL certificate possession, that is, having a certificate already does not guarantee a positive opinion about it and vice versa. Either way, we believe that the sudden imposition of this regulation has created a more hostile and unfavourable attitude towards EFL on the whole. Additionally, we consider that the reasons given for justifying both negative and positive opinions might be of great importance to the University since they describe how the students feel about it and how the whole process can be ameliorated in the future.

Finally, we need to highlight that this study is the first one that has tried to explore the effects of this regulation on students’ motivation in Spain and it would be more than necessary to keep developing a research model in order to address a wider range of public –by including students from other fields or even from other Spanish universities– and answer more complex questions about the dichotomy ‘motivation-FL certificates’. Despite being just a humble attempt to answer some of the questions proposed, we hope constructive conclusions may be drawn from it.

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Appendix: ANOVA analysis

ANOVA						
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Because it makes my relationship with English speakers easier.	Between groups	10,080	3	3,360	5,111	,002
	Within groups	97,289	148	,657		
	Total	107,368	151			
Because I like English language.	Between groups	30,051	3	10,017	7,888	,000
	Within groups	187,942	148	1,270		
	Total	217,993	151			
Because I would like to live in an English speaking country,	Between groups	7,609	3	2,536	1,383	,250
	Within groups	271,490	148	1,834		
	Total	279,099	151			
Because I need it in my (future) career.	Between groups	,888	3	,296	,434	,729
	Within groups	101,085	148	,683		
	Total	101,974	151			
Because I love learning new things.	Between groups	9,666	3	3,222	3,363	,020
	Within groups	141,807	148	,958		
	Total	151,474	151			
Because I need an official certificate in order to finish my degree.	Between groups	4,311	3	1,437	1,256	,292
	Within groups	169,367	148	1,144		
	Total	173,678	151			
Because it allows me to participate in activities in other cultures.	Between groups	5,453	3	1,818	2,168	,094
	Within groups	124,067	148	,838		
	Total	129,520	151			
Because learning foreign languages is interesting.	Between groups	14,990	3	4,997	6,505	,000
	Within groups	113,688	148	,768		
	Total	128,678	151			
Because it allows me to be wiser and more educated.	Between groups	6,866	3	2,289	2,689	,049
	Within groups	125,969	148	,851		
	Total	132,836	151			
Because it allows me to better understand and appreciate literature, films, music and arts in English.	Between groups	25,779	3	8,593	8,351	,000
	Within groups	152,300	148	1,029		
	Total	178,079	151			
Because learning in general is rewarding.	Between groups	6,207	3	2,069	2,800	,042
	Within groups	109,372	148	,739		
	Total	115,579	151			
Because it is useful for travelling abroad.	Between groups	6,586	3	2,195	3,513	,017
	Within groups	89,975	144	,625		
	Total	96,561	147			
Because I feel fulfilled when I learn foreign languages.	Between groups	4,209	3	1,403	1,200	,312
	Within groups	173,054	148	1,169		
	Total	177,263	151			