
The Influence of Family Environment on Exposure to English among Spanish Secondary School Students

La influencia del entorno socio-familiar en la exposición al inglés del alumnado de Educación Secundaria en España

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Resumen: Este artículo examina en qué medida el ambiente familiar influye en la exposición al inglés de los estudiantes de Educación Secundaria en España. La muestra participante en el estudio consta de 186 alumnos de último curso de Enseñanza Secundaria Obligatoria de dos centros educativos urbanos. La información se recogió a través de un cuestionario sobre las actividades cotidianas de exposición al inglés que los estudiantes y sus familias realizan fuera del ámbito escolar, y sobre qué tipo de actividades de exposición rodean al estudiante en situaciones cotidianas. A partir de los datos recogidos, se realizó un análisis descrip-

tivo, otro de tipo correlacional y un análisis clúster. Los resultados revelan fundamentalmente tres patrones en referencia al grado y a los tipos de exposición al inglés, que ponen de manifiesto una pobre exposición al inglés de los estudiantes de Secundaria fuera de su centro educativo y las escasas oportunidades que los estudiantes tienen para aprender dicha lengua de un modo informal.

Palabras clave: Inglés como segunda lengua, Entorno familiar, Aprendizaje de una segunda lengua, Estudiantes de Enseñanza Secundaria.

Abstract: This article examines how the family environment influences exposure to English among Spanish Secondary Education students. Data concerning 186 students attending an ISCED-2 level in two urban secondary schools was collected through a questionnaire survey about the activities in English that students' families do and/or promote outside the academic environment, and what kind of exposure activities students have in everyday situations. Several analyses were carried out including a descriptive, a

correlational and a Cluster study. The findings reveal three main patterns concerning degrees and types of exposure, but indicate that Secondary students' exposure to English outside the school and informal language learning opportunities are very low.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Family environment, Second language learning, Secondary school students.

INTRODUCTION

In the last few years, we have witnessed a process of internationalisation of education in which the knowledge of a second language is an essential requirement for the all-round development of the individual (INEE, 2012). The type of society we are immersed in associates knowing one or more foreign languages with the progress of individuals and countries in an international context led by the global exchange of tangible and intangible goods (Council of Europe, 2001). In this context, educational systems and institutions strive to provide quality education in which learning one or more foreign languages is one of the main challenges.

European countries, distinguished by their multilingual and multicultural character, have addressed the language issue in positive terms as a way to achieve greater social, political and cultural cohesion (Butler, 2009). Supranational organisations like the European Commission have discussed the problem of teaching a foreign language in a multilingual context, recommending new strategies to promote multilingualism (Dendrinios, Zouganeli and Karavas, 2013). In relation to the foreign language this paper focuses on (English), it is fundamental to highlight the importance of English as an international/global language because, as Graddol (2006, p. 12) stated, “the phenomenon of English being a global language lies at the heart of globalization”, and this is probably the main reason why students in Spanish schools have to learn it. Nevertheless, although the practice of English is situated within multilingual contexts, non-native teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and the society in general tend to operate with a monolingual consciousness (Joseph and Ramani, 2012).

In the context of widespread concern about teaching and learning a foreign language, the European Survey on Language Competences of 2012 (ESLC from now on) was created. That project, funded by the European Commission, provided a wide overview of the status of the foreign language proficiency of second-

ary school students across Europe, and so obtained comparable data between the participating countries in relation to this issue. One of the main findings in that project brought out the importance of exposure to languages outside school and informal language learning opportunities. One of the main findings of the ESLC regarding the informal language learning opportunities was that “overall, the use of the target language at home, the number of first languages and the exposure to the target language in the living environment is low” (European Commission 2012, p. 67).

The results of the ESLC, which provided an approximate picture of the situation of how we learn a foreign language in Europe, raised concerns in some countries such as Spain, where the results were far from those initially expected. Spain's results seemed to indicate that despite the strong presence of English in the school curriculum, the creation and promotion of bilingual schools and the presence of English teaching assistants at school, have not been sufficient. In fact, another European report *The assessment of pupils' skills in English in eight European countries* stated that Spanish students are those who least practise English outside the classroom (Bonnet, 2003). Similarly, Erickson (2004) and Sylvén (2013) pointed out that the Spanish context offers few opportunities for exposure to English, which could be the reason why Spanish students did not do as well as others in the ESLC. The environmental exposure of the Spanish students appeared to be practically non-existent. The analysis of these results leads us to consider the role played by external factors in the learning of EFL.

ECOLOGY OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

There is evidence that external factors such as the family environment and the importance given to the way parents transmit their attitudes, values, knowledge and skills to their children play a crucial role in the students' learning and so in their success in the educational system (Bernstein, 1989, 1996; Bourdieu, 1986). The role parents play and their involvement in their children's education are essential as they are responsible for developing at home a system which comprises multiple elements that serve as internal guides for students' behaviour (Santos, Godás and Lorenzo, 2016). Studies on everyday literacies have shown an evident interest in how this out-of-school learning occurs (Baynham, 2004; Sealey and Carter, 2004). Recently, an increasing interest in lifelong learning has led to research such as that by Barron (2006) and Barton (2007), who emphasise the importance of the 'learning ecology perspective' and the 'ecological metaphor' which stress learning across different informal environments (e.g. home, school, community, etc.).

These concepts are indeed relevant when it comes to learning languages as the exposure to the target language can take many forms and happen in different places (Sundqvist, 2009). This idea of learning a language through the opportunities the context offers is usually known as extramural exposure and it has proved to be an essential source of target language input (Olson, 2011; Oscarson and Apelgren, 2005; Sylvén, 2004, 2013). Extramural exposure to English does clearly play an important role when learning the language and some researches have shown that the amount of exposure to the target language outside of school correlates with various language skills (Cobb and Horst, 2011; Kuppens, 2010; Reinders, 2012; Sylvén and Sundqvist, 2012).

Similarly, some authors (van Lier, 2004; Fill and Mühlhäusler, 2006; Tudor, 2003; Kramersch, 2003; and others) have pointed out the importance of ecology in the language learning process, as learning EFL should go beyond the level of acquiring grammatical rules and focus on how to use the target language in the situated context. In relation to this socio-cultural approach, on the one hand, Barron (2006, p. 195) defines the ‘learning ecology perspective’ as the “set of contexts found in physical or virtual spaces that provide opportunities for learning”: a) adolescents are simultaneously involved in many settings, b) they create learning contexts for themselves within and across settings; c) the boundaries between settings can be permeable; and d) interest-driven activities can span contextual boundaries and be self-sustaining given adequate time, freedom, and resources (199-201). On the other hand, Barton (2007) points out the importance of an ecological approach which aims to understand how literacy is embedded in different human activities, in social life, in language, in learning, etc.

OBJECTIVES

The process of learning a foreign language is thus socially and culturally constructed because learners are social agents who cooperate with others and use the resources available to them in their environment (Kalaja, Alanen, Palviainen and Dufva, 2011; Pinker, 1994). In conclusion, foreign language literacy is developed in many contexts and happens in different ways depending on the learner¹. The current paper focuses on a sample of Spanish schoolchildren in a region where only

¹ This is the reason why this study is part of a wider research which includes two comparisons: the first one is between two Spanish contexts (a monolingual and a bilingual one); and the other one between two European countries (Spain and Greece) with the purpose of understanding the way English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is taught and learnt.

one official language is spoken (Spanish). Our main aim is to examine what kind of exposure activities Secondary Education students in this setting experience in everyday situations that influence their learning of EFL, and how the target language is promoted outside the academic environment. Specifically, the following goals are addressed:

- To develop and validate an instrument to collect information on the influence of students' socioeconomic setting on the learning of EFL.
- To describe the out-of-school contexts of learning English, considering the perspectives of the students, their parents and their older siblings.
- To establish possible relationships between the out-of-school contexts of the students, their parents and their older siblings on the learning of EFL.
- To identify similar patterns that define the students' non-formal contexts of learning EFL.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research is based on a quantitative approach using data collected through a survey questionnaire. In order to achieve the aims set, several analyses were carried out including: a correlational study to measure the validity and reliability of the questionnaire (aim 1); a descriptive study to analyse every aspect of the students' exposure activities in English through their own context, as well as their parents' and their older siblings' contexts (aim 2); a correlational study using Spearman's rho correlation coefficient to establish possible relations between the three contexts (parents, siblings and students themselves) (aim 3); and a Cluster analysis to identify similar patterns within the non-formal learning contexts of the students (aim 4).

Sample

The research context of this study is a city in Spain where Spanish is the main spoken language. The sample consists of 186 students attending an ISCED-2 level in two urban secondary schools located in the same area. Both schools have the same socioeconomic status (SES), according to the results of a context questionnaire applied to all schools in Andalusia by its regional government. One of the schools is a publicly funded bilingual school (N=56) in which English was the language used to teach several curricular subjects, and the other one is a privately funded monolingual one (N=130) where English was just taught as a foreign language. In order

to balance the two samples for one of the analyses, 56 students from the private school were randomly selected. The selection of schools within the same area and with similar characteristics was carefully carried out to try to neutralise the effect of the socioeconomic and cultural index. The reason why the participants had to be attending an ISCED-2 level is because this is the last year of compulsory education in the Spanish educational system. In order to analyse the differences between both schools, a random sample of students of the monolingual school was selected so that the number of students was the same in both cases.

In relation to the basic features of the sample, it can be seen that 35.7% of the students in the bilingual school are boys whereas 64.3% of them are girls. The monolingual school presents a more balanced sample with 55.4% boys and 44.6% girls. Students at both schools showed similar patterns in terms of the number of years they had been studying EFL at school, in the number of years studying English as an extracurricular activity and the approximate percentage of time English is spoken at home. No statistically significant differences between the two schools were found (Table 1).

Table 1. Main characteristics of the sample

VARIABLES	RESPONSE OPTIONS	BILINGUAL SCHOOL (%)	MONOLINGUAL SCHOOL (%)	X ²	SIG.
Years studying EFL	Less than 9 years	36.4	30.1	2.36	0.31
	Between 10 and 11 years	32.7	26.8		
	More than 11 years	30.9	43.1		
Years studying English as an extracurricular activity	None	24.8	36.5	3.56	0.31
	Up to 2 years	4.8	7.7		
	Between 3 and 6 years	28.0	21.2		
	More than 6 years	42.4	34.6		
English is spoken at home	Never	65.4	73.2	1.78	0.78
	25% of the time	25.4	21.4		
	50% of the time	5.4	3.6		
	75% of the time	2.3	1.8		
	100% of the time	1.5	-		

Procedures, techniques and research tools

The collection of the information was carried out through a “Questionnaire on the family environment factors that influence the learning of English as a Foreign Language”, which was designed specifically for this research. This instrument, which contains basic questions about the students’ families (parents and older siblings) and 35 items concerning various activities of exposure to English and use of this language that students and their families perform “outside” the school environment, has been validated (as shown below) and submitted. The items are presented in a Likert scale with values ranging from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Completely agree). Next, Table 2 summarises the tool, its dimensions and a description of each block of questions:

Table 2. Instrument, dimensions and items of the questionnaire

INSTRUMENT	BLOCKS OF QUESTIONS	DESCRIPTION	ITEMS
Questionnaire on the family environment factors that influence the learning of EFL	1. Parents’ context influence	Activities in English that students’ parents perform and/or promote outside the academic environment.	1-10
	2. Older siblings’ context influence	Activities in English that students’ siblings (older than 15 years) perform and/or promote outside the academic environment.	11-20
	3. Students’ learning context	Exposure activities in English that students perform in everyday situations which influence their English learning.	21-35

The content validity of the questionnaire was determined by two validation procedures. Before the application of this tool, we took into account the views of ten experts in the field of EFL who teach at University and/or at Secondary Schools. The opinions of these ten judges were analysed in order to improve the instrument’s content based on five criteria (see Table 3). In the latter case, Kendall’s *W* (coefficient of concordance) was used to measure agreement among judges, which indicated some level of agreement ($W=0.161$) that was significant at $\alpha = 0.01$.

Table 3. Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W)

	CLARITY	APPROPRIATENESS	COHERENCE	USEFULNESS	VIABILITY
Kendall's W	0.158	0.202	0.155	0.242	0.280
Chi-square	29.828	38.149	29.331	45.734	52.921
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000

Furthermore, a Categorical Principal Components Analysis (CATPCA) was carried out for this reviewed version of the tool, which allowed us to check if all the items of the three blocks of questions presented a unique dimension. Firstly, the items related to the “parents’ context” presented 48% of the variance accounted for by dimension 1 (out of 59% in total) with component loadings above 0.563. The items about “older siblings’ context” present one dimension since it has an explained variance of 47% (over 60% of the total), with component loadings above 0.41. Finally, the items related to the “students’ context” presented 35% of the variance accounted for by dimension 1 (over 51% of the total), in which all component loadings are above 0.323.

The construct validity of the instrument was analysed using the Multidimensional scaling (PROXSCAL). The four Stress measures obtained scores close to zero, and the two fit measures that analyse the set of proximity measures between objects (Dispersion Accounted For or D.A.F. and Tucker's Coefficient of Congruence or CCT) are close to one. The results shown in Table 4 present adjustment indicators that confirm the existence of the three blocks of questions in the questionnaire. Lastly, an analysis to measure the internal consistency or reliability of the questionnaire based on the mean of the correlations between items through statistical Cronbach's Alpha presents values ranging from 0.866 in the “Parents’ context influence” block to 0.847 in the “Students’ learning context” one (Table 4).

Table 4. Stress and Fit Measures of the questionnaire

BLOCKS OF QUESTIONS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	STRESS MEASURES				FIT MEASURES	
		SBN ¹	STRESS I	STRESS II	S-STRESS	D.A.F.	C.C.T.
Parents' context influence	0.866	0.5380	0.23196	0.64543	0.12547	0.94620	0.97273
Older siblings' context influence	0.859	0.02847	0.16872	0.43816	0.06509	0.97153	0.98566

[CONTINÚA PÁGINA SIGUIENTE]

BLOCKS OF QUESTIONS	CRONBACH'S ALPHA	STRESS MEASURES				FIT MEASURES	
		SBN ¹	STRESS I	STRESS II	S-STRESS	D.A.F.	C.C.T.
Student's learning context	0.847	0.05098	0.22579	0.56588	0.10966	0.94902	0.97418

¹Sbn: Normalized Raw Stress

Data analysis

In this study, the data analysis procedures carried out include the description of the student responses collected through the questionnaire previously described. In order to establish possible relationships between the out-of-school contexts of the students, their parents and their older siblings on the learning of EFL, we conducted a correlational study using Spearman's rho correlation coefficient. Finally, to identify similar patterns that define the students' non-formal contexts of learning EFL, a Cluster analysis was conducted.

FINDINGS

Results of the descriptive study of the out-of-school contexts

The findings of the descriptive study indicate that the exposure to English and the use students make of it outside the school is quite low in the Spanish families, in both the monolingual and the bilingual school. Thus, learning a foreign language is an activity largely restricted to the school environment: it is just part of the curriculum.

Regarding the students' responses (see Appendix 1), they believe that most of their parents (87.6%) give great importance to the learning of a second language (item 1). However, when students are asked about their parents' written and oral skills in English (items 2 and 3), only 26.9% of the students agree or strongly agree that their parents have good written skills in English and 28.5% think they have good oral skills. Similarly, only 10.8% of students' parents are currently studying English (item 4) and only 15.1% of students receive help from their parents to complete their homework, assignments, etc. in English.

Furthermore, parents do not promote many activities to encourage the use of English at home. For example, 68.3% of parents do not watch the TV in the original version (from now on "OV") (English) (item 6) and 67.7% do not read books, magazines, newspapers, etc. in English (item 7). Most students (64%) say their par-

ents never communicate in English by phone, via video conference, etc. for personal purposes and/or work (item 8). When travelling abroad, only 48.4% of students aver that their parents communicate in English (item 9). Finally, 65.1% of students say that their parents have never lived in an English-speaking country (item 10).

With regard to the siblings' context (see Appendix 2), the students claim that their older siblings consider the knowledge of a foreign language to be of great importance. In fact, 85.2% agree with that idea, although this percentage is lower than among the parents. However, unlike the students' parents, the siblings' answers based on the grades they obtain in EFL indicate that most of them have a good command of written (65.1%) and oral (62.5%) English. Furthermore, most of the students' siblings (75.7%) are currently studying English, although they do not seem to support their siblings (the students) in doing assignments, homework, etc. in English. Only 23.7% of the students confirm that they receive help from their older siblings in these tasks.

The students' siblings do not watch TV in OV (English), as 46.7% of the students strongly disagreed with this statement. Neither do most of the siblings (53.9%) read books, magazines, newspapers, etc. in English (item 17), nor do they communicate in English by phone through video conferencing, etc. for personal purposes and/or work (item 18), as 61.8% strongly disagreed. Nevertheless, the use of English when travelling to a foreign country is more common among students' siblings (53.3%) than among their parents. Lastly, most of the siblings (74.3%) have never lived in an English-speaking country.

In relation to the students' own learning context (see Appendix 3), the answers reveal low exposure to and use of English out of school. Most students (59.1%) never communicate in English with their foreign relatives, and neither do they usually communicate in English with a friend, a neighbour, etc. (66.1%). Something similar happens with item 23, in which students admit to hardly ever practising English with foreign classmates that have been in their school for a cultural exchange who are still in touch with them. Actually, 66.1% of the students say they never contact such classmates and only 9.7% maintain regular contact with them. Approximately half of the sample (45.2%) studies English as an extracurricular subject in an English academy (item 24) while only 12.4% attend private lessons to learn English (item 25). It should be highlighted that 79.6% of the students have never participated in a cultural exchange in an English speaking country (item 26), while more than half of them (55.9%) say that when they travel abroad, they always try to communicate in English (item 27).

In relation to the use students make of English in their own social environment and in their country, we found that 60.2% never practise speaking in English

through Skype, Viber, etc. with English speakers (item 28). Similarly, 51.1% say they do not keep in contact with a foreign friend through WhatsApp, emails, social networks, etc. (item 29). When analysing the exposure to English and uses in leisure and entertainment activities, it is possible to see that although the students' answers are dispersed, there is predominantly low exposure to situations in which English is used. Thus, 50.6% of students never or hardly ever watch TV (movies, series, etc.) in English (item 30), and 69.4% barely read books, magazines, newspapers, etc. in English (item 31). Although these results could be understood simply to reflect the preferences of most young people, who usually prefer activities where technology is present or there is some kind of interactivity, it is true to say that there is evidently very low exposure to English on the Internet. Hence, while 55.4% say they always or often search on the Internet for the lyrics of those songs in English they do not understand (item 32), 51.6% say they barely use the Internet to watch programs and videos in English (item 33) and 64.5% usually do not play videogames, table games, etc. in English with their families and friends (item 34). Lastly, 86% of students deny having a blog in which they share their hobbies, thoughts, etc. in English (item 35).

Results of the correlational study between the out-of-school contexts

In order to calculate Spearman's rho correlation coefficient, the answers of each student (st) were matched with the answer of their parents (p) and their siblings (s). A positive and statistically significant correlation was found between them in items 6-16-30 in terms of their attitudes towards watching the TV in English (shown in the table as 'WTV') as shown in Table 5. As stated in the descriptive study, none of the three groups usually watches TV in OV (English).

The results of the items 7-17-31 related to reading books, magazines, newspapers, etc. in English (shown in table 5 as 'RB') reveal a similar pattern. As shown in Table 5, there are statistically significant relationships between students (st), their parents (p) and their siblings (s). This means that if the habit of reading in English is promoted at home by student's parents or siblings, it will probably be acquired by the student.

In items 8-18-29 related to entertainment in English, there is a positive and significant correlation in the frequency with which students (st), their parents (p) and their siblings (s) communicate in English through some technological medium (shown in the table as 'CE'). Two positive correlations between the students (st) and their siblings (s), and between the students' parents (p) and the students' siblings were found, although there was no relation between the students and their

parents (see Table 5). This means that, while the students' parents and siblings hardly ever use English for communicating with others, students seem to do so more often than the other members of their families.

According to the data shown in Table 5, there is a common response pattern between the students (st) and their parents (p) and siblings (s) when travelling abroad (items 9-19-27). They all seem to try to communicate in English (shown in table 5 as 'ET'), although the students are those who obtain higher values in this variable.

Table 5. Correlation coefficients between contexts for all the variables

	WTV _p	WTV _s	WTV _{st}						
WT _p	1	0.174	0.448**						
WT _s		1	0.395**						
WT _{st}			1	RB _p	RB _s	RB _{st}			
RB _p				1	0.217*	0.373**	CE _{st}		
RB _s					1	0.505**	0.288*		
RB _{st}						1	CE _p CE _s		
CE _p							1	0.129	
CE _s								1	0.354**
CE _{st}									1
ET _p									1
ET _s									
ET _{st}									

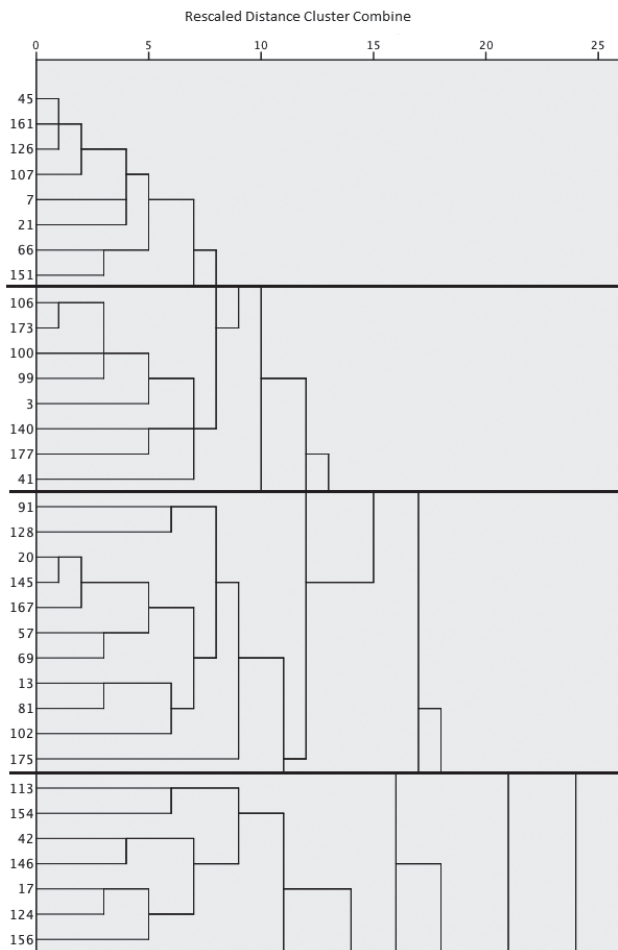
* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$.

Results of the cluster analysis

The descriptive analysis shows that, in general, the family environment does not stimulate EFL learning. According to the students, their parents have a low level of English proficiency, which makes the use of and contact with this language very rare. It could also be said that English is not the language used in activities of entertainment. Moreover, although the students believe their older siblings do have a better knowledge of English, their use of and contact with that language is generally minimal, and entertainment activities are generally performed in Spanish.

Despite this general description, which holds for students at both schools, there are some subgroups of students' families that have contexts with differential characteristics in relation to the way EFL is learnt. After a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis of cases based on Ward's minimum variance criterion, some similar characteristics to describe different contexts of learning English were found, as shown in the dendrogram below (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Dendrogram obtained through the Cluster analysis (cases)



As reflected in the dendrogram, the first learning context (identified as G1) is represented by a balanced number of cases at both schools. The agglomeration coefficients between each of the two cases in this Cluster go from 6.000 to 26.500 (see Appendix 4). This learning context comprises those families and students that best reflect the general case described above: English is not present in most of the daily routines, it is not a matter of voluntary study, and it is not used when travelling, for contact with other members of the family, or in leisure activities, etc. In this context, Spanish is the main language of communication.

The vast majority of these students' mothers hold a university degree and mainly work in the health and education sectors as pharmacists, nurses, early childhood education teachers and social workers, among others; while others work as cleaners or housewives. Most of the students' fathers in this group have a fairly high level of education and work as accountants, bankers, entrepreneurs, engineers and lawyers.

In contrast to the above group, there is another cluster (G2) whose agglomeration coefficients are between 7.000 and 33.571 (see Appendix 4) and whose members promote the learning of EFL at home. This group is mainly formed by students of the monolingual school. Furthermore, in these students' homes, it was found that Spanish and a second language are spoken in equal measure.

As for the level of studies completed by the students' mothers, the vast majority hold university studies. Nonetheless, the professions of the mothers in this group are mainly in the field of I.T., administration, secretarial duties, etc. On the other hand, the students' fathers have completed university studies. In fact, nearly all of them work in the field of business, I.T., law and engineering.

A third learning context (G3) would be represented by cases whose agglomeration coefficients are between 8.000 and 41.900 (see Appendix 4). These are students who mainly belong to the monolingual school. In this group 100% of the students only speak Spanish when communicating and their learning context does not promote the use of English in daily routines, they do not speak it when they go abroad either, it is not the common language used in entertainment activities, and it is not a matter of voluntary study. In addition, the vast majority of the students' mothers have university degrees. Many work as teachers, vets and doctors, while only some of them work in catering services and commerce, and some others are unemployed. On the other hand, the level of education of the fathers of these students is quite high and almost all of them have studied at the university. In fact, they mainly work as engineers, businessmen and administrators, among others.

In contrast to the previous group, G4 presents agglomeration coefficients between 15.000 and 41.900 (see Appendix 4) and a fairly balanced distribution of students at both schools. The number of cases in which only Spanish is spoken at

home is nearly the same as those in which besides this language, another one is spoken. Most of the students' mothers have studied A-levels, vocational training and university degrees, and they mainly work in the health and education fields as doctors, nurses, teachers, and some others work as housewives. On the other hand, the students' fathers have mainly completed university studies and most of them are secondary school teachers or doctors, while others work as insurance brokers, lawyers, or business managers, among others.

DISCUSSION

The first aim of our research concerned the development and validation of the "Questionnaire on the family environment factors that influence the learning of English as a Foreign Language", in order to collect information on the influence of students' socioeconomic setting on the learning of EFL. The data obtained from the Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance ($W= 0.161$) allowed us to validate the content of the questionnaire. Then, a Categorical Principal Components Analysis (CATPCA) and a Multidimensional scaling (PROXSCAL) indicated construct validity confirming the structure of the questionnaire and the dimensions reflected in it. Similarly, the internal consistency of the instrument (Cronbach's Alpha) presented very positive results.

The second aim, focused on the description of the non-school contexts involved in learning English, allowed us to identify a number of features that are associated with and influence students' English learning. On the one hand, the results suggest that both students' parents and siblings give great importance to the mastery of another language (around 90%), although they do not usually help the students with their English homework, assignments, etc. Furthermore, they do not often promote English in leisure activities at home (watching the TV, reading, etc.) but, unlike students' parents, about 33% of students' siblings try to do these kinds of activity. They rarely communicate in English, except when travelling abroad (about 50%), and most of them have never lived abroad. Nevertheless, the main differences found between the students' parents and the students' siblings were that although students' parents do not have a good command of oral and written English and about 70% are not currently studying English, the students' older siblings present more positive results: in general they have a good oral and written knowledge of English and almost 80% are currently studying English. In the case of the students, we found that they do not often communicate in English with an English-speaking friend, relative, etc. in their close or distant environment. However, around 60% do attend additional lessons in English, and almost 70% try

to communicate in English when travelling abroad. Moreover, around 20% of students sometimes uses English for different entertainment purposes at home (such as watching the TV, reading, using the Internet to look for things in English, etc.), something that does not usually occur in the case of students' parents or siblings.

The third aim was to establish possible relationships between the out-of-school contexts of the students, their parents and their siblings. For the variable *contact with English*, a statistically non-significant negative correlation between students and their parents ($\rho = -.030$, $p = .750$) was found, which means that students are currently studying English while their parents are not. Concerning the variable *use of English*, we see that students watch television in English when influenced by their parents ($\rho = .448$) and their siblings ($\rho = .395$) when this activity is promoted at home. Also, the fact that the students' parents and siblings read in English influences the students to follow suit. In relation to the variable *entertainment in English*, a significant correlation occurs between the three groups when communicating in English by phone, videoconference, etc., for personal purposes and/or work. Furthermore, significant correlations were found between the groups regarding communicating in English while travelling abroad. Finally, we can see that the students' siblings who have lived abroad are those whose parents have also experienced some sort of stay for at least three months.

The fourth aim, the identification of characteristic patterns that define the students' non-formal contexts of learning EFL, was analysed through Cluster analysis obtained by using Ward distance. Two possible solutions were found: the first one, which ranks 152 out of 186 cases into two groups (one consisting of 62 cases and another one of 90); and the second solution which divides the sample of 152 cases in four groups. This analysis allowed us to observe that, in general, the family context is not conducive to learning EFL. The students believe their parents have a low level of English proficiency, and their use and contact with this language is usually very low. It could also be said that English is not the language in which entertainment activities are carried out. Nevertheless, although students believe that their siblings do have better knowledge of English, their use and contact with that language are low and entertainment activities are not performed in English. In addition, the Student's t-distribution or analysis of variance revealed that there were no statistically significant differences between the cases of the different groups (2 or 4) depending on the schools, the studies completed by their parents or their parents' job. However, statistically significant differences were found ($p = .036$) between the groups in relation to the amount of time they spend speaking other languages (English, French, Catalan, German, etc.) at home beside Spanish.

The characteristics of the different contexts of learning EFL are reflected in four groups. Contexts G1 and G3 consist of those families and students from both schools that best reflect the general case described above (learning EFL is not present in the daily life routines, it is not studied voluntarily, it is not used on trips, or for keeping in contact with their families, it is not used in leisure activities, Spanish is the main language of communication, etc.). On the contrary, group G2, mainly formed by students of the monolingual school, presents a family context which is conducive to learning English (Spanish and another language are spoken at home in equal measure, and EFL learning is stimulated). Finally, G4 presents a balanced distribution of students between the two schools, and has the same proportion of students who only speak Spanish and those who speak another language (English, French, Catalan, German, etc.) in addition to Spanish.

CONCLUSIONS

The data collected in the European Survey on Language Competences (2012) presented poor results in some of the participating countries, raising questions about the role contextual factors play in the process of learning English as a Foreign Language. This study identifies some of the contextual factors which may contribute to language learning at secondary school level.

It is likely that the context that surrounds the student may have a significant impact on the way the student learns English. A student who is exposed to English in the family and social environment, and who takes advantage of the learning opportunities these environments provide, will probably be more motivated to learn a foreign language. In fact, according to Arribas (2016, p. 273), “research has shown that lower levels of motivation have to do with the minimum contact that these learners experience with the language outside the classroom context; they are not motivated to learn a language because they do not think it is useful for their everyday life”. These external factors involve the development of other skills that are not explained in the formal educational context, but they somehow transform the way the student learns a foreign language. Therefore, it is important that the students’ exposure to English is not limited to school, but that they take advantage of the learning opportunities offered in other areas of life. Ideally, harmony should be achieved between learning in a formal and a non-formal context that may allow progress in both settings.

The results obtained in this study highlight the low exposure Spanish students have to English outside the school and how little this language is promoted through daily routines and activities at Spanish homes. In the future, it would be

interesting to carry out a qualitative study based on case studies of some of the students in this sample so that the impact can be further analysed. Furthermore, it would be interesting to work closely with some schools implementing out-of-school activities since our research suggests they could have a meaningful impact on student's learning.

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Appendix 1. Percentages of response: Parents' context influence

ITEMS	RESPONSE OPTIONS				I TOTALLY AGREE
	I TOTALLY DISAGREE	I DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	I AGREE	
1. My parents think that knowing a foreign language is very important.	-	-	1.6	10.8	87.6
2. My parents' writing skills in English are very good.	17.2	23.1	32.8	16.7	10.2
3. My parents' oral skills in English are very good.	17.2	25.3	29.0	18.8	9.7
4. My parents are currently studying English	57.0	12.9	14.0	5.4	10.8
5. My parents help me with my English homework, assignments, etc.	53.2	17.7	14.0	8.6	6.5
6. My parents watch the TV in OV (English).	68.3	11.3	14.5	2.2	3.8
7. My parents read books, magazines, newspapers, etc. in English.	67.7	10.4	11.8	5.4	2.7
8. My parents communicate in English on the phone, through video conference, etc. for personal purposes and/or work.	64.0	14.5	9.7	8.6	3.2
9. My parents communicate in English when they travel to a foreign country.	25.8	12.4	13.4	15.6	32.8
10. My parents have lived abroad at least three months in an English speaking country.	65.1	7.5	8.1	2.7	16.7

Appendix 2. Percentages of response: Older siblings' context influence

ITEMS	RESPONSE OPTIONS				
	I TOTALLY DISAGREE	I DISAGREE	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	I AGREE	I TOTALLY AGREE
1. My siblings think that knowing a foreign language is very important.	2.0	1.3	10.5	18.4	67.8
2. My siblings' writing skills in English are very good.	3.9	8.6	22.4	34.2	30.9
3. My siblings' oral skills in English are very good.	3.9	8.6	25.0	30.3	32.2
4. My siblings are currently studying English	11.8	2.6	9.9	11.2	64.5
5. My siblings help me with my English homework, assignments, etc.	45.4	18.4	12.5	15.8	7.9
6. My siblings watch the TV in OV (English).	46.7	17.1	13.2	13.2	9.9
7. My siblings read books, magazines, newspapers, etc. in English.	53.9	15.1	15.8	8.6	6.6
8. My siblings communicate in English on the phone, through video conference, etc. for personal purposes and/or work.	61.8	13.2	14.5	7.2	3.3
9. My siblings communicate in English when they travel to a foreign country.	23.7	7.2	15.8	13.8	39.5
10. My siblings have lived abroad at least three months in an English speaking country.	74.3	2.6	3.9	0.7	18.4

Appendix 3. Percentages of response: Students' learning context

ITEMS	RESPONSE OPTIONS				
	NEVER	HARDLY EVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
1. I can communicate in English with one or several foreign relative/s.	59.1	16.7	11.3	9.1	3.8
2. I usually talk with an English-speaking friend, neighbour, etc.	47.8	18.3	15.1	9.7	9.1

[CONTINÚA PÁGINA SIGUIENTE]

THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT ON EXPOSURE TO ENGLISH

ITEMS	RESPONSE OPTIONS				
	NEVER	HARDLY EVER	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS
3. I practise English with English-speaking classmates that have been in my school for a cultural exchange and I often get in touch with them.	66.1	12.4	11.8	3.2	6.5
3. I am currently studying English in an academy.	46.2	3.2	3.2	2.2	45.2
4. I am currently attending private English lessons.	72.0	4.3	8.1	3.2	12.4
5. I have gone on a cultural exchange in an English speaking country.	79.6	3.8	-	0.5	16.1
6. I try to communicate in English when I travel abroad.	9.7	5.4	12.4	16.7	55.9
7. I practise my speaking in English by talking to English people I know through Skype, Viber, etc.	60.2	11.3	9.7	7.0	11.8
8. I get in touch with a foreign friend through WhatsApp, emails, social networks, etc.	51.1	8.1	11.3	9.1	20.4
9. I watch the TV in OV (English).	29.6	21.0	22.6	14.5	12.4
10. I read books, magazines, newspapers, etc. in English.	49.5	19.9	18.8	6.5	5.4
11. I search on the Internet songs' lyrics when they are in English and I don't understand what they say when I listen to them.	19.4	10.8	14.5	21.5	33.9
12. I use the Internet to watch programs and videos in English.	28.5	23.1	15.1	14.5	18.8
13. I usually play videogames, table games, etc. in English with my family, friends, etc.	48.9	15.6	15.1	10.8	9.7
14. I have a blog in which I share my hobbies, thoughts, etc. in English.	86.0	5.4	3.2	3.2	2.2

Appendix 4. Table of the groups and agglomeration coefficients obtained through the Cluster analysis

CASES	CLUSTER 1	CLUSTER 2	COEFFICIENTS
(G1)	45	161	6.000
	45	126	8.000
	45	107	11.000
	66	151	15.000
	7	21	19.000
	7	45	22.750
	7	66	26.500
(G2)	106	173	7.000
	100	106	15.500
	99	100	17.000
	3	99	23.750
	140	177	24.000
	3	140	31.600
	3	41	33.571
(G3)	106	145	8.000
	20	167	12.000
	13	81	17.000
	57	69	17.000
	20	57	23.500
	91	128	28.000
	13	102	30.500
	13	20	34.200
	13	91	39.250
	13	175	41.900
(G4)	106	124	15.000
	42	146	19.000
	17	156	26.500
	113	154	29.000
	17	42	33.833
	17	113	41.900

RECENSIONES

