

The influence of the parents' socio-educational level and parental encouragement on university students' motivational profile for learning English

Rosario Gil-Galván¹ & Inmaculada Martín-Espinosa²

Abstract

Fluency in other languages has become essential for proper integration and communication with other communities, societies, and cultures. Hence, it is of major importance to understand the factors which impact on English language learning, including the influence of parents on their children's learning during the higher education years, last stage before labor market. To this effect, this descriptive survey study with a sample of 689 students from the University of Seville describes the influence of the parents' socio-educational level and parental encouragement on the university motivational profile of future preschool and primary school teachers, doctors, and computer engineers to learn languages according to their academic goals for a successful socio-occupational integration. For this purpose, a descriptive data analysis of percentages, means, and standard deviations, Kruskal-Wallis tests and Pearson correlations have been carried out. The results show the prevalence of learning goals over the performance goals in their motivation, as well as a notable impact of the socio-educational level of parents on the parental support. In conclusion, parental encouragement, undergraduate degree programme, and the student's expected professional career are key factors in achieving a successful apprenticeship which facilitates their employability.

Keywords: *parental encouragement, socio-educational level, higher education, English language learners, academic achievement.*

Introduction

The twenty-first century is characterised by economic, communication and technological trends that have blurred the borders between countries (Rendón & Ferreira, 2013) and which have given rise to participation in broader communities in which foreign language proficiency is essential for integrating into them. Moreover, English stands out among other languages given its importance as a vehicle for gaining a better understanding of other societies and cultures (Lasagabaster, 2008) and the fact that it has become the lingua franca par excellence of the academic and professional worlds (Gil-Galván & Martín-Espinosa, 2021a). For this reason, it is important to identify the

¹ Prof., University of Seville, Spain, rosagil@us.es

² PhD Candidate in Education, University of Seville, Spain, inmmaresp1@alum.us.es

factors influencing the learning of languages, chiefly English, with a view to becoming successfully integrated into these new communities in both academic and socio-professional terms.

The set of those factors is called a ‘motivational profile’ and, although some years ago it appeared to be a priority research topic, the number and impact of studies in this respect have declined in recent years (Valle et al., 2015). Whereby this study focuses on how important it is to identify the motivational profile of those learning a foreign language for the purpose of fine-tuning their learning process and making it significant. Accordingly, it extrapolates the foregoing to university students who need to acquire the foreign language skills necessary for improving their academic performance, thus facilitating their future employability in an increasingly more complex, diverse and changing society (Serrano & De la Herrán, 2018).

Likewise, and according to Van der Zanden et al. (2018), in order to perform this study both personal and contextual factors have been taken into account with the aim of making up the motivational profile of university students for learning English as a foreign language. As to the personal factors, also called ‘personality traits’, they include the motivation, attitude and interest shown by students towards their studies or a specific module (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016).

Literature Review

Gardner and Lambert (1972), pioneers in this regard, have constructed a psychosocial model in which motivation is the main factor behind the learning of foreign languages. This concept has been defined as the desire to learn, together with the effort and favourable attitude necessary for achieving such a goal. In the same vein, Espí and Azurmendi (1996) have also observed that an attitude motivated by social factors and the desire to understand other cultures and peoples speaking different languages goes a long way to encouraging individuals to learn them. It warrants noting that, with time, these terms have been unified and have evolved. Consequently, motivation is now explained on the basis of the goals pursued by individuals through patterns of action comprising beliefs, attributions and emotions or feelings that drive behavioural intentions (Pintrich & Schunk, 2006). In the case at hand, university students pursue academic goals, which are approached here from a dual perspective. Specifically, they comprise, on the one hand, learning goals and, on the other, performance goals, which can be subdivided into those of achievements and social esteem (Elliot, 1999; Pajares et al., 2000):

- *Learning goals*. They refer to the involvement of students in their tasks and studies owing to their desire to learn, develop and improve their skills.
- *Performance goals*. Their objective is to demonstrate the capabilities of students or to help them to be seen in a positive light by others.
 - *Achievement goals*. Relating to the tendency to perform well and to make progress in academic settings.
 - *Social esteem goals*. Associated with learning aimed at obtaining the approval of parents, teachers and fellow students and avoiding their rejection.

As to the contextual factors, it warrants noting that social support is perceived as a relevant instrumental and emotional psychosocial variable during any learning process (Richardson et al., 2012). In this respect, authors like Tian and Sun (2018) stress that the development of students also involves the orientation of their teachers and their experiences, it being considered as a process of self-assessment and social construction of individuals. Other authors like Torres and Rodríguez (2006) emphasise that the socio-educational success of students is influenced by the perception that they have of their parents' appraisal of what they are studying and the support that they receive from them during the learning process, as well as their attitude towards education, the teaching profession and culture in general. Additionally, it is important to bear in mind that such a perception is affected by the socio-educational level of the parents of students, which, to a great extent, is determined by their academic qualifications (Ruiz, 2001).

By the same token, although the encouragement of parents can be approached from different perspectives, it should always be understood as being tantamount to their involvement in the socio-educational development and success of their children. Such encouragement offers students the opportunity to express their feelings and helps them to achieve emotional wellbeing (Chen et al., 2015), to reduce stress (Longás et al., 2018) and to increase satisfaction (Novoa & Barra, 2015), thus favouring the learning process (Saito et al., 2018). Accordingly, this research takes into consideration the foregoing as a hierarchical and linear chain for the wellbeing of students and society in general. It is understood here that the parental support that students receive affects their academic performance, quality of life and health (Alsubaie et al., 2019), all of which have a direct influence on their future socio-educational success, which, in turn, is influenced by both the quality

indices of the education system and the economy, culture and society of a country (Ezenwoke et al., 2018).

Therefore, the dichotomy between individual and contextual variables is reflected in this article, in which the spotlight is placed on both so as to identify the motivational profile of students in view of their academic goals. Consequently, that profile focuses, on the one hand, on individual variables associated with the motivation, interest and attitude of students when learning English as a foreign language at university. The study and development of these factors implies fostering their sense of competence, self-esteem, accomplishment and autonomy (Edel, 2003). At this point, it should be observed that autonomy has usually been addressed as an individual transformation that enables individuals to satisfy their basic needs and to take control of their own lives (Moleiro et al., 2017). In this study, that concept has been extrapolated to the field of education, it being conceived here as the process by which students acquire the wherewithal to embark on a learning process that allows them to develop with guarantees in relation to their future inclusion in society and the job market.

On the other hand, it is also assumed that the individual variables do not develop on their own, but are influenced by external factors among which the family environment stands out (Álvarez, 2015). For this reason, as well as studying these individual factors during the university learning process, parents have been considered as an affective contextual variable and a source of social support, above and beyond the help of teachers or peers (Lam et al., 2012), for completing the motivational profile of students. This decision has been arrived at for three reasons. The first is based on the fact that parental support is related to higher levels of autonomy (Bernal et al., 2020), above all as regards students taking engineering, healthcare and teacher training undergraduate degrees (López-Angulo et al., 2020), the three disciplines studied by the respondents here. The second is because parental support has been singled out as one of the most important affective contextual variables with a positive impact on the socio-educational success of university students (Chen et al., 2015). And the last because agents of socialisation are essential throughout the lives of individuals (Chong, 2017) and their influence is the most relevant and lasting (Ramos & González, 2017).

As to the direct influence of parental encouragement on learning English there are two pieces of evidence. One shows how both the socioeconomic status and educational level of parents influence the number of resources available, the participation of their children in academic activities, the support that they lend them and the educational setting as a whole (Liu & Chiang, 2019). Similarly, family background is associated with the motivation to learn. For instance, students with a good family background are more motivated to learn English than those from less well-off families. While the other, in contrast, has to do with those studies that have concluded that there is no statistically significant relationship between the family background of students and their motivation to learn English, on the one hand, and their academic performance in this respect, on the other (Arib, 2017).

So, in view of the foregoing, the motivational profile for learning foreign languages is defined here as the set of academic goals pursued by university students under the influence of their parents, for which reason it is a dynamic profile that varies depending on the individual and social context of each student. Therefore, the main research objective is to adopt an individual approach to identify the possible motivational profile of a sample of students taking different science undergraduate degrees (teacher training, medicine and computer engineering) through the different types of academic goals relating to the learning of English as a foreign language. As the main novelty with respect to other previous studies, the motivational profile of students is also analysed according to the social-educational level of their parents in terms of their academic qualifications, as well as the encouragement that they give them at university when studying English, as the study's object variable.

Method

Research Design

A survey-type study based on the administration of a questionnaire was conducted so as to perform both a descriptive analysis by means of percentages, means and standard deviations, plus an inferential analysis by means of Kruskal-Wallis tests and Pearson's correlation coefficient for the purpose of meeting the following research objectives:

1) To describe the motivational profile of students for learning English as a foreign language on the basis of their academic goals in terms of both their degree programmes and the socio-educational level of their parents.

2) To analyse the parental encouragement that the students receive when learning English as a foreign language, according to their degree programmes and the socio-educational level of their parents.

3) To determine whether or not there are any statistically significant differences in the motivational profile of students for learning English as a foreign language.

4) To discover whether or not there are any statistically significant differences in the parental encouragement that students receive when learning English as a foreign language.

Participants

The study population was made up of second-year university students (96.1%) taking preschool (22.8%) or primary school (32.4%) teacher training, medicine (23.5%) or computer engineering (21.3%) undergraduate degrees at University of Seville during the academic year 2019/2020. All the students taking these courses were invited to participate in the study ($N=1426$), of which 689 completed the questionnaire ($n=689$), accounting for 48 per cent of the four cohorts. Most of the respondents were aged between 18 and 21 (72.1%) or between 22 and 25 (20.4%), while 69.7 per cent were female and 30.3 per cent, male. Furthermore, the socio-educational level of their parents, the most important variable in this study, was as follows: 20.9 per cent with a basic education, 39.9 per cent with secondary education and 39.2 per cent with higher education.

As to the relationship between the degree taken by the students and the socio-educational level of their parents (Table 1), it is important to note the uniformity of the percentages obtained as regards the preschool teacher training undergraduate degree programme, in which the parents of 35.7 per cent of the students had completed secondary or higher education and those of 28.7 per cent of the students had a basic education. However, the educational level of the parents of the students taking the rest of the undergraduate degrees tended to be higher. For instance, the parents of most of the students taking primary school teacher training (40.8%) and computer engineering (53.1%) undergraduate degrees had completed secondary education, while those of the majority of the students studying medicine (53.7%) had gone to university.

Table 1

Distribution of the percentage of participants according to their undergraduate degree programme and the socio-educational level of their parents

Socio-educational level of parents	Undergraduate degree programme of students			
	Primary school teacher training	Preschool teacher training	Computer engineering	Medicine
Basic education	21.10%	28.70%	18.40%	15.40%
Secondary education	40.80%	35.70%	53.10%	30.90%
Higher education	38.10%	35.70%	28.60%	53.70%

A probabilistic cluster sample was employed, with a confidence level of 95 per cent ($p=q=50$ and a sample error of $\pm 2.7\%$). Second-year students were chosen intentionally, for it was assumed that they had had time to become familiar with the undergraduate degree that they were taking and their role as university students, while it allowed for performing longitudinal studies of a comparative nature, thus making it possible to gain a better understanding of how motivational profiles evolve during higher education.

Data Collection Tool

Data collection was performed with an instrument already employed by Gil-Galván & Martín-Espinosa, (2021b) to conduct similar research. Nevertheless, it was based on Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB), which was adjusted to higher education. To this end, an ethnocentric group translation was performed (Marín & Van Oss, 1991; Sartoriuys & Kuyken, 1994), while reorganising the items according to the research objectives established here. The final version of the questionnaire contained a series of demographic items (sex, age, undergraduate degree programme, course and educational level of parents), 86 items measured on a 4-point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=agree; 4=strongly agree) and 11 items measured on a semantic differential scale (1=low; 2=medium; 3=high). For this study, from among the 86 Likert-scale items 20 were chosen, which were classified as learning goals, achievement goals, social esteem goals and parental encouragement.

As to the questionnaire validation methods, the psychometric properties were estimated by performing an exploratory comparative analysis on the factorial model (with varimax rotation), in which an index of .855 was obtained in the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test and a p value of .000

in Bartlett's test of sphericity, the correlation between variables thus being considered as significant. In addition, the measure of internal consistency was high, with a Cronbach's alpha value of .832 for the items indicating a positive attitude, motivation and interest and a value of .900 for the negative ones.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered in person to the respondents in the university's lecture halls during the academic year 2019/2020, with the collaboration of the teaching staff, with whom the date, time and place were agreed upon. The questionnaire was administered to a total of 468 students divided into four groups from the degree in primary teacher training, two groups from the degree in preschool teacher training, two groups from the degree in medicine, and two groups from the degree in computer engineering. Subsequently, with a view to increasing the response rate due to the health crisis caused by COVID-19 at the time, which made access difficult for students, respondents were offered the opportunity to complete the questionnaire online, prior consent and in agreement with the student body through the faculty members and the student delegations of each one of the undergraduate degree programmes under study. For this purpose, the questionnaire was transcribed into an online format and a link was provided to the professors via e-mail to send it through the university's official platform to those students who had not completed the questionnaire in paper format could do so voluntarily online. This process resulted in a total of 221 questionnaires in online format. All data were entered into the SPSS statistical program (Version 25) regardless of whether the information came from the paper or online questionnaire, as they were identical in their entirety. Furthermore, all students filled in the questionnaire completely, so no missing values were considered.

Data Analysis

Data analyses were performed with the SPSS statistics program (Version 25). A *Kolmogorov-Smirnov* test was run to confirm that the data collected did not follow a normal distribution, establishing a confidence level of higher than 95 per cent ($p=.05$). Therefore, in addition to the descriptive analysis of percentages, means and standard deviations, Kruskal-Wallis tests were performed in order to identify any statistically significant differences between the groups of students, as well as Hedges' g to verify the effect sizes between them. Also, Pearson's correlation

coefficient has been included for determining the relationship between their academic goals and the parental encouragement that they had received.

Findings

Classic Assumption Test

The results of the normality test using *Kolmogorov-Smirnov test* with Lilliefors significance correction, homogeneity test and linearity test are presented in the classical assumption test. Once the *Kolmogorow-Smirnov* test was performed (Table 2), it was found that the sample of this study does not have a normal distribution, as the result is $p=.001 < 0.05$. Therefore, the H_0 is rejected, and the H_a is accepted, so the non-parametric statistic will be applied.

Table 2

Kolmogorov-Smirnov^a test results

Socio-educational level of parents		Statistic	df	Sig.	Description
Undergraduate degree programme of students	Basic education	.215	144	.001	No normal
	Secondary education	.212	275	.001	No normal
	Higher education	.212	270	.001	No normal

a. Lilliefors significance correction

Therefore, as the sample does not have a normal distribution, the Levene’s test is performed (Table 3) to check the homogeneity of variances assumption or homoscedasticity assumption. In this case, as $p=.001 < 0.05$, it is unlikely that the differences obtained in the sample variances were produced on the basis of random sampling from a population with equal variances. Therefore, the null hypothesis of equal variances is rejected, and it is concluded that there is a difference between variances in the population.

Table 3

Homogeneity test results

		Levene’s statistic	df 1	df 2	Sig.
Undergraduate degree programme of students	Based on the mean	9.873	2	686	.001
	Based on median	7.059	2	686	.001
	Based on the median and with df adjusted	7.059	2	674.617	.001
	Based on trimmed mean	10.329	2	686	.001

As the significance level of the deviation from linearity statistic is $p > .05$ (Table 4), the relationship between the means is linear and the assumption of linearity is met (Figure 1).

Table 4

Linearity test results

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Undergraduate degree programme of students * Socio-educational level of parents	Combined	8.067	2	4.034	3.006	.050
	Linearity	7.921	1	7.921	5.902	.015
	Deviation from Linearity	.147	1	.147	.109	.741

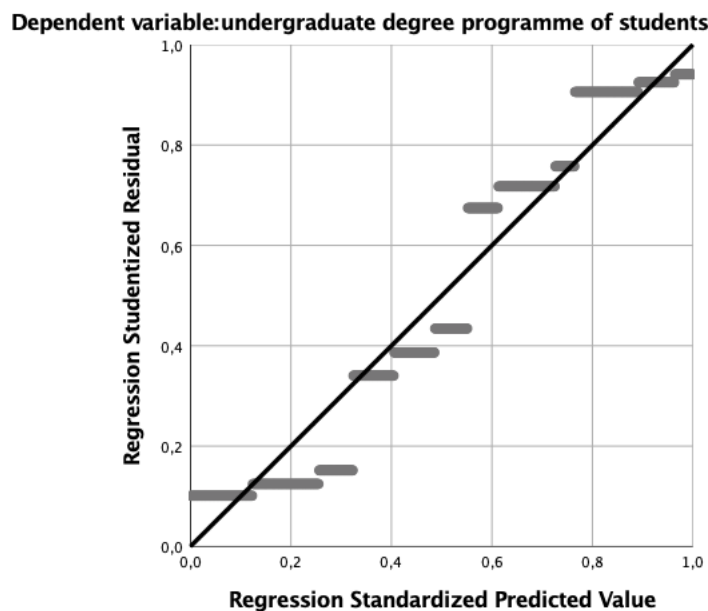


Figure 1. Heteroscedasticity test results

Descriptive statistic results

The descriptive statistic results of this study are presented below.

Academic goals of the students according to their undergraduate degree programme.

First of all, an attempt was made to outline the motivational profile of the students for learning English as a foreign language on the basis of their academic goals and according to the degree that they were taking (Table 5). The comparison of the values obtained for each type of academic goal

shows that the respondents gave the highest scores to the learning goals, followed by the achievement goals and, lastly, the social esteem goals.

As to the learning goals, the percentages and means were very high for all the items, except for ‘I try to understand everything that I see and hear in English’ in the case of the preschool teacher training undergraduates ($M=2.87, SD=1.018$). In the rest of the items, it was chiefly the medicine and computer engineering undergraduates who gave the highest scores.

With respect to achievement goals, the overall means were very high for those items relating to the future employability of the respondents: ‘Studying English is necessary for my undergraduate degree programme and professional career’ ($M=3.54, SD=.792$); ‘Studying English will help me to find a good job’ ($M=3.60, SD=.691$); and ‘I need English for my future job prospects’ ($M=3.80, SD=.501$).

In relation to the social esteem goals, all the items received lower scores than those relating to the previous goals. Noteworthy were the answers of the medicine undergraduates to the items ‘The rest will respect me more if I speak English’ ($M=2.59, SD=1.113$) and ‘I feel at ease when speaking in English with my classmates’ ($M=2.88, SD=1.087$). While, for their part, the preschool teacher training undergraduates were concerned about ‘the fact that other students seemed to be more proficient in English than them’ ($M=2.71; SD=1.126$) and that ‘their classmates laughed at them when they tried to speak English’ ($M=2.68; SD=1.120$).

Table 5

Academic goals of the students according to their undergraduate degree programme

Undergraduate degree programme of students	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly agree %	M	SD
LEARNING GOALS						
I would like to be able to speak many foreign languages perfectly						
Primary Sc. T.	3.1	11.2	16.1	69.5	3.52	.816
Preschool T.	5.1	12.2	21.8	60.9	3.38	.891
Computer Eng.	9.5	6.1	20.4	63.9	3.39	.968
Medicine	9.9	11.7	11.7	66.7	3.35	1.030
I would like to be able to read books in other languages and understand them easily						
Primary Sc. T.	3.6	7.7	24.3	64.4	3.50	.789
Preschool T.	11.6	11.0	21.3	56.1	3.22	1.046
Computer Eng.	3.6	5.8	22.5	68.1	3.55	.765
Medicine	5.8	4.5	12.8	76.9	3.61	.824
Studying English is important because it will enhance my culture						
Primary Sc. T.	2.3	9.9	36.0	51.8	3.37	.755
Preschool T.	2.0	6.5	34.0	57.5	3.47	.708
Computer Eng.	1.4	11.6	32.6	54.3	3.40	.750

Medicine	1.3	6.3	23.3	69.2	3.60	.666
	I try to understand everything that I see and hear in English					
Primary Sc. T.	8.2	16.8	35.5	39.5	3.06	.944
Preschool T.	12.4	21.6	32.7	33.3	2.87	1.018
Computer Eng.	2.2	8.0	22.5	67.4	3.55	.736
Medicine	4.5	8.4	27.1	60.0	3.43	.829
	I wish I could speak English more fluently					
Primary Sc. T.	0.5	9.6	23.7	66.2	3.56	.684
Preschool T.	1.3	10.4	23.4	64.9	3.52	.734
Computer Eng.	2.2	7.2	15.2	75.4	3.64	.714
Medicine	6.5	7.1	16.1	70.3	3.50	.885
ACHIEVEMENT GOALS						
	I keep up with my English, studying the language on a daily basis					
Primary Sc. T.	37.2	33.2	20.2	9.4	2.02	.977
Preschool T.	28.4	40.6	22.6	8.4	2.11	.916
Computer Eng.	27.7	26.3	19.7	26.3	2.45	1.156
Medicine	35.2	25.2	22.6	17.0	2.21	1.104
	I ignore distractions when studying English					
Primary Sc. T.	9.5	40.7	37.6	12.2	2.52	.829
Preschool T.	9.7	36.8	36.1	17.4	2.61	.886
Computer Eng.	8.8	40.8	38.1	12.2	2.54	.822
Medicine	10.2	36.3	36.3	17.2	2.61	.890
	Studying English is necessary for my undergraduate degree programme and professional career					
Primary Sc. T.	2.2	9.0	20.2	68.6	3.55	.751
Preschool T.	5.9	11.8	19.0	63.4	3.40	.913
Computer Eng.	2.2	5.8	11.6	80.4	3.70	.677
Medicine	3.8	7.6	19.7	68.8	3.54	.797
	Studying English will help me to find a good job					
Primary Sc. T.	0.5	8.6	25.7	65.3	3.56	.668
Preschool T.	0.6	10.4	27.3	61.7	3.50	.707
Computer Eng.	2.9	5.1	13.8	78.3	3.67	.706
Medicine	2.6	4.5	14.2	78.7	3.69	.680
	I need English for my future job prospects					
Primary Sc. T.	0.5	2.3	13.1	84.2	3.81	.476
Preschool T.	0.6	3.9	14.2	81.3	3.76	.548
Computer Eng.	0.0	0.7	6.9	92.4	3.92	.301
Medicine	1.2	3.7	19.3	75.8	3.70	.603
SOCIAL STEEM GOALS						
	I feel at ease when speaking in English with my classmates					
Primary Sc. T.	16.8	37.3	33.6	12.3	2.41	.910
Preschool T.	29.0	34.2	24.5	12.3	2.20	.996
Computer Eng.	17.4	31.3	24.3	27.1	2.61	1.065
Medicine	14.5	22.0	24.5	39.0	2.88	1.087
	I am concerned about the fact that other students seemed to be more proficient in English than me					
Primary Sc. T.	21.7	28.5	28.1	21.7	2.50	1.060
Preschool T.	18.8	25.3	22.1	33.8	2.71	1.126
Computer Eng.	36.2	29.7	17.4	16.7	2.14	1.091
Medicine	26.6	25.3	25.3	22.8	2.44	1.114
	I don't pay enough attention in my English classes					
Primary Sc. T.	26.1	45.9	20.7	7.2	2.09	.867
Preschool T.	28.9	36.2	25.7	9.2	2.15	.947
Computer Eng.	28.7	44.1	16.9	10.3	2.09	.931
Medicine	42.6	38.7	17.4	1.3	1.77	.778
	The rest will respect me more if I speak English					
Primary Sc. T.	28.8	34.2	21.6	15.3	2.23	1.033
Preschool T.	23.1	25.0	23.7	28.2	2.57	1.131
Computer Eng.	21.4	44.8	20.0	13.8	2.26	.950
Medicine	20.4	29.6	21.0	29.0	2.59	1.113
	I am concerned that my classmates laughed at me when I tried to speak English					
Primary Sc. T.	18.8	28.7	33.2	19.3	2.53	1.008
Preschool T.	20.8	21.4	27.3	30.5	2.68	1.120

Computer Eng.	33.6	27.0	26.3	13.1	2.19	1.047
Medicine	31.0	20.0	31.0	18.1	2.36	1.104

Academic goals of students according to the socio-educational level of their parents.

In a different vein, the same analysis was performed on the academic goals of the respondents, taking into account the socio-educational level of their parents (Table 6). As in the analysis by undergraduate programme, the most valued goals were those relating to learning, followed by achievements and, lastly, social esteem.

As regards the learning goals, the highest scores were obtained from those students whose parents had completed secondary education, with overall means very close to 4 (strongly agree), followed by those whose parents had gone to university, whose means ranged between 3 (agree) and 4 (strongly agree). On the contrary, the lowest mean was obtained for the item ‘I try to understand everything that I see and hear in English’, corresponding to those students whose parents only had a basic education ($M=2.97$, $SD=1.028$).

As to the achievement goals, it is striking that neither did the students ‘keep up with their English, studying the language on a daily basis’ ($M=2.17$, $SD=1.043$) nor ‘ignored distractions when studying English’ ($M=2.57$, $SD=.854$). By contrast, the items referring to ‘studying English is necessary for taking a university degree and pursuing a professional career’ ($M=3.54$, $SD=.792$), ‘useful for finding a good job’ ($M=3.60$, $SD=.691$) and ‘necessary for future job prospects’ ($M=3.80$, $SD=.501$) obtained means very close to 4 (strongly agree), regardless of the socio-educational level of the respondents’ parents.

It was the social esteem goals that received the lowest scores. The answers of some of the students whose parents only possessed a basic education show that they felt ‘uneasy when speaking in English in front of their classmates’ ($M=2.21$; $SD=.995$), ‘concerned about the fact that other students seemed to be more proficient in English than them’ ($M=2.62$; $SD=1.122$), ‘did not pay enough attention in their English classes’ ($M=2.28$; $SD=.948$) and, in addition ‘were worried that people would laugh at them when they spoke English’ ($M=2.62$; $SD=1.105$).

Table 6*Academic goals of students according to the socio-educational level of their parents*

Socio-educational level of parents	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly agree %	M	SD
LEARNING GOALS						
I would like to be able to speak many foreign languages perfectly						
Basic education	6.3	14.6	22.9	56.3	3.29	.938
Secondary education	3.6	8.4	16.7	71.3	3.56	.797
Higher education	9.7	10.4	14.9	65.1	3.35	1.010
I would like to be able to read books in other languages and understand them easily						
Basic education	9.9	9.9	18.3	62.0	3.32	1.007
Secondary education	3.7	5.6	24.1	66.7	3.54	.764
Higher education	6.2	7.7	18.1	68.0	3.48	.882
Studying English is important because it will enhance my culture						
Basic education	2.9	13.6	30.7	52.9	3.34	.819
Secondary education	0.7	7.5	33.6	58.2	3.49	.668
Higher education	2.3	7.2	30.7	59.8	3.48	.729
I try to understand everything that I see and hear in English						
Basic education	11.3	19.9	29.1	39.7	2.97	1.028
Secondary education	4.5	12.3	31.0	52.2	3.31	.855
Higher education	7.4	12.8	30.0	49.8	3.22	.936
I wish I could speak English more fluently						
Basic education	0	9.4	27.3	63.3	3.54	.662
Secondary education	0.4	6.4	18.0	75.3	3.68	.607
Higher education	5.8	10.8	18.5	65.0	3.43	.900
ACHIEVEMENT GOALS						
I keep up with my English, studying the language on a daily basis						
Basic education	37.3	35.2	14.1	13.4	2.04	1.027
Secondary education	33.5	32.3	21.9	12.3	2.13	1.016
Higher education	29.7	28.9	24.3	17.1	2.29	1.07
I ignore distractions when studying English						
Basic education	13.9	47.2	29.2	9.7	2.35	.839
Secondary education	8.5	36.4	40.4	14.7	2.61	.838
Higher education	8.3	36.7	37.9	17.0	2.64	.861
Studying English is necessary for my undergraduate degree programme and professional career						
Basic education	3.5	7.1	19.1	70.2	3.56	.778
Secondary education	1.5	9.7	20.1	68.8	3.56	.729
Higher education	5.4	8.4	15.3	70.9	3.52	.862
Studying English will help me to find a good job						
Basic education	0.7	8.5	29.8	61.0	3.51	.683
Secondary education	1.1	5.9	17.8	75.1	3.67	.639
Higher education	2.3	8.1	19.3	70.3	3.58	.740
I need English for my future job prospects						
Basic education	0.7	1.4	16.8	81.1	3.78	.491
Secondary education	0.4	2.2	10.3	87.1	3.84	.447
Higher education	0.7	3.7	14.9	80.6	3.75	.553
SOCIAL STEEM GOALS						
I feel at ease when speaking in English with my classmates						
Basic education	28.2	35.2	23.9	12.7	2.21	.995
Secondary education	17.8	32.7	30.9	18.6	2.50	.991
Higher education	15.7	28.8	25.8	29.6	2.69	1.060
I am concerned about the fact that other students seemed to be more proficient in English than me						
Basic education	21.8	23.2	26.1	28.9	2.62	1.122
Secondary education	26.6	31.1	21.7	20.6	2.36	1.086
Higher education	25.6	25.6	24.8	24.0	2.47	1.116
I don't pay enough attention in my English classes						
Basic education	22.3	39.6	25.9	12.2	2.28	.948
Secondary education	30.7	45.5	17.4	6.4	2.00	.861

Higher education	36.3	38.9	20.2	4.6	1.93	.864
	The rest will respect me more if I speak English					
Basic education	28.0	28.0	14.7	29.4	2.45	1.185
Secondary education	22.9	41.1	21.8	14.2	2.27	.971
Higher education	22.8	28.1	25.1	24.0	2.50	1.091
	I am concerned that my classmates laughed at me when I tried to speak English					
Basic education	19.9	27.0	24.1	29.1	2.62	1.105
Secondary education	23.2	29.6	33.0	14.2	2.38	.994
Higher education	29.9	18.4	29.9	21.8	2.44	1.134

The next step was to analyse the encouragement that the undergraduate students received from their parents when learning English, in terms of both their degree programme and the socio-educational level of their parents.

Parental encouragement received by students when learning English according to their undergraduate degree programme.

As to degree programmes (Table 7), the students received plenty of parental encouragement when learning English. They were of the mind that ‘their parents stressed to them how important it was to study English’ ($M=3.62$, $SD=.664$) and ‘to be proficient in the language after finishing university’ ($M=3.42$, $SD=.879$). Likewise, ‘they encouraged them to practice the language’ ($M=3.29$, $SD=.921$) and ‘to continue to study it during their time at university’ ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.068$). On the contrary, it is true that they appreciated that ‘their parents did not pay enough attention to their English studies’ ($M=2.26$, $SD=1.099$ for primary school teacher training undergraduates; $M = 2.21$, $SD = 1.155$ for preschool teacher training undergraduates; $M=2.16$, $SD=2.16$ for computer engineering undergraduates), except for those of the medicine undergraduates ($M=2.64$, $SD=1.268$).

Table 7

Parental encouragement received by students when learning English according to their undergraduate degree programme

Undergraduate degree programme of students	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly agree %	M	SD
	My parents paid enough attention to my English studies during my childhood and adolescence					
Primary Sc. T.	32.4	27.0	22.5	18.0	2.26	1.099
Preschool T.	37.6	24.2	17.8	20.4	2.21	1.155
Computer Eng.	41.5	21.8	15.6	21.1	2.16	1.182
Medicine	29.8	14.9	16.8	38.5	2.64	1.268

My parents stressed to me how important it was to study English						
Primary Sc. T.	1.4	6.3	23.4	68.9	3.60	.670
Preschool T.	1.3	8.4	24.5	65.8	3.55	.704
Computer Eng.	2.1	5.5	18.6	73.8	3.64	.684
Medicine	1.3	3.1	18.2	77.4	3.72	.586
My parents stressed to me to continue studying English during my time at university						
Primary Sc. T.	6.8	15.4	24.0	53.8	3.25	.952
Preschool T.	15.5	18.1	23.9	42.6	2.94	1.109
Computer Eng.	15.2	18.8	28.3	37.7	2.88	1.081
Medicine	17.7	16.5	25.9	39.9	2.88	1.125
My parents stressed to me to be proficient in English after finishing university						
Primary Sc. T.	2.3	10.0	25.0	62.7	3.48	.767
Preschool T.	5.2	13.0	16.2	65.6	3.42	.906
Computer Eng.	9.4	14.5	19.6	56.5	3.23	1.020
Medicine	3.8	12.0	16.5	67.7	3.48	.850
My parents encouraged me to practice English						
Primary Sc. T.	2.7	10.4	27.9	59.0	3.43	.786
Preschool T.	4.5	19.5	22.7	53.2	3.25	.924
Computer Eng.	10.1	21.7	21.7	46.4	3.04	1.045
Medicine	7.0	11.4	20.3	61.4	3.36	.939

Parental encouragement received by students when learning English according to the socio-educational level of their parents

After analysing the encouragement that the students received from their parents, taking into account the latter's socio-educational level (Table 8), it was those students whose parents had gone to university who gave the highest scores to all the items, followed by those whose parents had completed secondary education. In contrast, those students whose parents only possessed a basic education 'had received very little help from them during their childhood and adolescence as to learning English' ($M=1.84$; $SD=1.052$), although 'they now encouraged them to practice it' ($M=3.05$; $SD=1.062$) and 'stressed the importance of being proficient in the language' ($M=3.20$; $SD=1.051$).

Table 8

Parental encouragement received by students when learning English according to the socio-educational level of their parents

Socio-educational level of parents	Strongly disagree %	Disagree %	Agree %	Strongly agree %	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
My parents paid enough attention to my English studies during my childhood and adolescence						
Basic education	52.4	23.1	12.6	11.9	1.84	1.052
Secondary education	34.7	24.5	20.8	20.1	2.26	1.137
Higher education	25.9	20.0	19.6	34.4	2.63	1.203

My parents stressed to me how important it was to study English						
Basic education	2.1	10.5	23.8	63.6	3.49	.768
Secondary education	2.2	4.4	25.2	68.2	3.59	.679
Higher education	0.4	4.9	16.3	78.4	3.73	.566
My parents stressed to me to continue studying English during my time at university						
Basic education	17.0	22.0	25.5	35.5	2.79	1.105
Secondary education	10.5	16.5	30.0	43.1	3.06	1.008
Higher education	13.6	14.8	20.5	51.1	3.09	1.096
My parents stressed to me to be proficient in English after finishing university						
Basic education	10.8	14.4	18.7	56.1	3.20	1.051
Secondary education	2.2	10.8	23.5	63.4	3.48	.776
Higher education	4.2	12.2	16.7	66.9	3.46	.864
My parents encouraged me to practice English						
Basic education	10.7	21.4	20.0	47.9	3.05	1.062
Secondary education	3.0	13.8	29.5	53.7	3.34	.826
Higher education	5.7	12.9	19.7	61.7	3.38	.914

Hypothesis testing

Based on the above results, this study proposes a total of four hypotheses in this section. The respective Kruskal-Wallis tests were then run to detect any statistically significant differences in the motivational profile of the students for learning English as a foreign language. The results of each of the tests are presented below.

H₁: There are statistically significant differences in the academic goals of the students according to their undergraduate degree programme.

With respect to the degrees taken by the students (Table 9), there were indeed statistically significant differences in their academic goals. The results show that the medicine undergraduates placed the accent on both learning and social esteem goals, whereas for their computer engineering counterparts achievement goals were the most important. However, the future teachers among the respondents, namely, the preschool and primary school teacher training undergraduates, did not single out any type of academic goal in particular.

Table 9

Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in the academic goals of the students according to their undergraduate degree programme

ACADEMIC GOALS	<i>p</i>	Primary Sc. T.	Preschool T.	Computer Eng.	Medicine
LEARNING GOALS					
I would like to be able to read books in other languages and understand them easily	.001	333.81	295.55	346.30	370.19

Studying English is important because it will enhance my culture	.007	316.09	338.38	322.84	375.03
I try to understand everything that I see and hear in English	.001	303.16	270.61	402.61	377.28
ACHIEVEMENT GOALS					
I keep up with my English, studying the language on a daily basis	.007	311.22	331.59	381.20	342.48
I ignore distractions when studying English	.011	333.46	310.85	371.27	333.12
Studying English is necessary for my undergraduate degree programme and professional career	.002	320.07	307.03	359.81	362.10
I need English for my future job prospects	.001	345.36	334.61	373.55	316.07
SOCIAL STEEM GOALS					
I feel at ease when speaking in English with my classmates	.001	321.47	282.06	356.18	405.33
I am concerned about the fact that other students seemed to be more proficient in English than me	.001	342.78	377.49	282.22	333.05
I don't pay enough attention in my English classes	.001	346.83	356.11	341.96	282.66
The rest will respect me more if I speak English	.001	313.87	372.21	320.33	375.08
I am concerned that my classmates laughed at me when I tried to speak English	.001	347.79	373.15	289.10	319.27

H2: There are statistically significant differences in the academic goals of the students according to the socio-educational levels of their parents.

As to the differences in the respondents' academic goals in relation to the socio-educational level of their parents (Table 10), statistically significant differences were detected in the three types of academic goals analysed here. In the case of the learning goals, it was those students whose parents had completed secondary education who stood out most. Moving on to the achievement goals, those students whose parents had gone to university paid more attention to the task at hand ($p=.002$), while those whose parents had completed secondary education thought that 'studying English would be useful for finding a good job' ($p=.020$). With respect to the social esteem goals, it was the respondents whose parents had gone to university who gave the highest scores, followed by those whose parents had completed secondary education and, lastly, those whose parents only possessed a basic education.

Table 10

Kruskal-Wallis test for differences in the academic goals of the students according to the socio-educational levels of their parents

ACADEMIC GOALS	<i>p</i>	Basic	Secondary	Higher
LEARNING GOALS				
I would like to be able to speak many foreign languages perfectly	.006	314.04	366.04	337.90
I try to understand everything that I see and hear in English	.006	292.23	351.20	337.68
I wish I could speak English more fluently	.005	319.92	357.72	315.89

ACHIEVEMENT GOALS				
I ignore distractions when studying English	.002	292.05	351.68	355.41
Studying English will help me to find a good job	.020	306.61	351.53	333.29
SOCIAL STEEM GOALS				
I feel at ease when speaking in English with my classmates	.001	283.94	337.30	371.27
I don't pay enough attention in my English classes	.001	381.64	326.74	313.50

H3: There are statistically significant differences in the parental encouragement received by students when learning English in terms of their undergraduate degree programme.

To meet the objective of determining whether or not there were any statistically significant differences in the parental encouragement that the students received to study English in terms of the degree that they were taking, a Kruskal-Wallis test was run (Table 11). In this respect, statistically significant differences were detected in the lengths to which their parents had gone to help them to learn English in the previous educational stages ($p=.002$), with the medicine undergraduates having received more help from their parents in this respect than the rest of the respondents. There were also differences as to whether or not the students' parents believed that they ought to continue to study English throughout their time at university ($p=.001$) and as to whether or not they encouraged them to practice the language as much as possible ($p=.004$). In this case, the computer engineering undergraduates gave the lowest scores to these items, while it was the future teachers who gave them the highest ones, namely, those whose parents encouraged them most to improve their English during their time at university.

Table 11

Kruskal-Wallis test of the parental encouragement received by students when learning English in terms of their undergraduate degree programme

Variables	<i>P</i>	Primary Sc. T.	Preschool T.	Computer Eng.	Medicine
My parents paid enough attention to my English studies during my childhood and adolescence	.002	337.17	327.21	318.44	393.13
My parents stressed to me to continue studying English during my time at university	.001	375.70	324.29	312.32	314.77
My parents encouraged me to practice English	.004	357.40	326.51	294.09	353.91

H4: There are statistically significant differences in the parental encouragement received by students when learning English according to the socio-educational level of their parents.

With regard to the encouragement that the students received from their parents to learn English in terms of the latter's socio-educational level, the Kruskal-Wallis test detected statistically significant differences in all the items (Table 12). This confirms that the academic qualifications of the students' parents influenced the amount of encouragement and support that they gave them during the learning process, whereas it was those students whose parents had gone to university who received the greatest amount of encouragement and support from them.

Table 12

Kruskal-Wallis test of the parental encouragement received by students when learning English according to the socio-educational level of their parents

Variables	<i>p</i>	Basic	Secondary	Higher
My parents paid enough attention to my English studies during my childhood and adolescence	.001	266.10	336.24	393.13
My parents stressed to me how important it was to study English	.002	312.04	332.17	365.85
My parents stressed to me to continue studying English during my time at university	.014	298.25	339.83	353.56
My parents stressed to me to be proficient in English after finishing university	.034	303.24	341.42	346.52
My parents encouraged me to practice English	.006	297.31	338.29	355.47

Hedges' g and Pearson's correlation coefficient

In addition to Kruskal-Wallis tests in terms of the degree the students were taking for the constructs learning goals ($\chi^2=19.785$, $p=.001$), achievement goals ($\chi^2=14.987$, $p=.002$), social esteem goals ($\chi^2=8.797$, $p=.032$) and parental encouragement ($\chi^2=13.680$, $p=.003$), the effect size was calculated by considering pooled standard deviations (Hedges, 1981). The results reveal that the magnitude of the differences between the groups is generally small. However, the magnitude of the differences is close to medium between the groups of computer engineering with the primary ($g=.416$) and preschool teacher training undergraduates ($g=.416$) in the achievement goals.

The same Kruskal-Wallis tests were also conducted for parental academic level, where the data were learning goals ($\chi^2=18.856$, $p=.000$), achievement goals ($\chi^2=10.328$, $p=.006$), social esteem goals ($\chi^2=5.021$, $p=.081$) and parental encouragement ($\chi^2=31.683$, $p=.001$). On this occasion, the calculation of the effect size of Hedges' *g* (1981) provided very interesting results in this respect,

so that the magnitude of the differences found in the learning goals construct between students whose parents only completed basic education and those who completed secondary education is close to the mean ($g=.432$). Likewise, the magnitude of the differences between students whose parents completed basic education and those whose parents completed secondary education ($g=.447$) and higher education ($g=.581$) is medium for the parental encouragement construct. Therefore, the parental encouragement which university students receive during their English learning process is influenced by the academic level of their parents.

However, the values obtained for Pearson’s correlation coefficient (Table 13) confirm that, although the correlation between the parental encouragement received and the students’ academic goals for learning English was significant, it was considered to be low ($r=.234, p=.000$ for learning goals; $r=.317, p=.001$ for achievement goals; $r=.093, p=.017$ for social esteem goals), for which reason parental encouragement did indeed have an influence on the efforts that the students put into learning English, although without it being the most relevant factor. Lastly, it should also be noted that there was a moderate correlation between the three academic goals, above all the influence of the learning goals on those of achievement ($r=.494; p=.001$) and social esteem ($r=.484; p=.001$).

Table 13

Pearson’s correlation coefficient between parental encouragement received and the student’s academic goals for learning English

		Parental encouragement	Learning goals	Achievement goals	Social esteem goals
Parental encouragement	Pearson	1	.234**	.317**	.093**
	Sig.		.001	.001	.017
Learning goals	Pearson	.234**	1	.494**	.484**
	Sig.	.001		.001	.001
Achievement goals	Pearson	.317**	.494**	1	.301**
	Sig.	.001	.001		.001
Social esteem goals	Pearson	.093**	.484**	.301**	1
	Sig.	.017	.001	.001	

Discussion

Learning goals and performance goals in the motivational profile of university students for learning English as a foreign language

The findings described above emphasise the prevalence of learning goals over the performance kind when university students were learning English as a foreign language. It is possible to observe a motivational profile for learning foreign languages characterised by the commitment of the students and their desire to learn, develop, and improve their skills in this regard. In contrast, demonstrating their capacity or being held in high esteem by their fellow students was relegated to second place in their motivational profile. In this connection, it is important to stress the influence of both the type of degree taken by the respondents (Al-Mubireek, 2020) and the socio-educational level of their parents (Da Cuña et al., 2017) on those learning goals. In light of the results of the analysis of the differences in the motivational profile for learning English as a foreign language, it warrants noting that, on the one hand, the medicine and computer engineering undergraduates stood out above their preschool and primary school teacher training peers, namely, the future teachers. On the other hand, those students whose parents had gone to university stood out above those whose parents only possessed a basic education. In this sense, the results obtained concur with those of other studies also performed in Spain, namely, that the higher the educational level of students' parents, the better their academic results (Fajardo et al., 2017).

Achievement goals in the motivational profile of university students for learning English as a foreign language

As to the performance goals relating to the respondents' motivation to learn English as a foreign language, the achievement goals, associated with the tendency to obtain better academic results and to make progress, clearly prevailed over the social esteem goals, relating to learning aimed at winning approval and avoiding the rejection of parents, teachers and classmates. For their part, the achievement goals received very high scores for those items referring to the students' future job prospects. Moreover, there were more statistically significant differences in terms of the degree being taken by the students than in relation to the socio-educational level of their parents. So, this confirms the link between learning foreign languages, the degree taken by the students and their future job prospects, because for certain degrees English is essential for finding a job (Asghar et

al., 2018). The students whose parents possessed a basic education also underscored their lack of concentration, together with the fact that they were not encouraged to study English on a daily basis. This finding is consistent with the results obtained by Barca et al. (2017), who claim that the family atmosphere is a factor that has a relevant influence on the attitude of students during the learning process.

Social esteem goals in the motivational profile of university students for learning English as a foreign language

Regarding the social esteem goals, they received very low scores in terms of both the degree being taken by the students and the socio-educational level of their parents. Furthermore, the medicine undergraduates were keener to learn English for the purpose of winning the respect of their classmates and of feeling more at ease with their peers when speaking English than the rest of the respondents. On the contrary, the future preschool teachers felt uncomfortable about speaking English in front of their classmates and even showed concern about being mocked for not being as proficient in the language as others. By the same token, those students whose parents only possessed a basic education also felt anxious about speaking English. Moreover, they were worried that their classmates might possess better oral language skills, although they were unable to remedy this situation because they did not pay enough attention in their English classes in order to improve their language skills.

Parental encouragement received by university students when learning English as a foreign language

Continuing with the next research objective, the students considered that they received plenty encouragement from their parents to learn English as a foreign language (Genc & Aydin, 2017). However, a large number of statistically significant differences were detected between the groups of students in terms of the socio-educational level of their parents. Specifically, only those students whose parents had gone to university claimed to have received their help to learn foreign languages during the primary and compulsory secondary education stages. It was also those parents who mostly stressed to their children the importance of learning English, plus the need for studying it at university and for practicing it as much as possible. On the contrary, those parents with a basic education were unaware of these needs and thus attached little importance to them.

All these findings are consistent with those of Longás et al. (2018), who underscore that parents whose educational level is considered to be basic or low recognise how this is a problem when helping their children in the learning process. Additionally, a family environment conducive to academic study, the possibility of parents helping and encouraging their children to study and the urge to excel and to achieve a better sociocultural status than that of the previous generation can be very important factors during the learning process (Martínez et al., 2010).

Therefore, in line with the results obtained by Bullón et al. (2017) and Giménez and Castro (2017) it can be claimed that the educational level of parents is a factor that has a powerful influence on the encouragement that they give their children to learn foreign languages, for the higher their educational level is, the greater the amount of quality time they will devote to encouraging their children to study and to supervising them. In other words, it is those parents who went to university who offer their children most support. Even so, although parental encouragement is an important factor in the effort that university students put into learning foreign languages, it is not the one that has the greatest impact on their motivational profile, since factors like the degree taken and career goals have a greater influence on it (Gil-Galván & Martín-Espinosa, 2021b).

Conclusions and Implications

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussions in this study some conclusions can be reached. At this point, it should be noted that parents as agents of socialisation in the school setting are now more aware than ever of the importance of cooperation, participation and commitment (Aguar et al., 2020), thanks in part to the education policies that have been implemented with the aim of improving the quality of family life (Fernández et al., 2015) which, in turn, favours and facilitates the socio-educational success of students (Sadiku & Sylaj, 2019). Whereby, as a proposal for improving the current state of affairs based on the available evidence, society should continue to place the accent on the importance of the influence of parents on the learning process of their children from an early age, as well as on those factors such as the students themselves, faculty and the educational context (Lee & Pun, 2021), so as to make a positive contribution when they are adults, as well as in their preparation and planning before entering university (Gao & Ng, 2017). To this end, the carrying out of activities in socialising contexts, such as the school setting and the family environment, makes it possible to put into practice the foregoing (Arellanos & Peralta, 2015), thus favouring the learning of content and the best way of achieving this.

The main implication of this study points out that as long as universities aim to improve the education of their students in any subject, they should emphasize on the encouragement and support that parents can provide them. This idea has arisen due to a large part of the students' education has been supervised in the previous educational stages by their parents. Therefore, if families are more involved in the learning process of their children in the university stages and are provided with tools (workshops, resources, talks...) that allow them to continue helping their children, better results will be obtained than if they are relegated to a secondary position.

The primary novelty of the present research with respect to other previous studies is the analysis carried out according to the social-educational level of the university students' parents in terms of their academic qualifications, as well as the encouragement they give them at university when studying English in order to determine how these variables impact on the motivational profile of the students. Lastly, our study's limitations include the fact that enquiries into the importance of the family for university students are few and far between, although this is understandable because those students are adults. However, we believe that the role of parents during this educational stage is vital because it is the last before their children enter the job market. For this reason, it would also be interesting to sound out the opinion of the parents themselves on the issues that we have broached here, insofar as they belong to a generation very different from that of their children in that proficiency in foreign languages was not as important then as it is now. Therefore, this limitation could be a future line of research. Similarly, we consider that it is essential to study the encouragement that primary and compulsory secondary school pupils receive from their parents to learn foreign languages, so as to analyse the problems to which the respondents referred in our study, like, for example, the lack of supervision on the part of their parents as regards learning English in these educational stages. And all for the purpose of fostering parental encouragement and improving the skills, socio-educational level, and job prospects of future citizens.

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