MOTIVATION AND L2 RECEPTIVE VOCABULARY KNOWLEDGE OF SPANISH EFL LEARNERS AT THE OFFICIAL SCHOOL OF LANGUAGES[1]

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1. Introduction

The Official School of Languages (Escuela Oficial de Idiomas - EOI) is a Spanish state-funded school specialising in the non-obligatory teaching of modern foreign languages to adult and adolescent learners.[2] In this school, each language course is divided into three levels according to the *Common European Framework of Reference* [CEFR] (Council of Europe 2001): waystage or elementary, equivalent to CEFR, A2; threshold or intermediate, equivalent to CEFR, B1; and vantage or upper intermediate, equivalent to CEFR, B2. Each of these levels presupposes two years of instruction.

The lack of obligatoriness of this particular type of teaching makes it an attractive laboratory for the analysis of the possible relationship between motivation and any dimension of language achievement, as this absence of obligatoriness might affect attitudinal features, such as learner's motivation, interest, attitude, or willingness to communicate.

The present work attempts to explore the connection between foreign vocabulary acquisition and motivation. In particular, we attempt to investigate the relationship between the size of receptive vocabulary, i.e. the number of words that learners know or vocabulary breadth, and the motivation of a group of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) EOI learners in two consecutive academic

years. In order to measure their receptive vocabulary knowledge, we make use of the 2,000-word frequency-band from the receptive version of the Vocabulary Levels Test (2K VLT) (Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham 2001, version 2). Learner motivation is measured through an adaptation of Gardner's (1985) A/MTB questionnaire.

1.1. Receptive Vocabulary and the Vocabulary Levels Test

The exploration of the different facets of foreign language vocabulary knowledge is a recurring theme in the specialized literature of the last few decades (e.g. Schmitt 2000; Qian 2002; López Mezquita 2005; Nation 2006; Staehr 2008). Productive word knowledge is understood to be an active skill that consists of the production of words that match, in speaking or writing, the speaker's intended meaning. Receptive knowledge is frequently considered a passive performance that involves the perception of a word and understanding of its meaning while listening and reading (Nation 2001). Different degrees of knowledge must be considered for a comprehensive definition of these two processes. These degrees are inextricably linked to what knowing a word consists of, a set of issues which can be summarized thus: knowing its form, its meaning, and its use (Nation 1990, 2001; Meara 1996).

One of the best-known tools for measuring the ability to learn a word receptively is the Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) (Nation 1983, 1990), a word-definition matching format test that measures subjects' receptive vocabulary breadth or size based on the recognition of words of graded frequency lists. The VLT has been used in a large number of studies (e.g. Laufer 1998; Cobb and Horst 1999; Cameron 2002; Jiménez Catalán and Terrazas 2005-2008; Canga Alonso 2013). As Terrazas and Agustín Llach (2009: 116-117) note, the test has been traditionally used at university level (Waring 1997; Cobb and Horst 1999; Nurweni and Read 1999; Pérez Basanta 2005). It is only in the last decade that the test has been implemented with younger learners (e.g. Qian 2002; Jiménez Catalán and Terrazas Gallego 2005-2008; Agustín Llach and Terrazas Gallego 2012; Canga Alonso 2013). Table 1 presents a summary of previous estimates of receptive vocabulary size of L2[3] learners of English at primary and secondary level after having received longer or shorter periods of instruction. Studies are arranged according to the receptive vocabulary size of learners.

As can be seen, the results obtained show considerable differences in receptive vocabulary knowledge as regards size. L2 learners' vocabulary knowledge figures are also difficult to compare on account of differences concerning the learner, the learning context, and the test administered for calculating vocabulary size. However, we consider this table to be relevant in order to show that, as far as we

Study	Receptive Vocabulary Size	Hours of Instruction	L1	Participants learning context
Takala (1985)	1,500 words	450	Finnish	Secondary School, grade 9
Milton and Meara (1998)	1,200 words	400	German	Secondary School
López–Mezquita (2005)	941 words	1049	Spanish	Secondary Education (4th ESO[4]/10th Grade)
Agustín Llach and Terrazas Gallego (2012)	663 words	629	Spanish	Primary Education (6th Grade)
Canga Alonso (2013)	935 words	1049	Spanish	Secondary Education (4th ESO/10th Grade)

TABLE 1: Average receptive vocabulary size in L2 English

know, the receptive vocabulary knowledge of learners from the Official School of Languages has not yet been measured by the 2K VLT or by any other receptive vocabulary test, and the data obtained in our sample will be compared with the results presented in Table 1.

1.2. Motivation and Foreign Vocabulary Knowledge

The connection between motivation and language learning has been widely reported in the literature about Foreign Language learning. The development of several theoretical models attests this relationship since Gardner and Lambert's (1972) pioneering Socio-Psychological Model. According to Gardner (1985: 11), motivation towards language learning is the desire to achieve that language, the learner's immediate goal, by means of effort, want or desire, and affect or attitude. This model covers integrative and instrumental orientations, the learner's ultimate reason for learning the language. Thus, while integrative orientation is defined by learners' willingness to learn the language in order to become part of the target language community, instrumental orientation is learners' desire to command the foreign language for practical reasons. According to Gardner, Tremblay and Masgoret (1997), instrumental orientations, as opposed to integrative ones, are vital in language learning. Despite the importance of this attempt to determine the types of motivation, different

studies reveal the need for further classifications (Clément and Kruidenier 1983; Crookes and Schmidt 1991). Hence, the Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan 1985; Noels, Pelletier, Clément and Vallerand 2000; Noels 2001), contributed with two categories of motivation: (1) extrinsic motivation, based on the external factors that influence foreign language learning, and (2) intrinsic motivation, which refers to the interest generated by the activity itself. It should be emphasized that any association between instrumental motivation and some kind of extrinsic motivation, and between intrinsic motivation and some forms of integrative motivation should take into account the different conceptualizations of these terms (see Gardner 1985: 11-12). In this paper, we will use the intrinsic-extrinsic distinction.

In recent decades, a considerable number of studies have explored the link between learners' motivation and foreign language achievement and, in general terms, have identified a positive relationship between both (e.g. Schmidt and Watanabe 2001; Masgoret and Gardner 2003; Csizér and Dörnyei 2005; Bernaus and Gardner 2008; Yu and Watkins 2008). When types of motivation are looked at, intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation tends to be identified as most positively related to language learning (Oller, Hudson and Liu 1977; Tremblay and Gardner 1995; Masgoret and Gardner 2003; Hernández 2006; Fernández Fontecha 2010).

By contrast, fewer specific studies have been designed to examine the relationship between learners' motivation and different issues of foreign vocabulary knowledge (Gardner and MacIntyre 1991; Laufer and Husltijn 2001; Kim 2008). Hence, research focused on exploring the relation between motivation on the one hand and receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge in a foreign language on the other is almost non-existent. In the Spanish context, in a sample of 250 EFL Spanish learners at 2nd grade of secondary education, Fernández Fontecha (2010) identified a significant positive correlation between learners' general motivation towards EFL and achievement in a productive vocabulary test, and between their intrinsic motivation and the productive test. Fernández Fontecha and Terrazas Gallego (2012) correlated the receptive vocabulary knowledge and motivation of a sub-group of this sample both in 2nd and 3rd grade, and found a significant relationship between their level of motivation and three receptive vocabulary tests in 3rd but not in 2nd grade, when a positive correlation had been noted in the previous study by Fernández Fontecha (2010) on productive knowledge. Fernández Fontecha and Terrazas Gallego (2012: 53-54) point to the type of vocabulary tasks, productive and receptive, as a determining factor for the results, the learners being the same and their motivational levels kept broadly unchanged over the two years.

1.3. Motivation, age and the compulsory nature of language teaching

A number of factors can be pointed to as interacting with motivation, such as learners' age, gender, the L2 methodology, or the obligatoriness of the classes. Among them, two are of special relevance in the present study: the learners' age and, mainly, the compulsory nature of the FL classes.

The age of the subjects is a relevant variable considered in studies on motivation for FL learning. Most research identifies a decrease of the motivational level with age (Williams, Burden and Lanvers 2002; Cenoz 2003; Ágreda 2006; Ghenghesh 2010). In a study of university students, Lasagabaster (2003) shows that motivation stabilises after Secondary Education. In another study, Tragant (2006) finds higher levels of motivation towards FL learning in Secondary students than in Primary students, although this tendency discontinues in upper Secondary Education.

We understand that the compulsory nature of FL teaching might have a major role in these findings, since age is inextricably linked to educational level. In our research, this obligatory factor merits close attention as EOI is a clear example of non-compulsory language education, in which one could expect high levels of extrinsic motivation. To our knowledge, no study has been conducted in EOI education that could yield some information on the connection between motivation and a particular language component.

2. Purpose

Our research attempts to examine the possible relevance of motivation in foreign language receptive vocabulary size acquisition in non-obligatory adult and post-secondary language studies. More specifically, we attempt to conduct research on the following questions:

1. Which are the levels of general motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, of the same group of learners in the 1st and 2nd year of EOI intermediate level (B1)?
2. What is the receptive vocabulary knowledge of these learners when they finish their 2nd year?
3. Is there any relationship between the degree of motivation towards EFL and the scores obtained by learners at both grades in the 2K Vocabulary Levels Test?

3. Method

3.1. Participants

A single sample of 30 EFL adolescent and adult learners in their 1st and 2nd year (intermediate level - CEFR B1) of an Official School of Languages in the north of Spain participated in this study. The 30 participants had received 350–400 hours of instruction in EFL. The data was collected in 2011 (1st EOI) and 2012 (2nd EOI).

3.2. Data-gathering instruments

In order to assess the receptive vocabulary size of these subjects, the 2,000-word frequency-band from the receptive version of the Vocabulary Levels Test (2K VLT) (Schmitt, Schmitt and Clapham, 2001, version 2) was implemented. This test is based on the frequency lists collected by West (1953) in the General Service List and the Thorndike and Lorge list (1944), which were checked against the list compiled by Kucera and Francis (1967), known as the Brown Corpus.

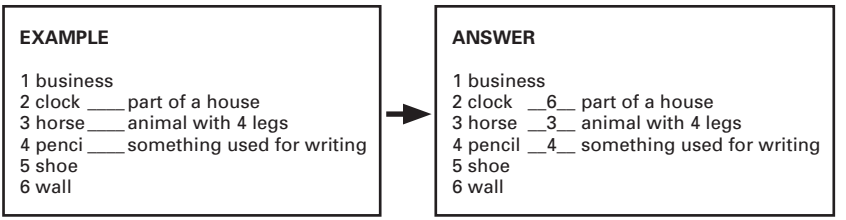
In the 2K VLT (see Figure 1), test-takers have to match a target word with the corresponding definition. A total of 60 target words are used for testing. Ten groups of six words and three definitions make up the test. Each correct answer, i.e. matching the definition to its target word, is given one point, so that the maximum score of the test is 30 points. An analysis of the validity and reliability of the 2K VLT (Read 2000) shows that the test is not only valid and consistent in its measurements, but it measures what it sets out to measure. In order to calculate learners' word estimates, Nation's formula "Vocabulary size = N correct answers multiplied by total N words in dictionary (the relevant word list) divided by N items in test" (Nation 1990: 78) was applied.

The learners' motivation towards EFL was measured by using part of a questionnaire adapted from Gardner's (1985) Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (A/MTB) (see Figure 2). The part selected consisted of a semantic differential technique of 7-point bipolar rating Likert scale using 7 pairs of bipolar adjectives introduced by the Spanish phrase "*Considero que el inglés es...*" ("I consider English to be…") and displayed in this way: 'ugly'/'nice', 'attractive'/'unattractive', 'pleasant'/'unpleasant', 'interesting'/'boring' for intrinsic motivation; and 'necessary'/'unnecessary', 'important'/'unimportant', 'useful'/'useless' for extrinsic motivation. All of the results are used to give an index of general motivation.

3.3. Procedure and analysis

Receptive vocabulary data were collected in one session during the regular school time for each of the two data gathering moments, that is, 1st and 2nd year. The time allotted to complete the vocabulary task was 10 minutes during class time. At

This a receptive vocabulary test. Groups of six English words are presented on your left together with the meanings of only three of them on the right. **Write the number of the word next to its right meaning.** Look at the following example:



1 coffee
2 disease _____ money for work
3 justice _____ a piece of clothing
4 skirt _____ using the law in the right way
5 stage
6 wage

1 choice
2 crop _____ heat
3 flesh _____ meat
4 salary _____ money paid regularly for doing a job
5 secret
6 temperature

1 cap
2 education _____ teaching and learning
3 journey _____ numbers to measure with
4 parent _____ going to a far place
5 scale
6 trick

1 attack
2 charm _____ gold and silver
3 lack _____ pleasing quality
4 pen _____ not having something
5 shadow
6 treasure

1 cream
2 factory _____ part of milk
3 nail _____ a lot of money
4 pupil _____ person who is studying
5 sacrifice
6 wealth

1 adopt
2 climb _____ go up
3 examine _____ look at closely
4 pour _____ be on every side
5 satisfy
6 surround

1 bake
2 connect _____ join together
3 inquire _____ walk without purpose
4 limit _____ keep within a certain size
5 recognize
6 wander

1 burst
2 concern _____ break open
3 deliver _____ make better
4 fold _____ take something to someone
5 improve
6 urge

1 original
2 private _____ first
3 royal _____ not public
4 slow _____ all added together
5 sorry
6 total

1 ancient
2 curious _____ not easy
3 difficult _____ very old
4 entire _____ related to God
5 holy
6 social

FIGURE 1. Vocabulary Levels Test (VLT) 2,000 (Schmitt. Schmitt and Clapham 2001).

Please, put a cross (X) in the appropriate box among the seven that we present (including the shaded one). The shaded box helps you to know the mean of the options that we present.

Learning English is...

Necessary								Unnecessary
Ugly								Nice
Difficult								Easy
Attractive								Unattractive
Unimportant								Important
Useless								Useful
Interesting								Boring

FIGURE 2. Likert scale adapted from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (A/MTB) Gardner's (1985).

the beginning of each test, clear instructions were given both orally and in written form in the learners' L1 to clarify what they were requested to do.

The 7-point bipolar rating scale used to measure motivation was administered together with another part of Gardner's (1985) A/MTB for 10 minutes at the end of a session. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were applied to the data. We used the SPSS program version 19.0 to perform these statistical analyses.

4. Results

In order to answer the first research question the levels of general motivation were ranged according to a three-level scale: level 1 (marks: 1.0 to 3.0), level 2 (marks: 3.01 to 5.0), and level 3 (marks: 5.01 to 7.0), where 1 is the lowest level of motivation and 7 the highest. The results are the same for the two years: most learners (n=20) were motivated at level 3 and the rest (n=10) at level 2. The evolution of mean general motivation from the 1st to the 2nd year is not significant. As regards the other two types of motivation, i.e. extrinsic and intrinsic, extrinsic motivation is higher than intrinsic motivation in both years. Their evolution from one year to the following one is not significant. As for maximum and minimum scores: intrinsic motivation presents the lowest scores, which seems to indicate that some of the learners in the present study are not intrinsically motivated. Table 2 illustrates these results.

Type of Motivation	Year	Mean	Min	Max	SD
General Motivation (GMot)	1st year	5.54	3.88	7	0.77
	2nd year	5.45	3.75	6.63	0.78
Intrinsic Motivation (IMot)	1st year	5.43	2.00	7.00	1.28
	2nd year	5.26	1.75	7.00	1.31
Extrinsic Motivation (EMot)	1st year	6.52	4.33	7.00	0.78
	2nd year	6.43	4.00	7.00	0.83

TABLE 2. Students' degree of motivation.

As for our second research question, i.e. whether there was any significant growth in the receptive vocabulary size of our 1st and 2nd EOI learners in the 2K VLT, Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics for results on the 2K VLT for the two years under study:

	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Word Estimates
1st Year (n=30)	16	30	23.33	3.68	1558
2nd Year (n=30)	17	30	24.88	3.26	1658

TABLE 3. Descriptive statistics 2K VLT

Results reveal that there is an increase in the overall scores of the learners in the two years of our research. As for descriptive statistics, the median values for the VLT are higher in the second year, which represent an increase in our learners' receptive vocabulary size. The p-value obtained (p=0.000831) through a t-test evinces that the growth in receptive vocabulary size along the two years is statistically significant.

Finally, our third research question aimed at finding out whether there was any relationship between the degree of motivation towards EFL and the scores obtained by our learners in the 2K VLT. The results for mean motivation and VLT scores met the normality assumption, so the Pearson correlation test was used to assess if there were statistically significant differences between these two variables during the 1st and 2nd year. In the 1st year of the study, the correlation factor is negative (cor=-0.081) but the p-value (p=0.67) obtained was higher than 5%;

therefore the relationship between general motivation and receptive vocabulary knowledge is not statistically significant in the present study. The same situation occurs during the 2nd year since the correlation coefficient is negative too (cor=-0.092) and the p-value (p=0.60) is higher than 5%. In the light of these findings, we can conclude that the relationship between receptive vocabulary knowledge and mean motivation is not statistically significant.

With regard to the correlation between intrinsic motivation (IMot) and receptive vocabulary size we had to apply non-parametric tests because the p-value (p=0.056) obtained for IMot in the 2nd year of the study was very close to 5%, for which reason the Spearman correlation test was applied. As illustrated in table 4, the results in the two years indicate that the correlation between IMot and 2K VLT and between extrinsic motivation (EMot) and 2K VLT is not statistically significant:

	IMot 2KVLT		EMot 2KVLT	
	rho	p-value	Rho	p-value
1st Year (n=30)	0.045	0.8114	-0.19	0.32
2nd Year (n=30)	0.096	0.59	-0.30	0.09

TABLE 4. Correlation between intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation and 2K VLT.

5. Discussion

Our data reveal that learners' receptive vocabulary knowledge increased significantly from the 1st to the 2nd year. These findings are in line with the assertion that vocabulary size grows as proficiency in the foreign language increases (Barrow *et al.* 1999; Fan 2000), and as exposure to the target language (Golberg et al. 2008) or frequency of input (Vermeer 2001) increase. Moreover, this gain follows a systematic order related to frequency, since at the lowest levels of proficiency learners are familiar with the most frequent words, but as their experience with the foreign language increases, less frequent words are incorporated into their lexicon (Barrow et al. 1999; Vermeer 2001). According to our estimates, our informants also obtain better results in the 2K VLT than younger learners from a similar educational background (Agustín Llach and Terrazas Gallego 2012; Canga Alonso 2013) and from other European contexts (Takala 1985; Milton and Meara 1998).

We should be cautious when considering the sum of two dynamic factors, such as vocabulary and motivation, and the way they interact with each other along time.

Hence, longitudinal studies are needed to capture the fluctuating movement of motivational levels in compulsory and non-compulsory types of language education. Precisely, in our research, the non-compulsory feature of the EOI studies is a key factor when interpreting the results.

As could be expected from a non-compulsory adult-oriented mode of language studies, we found high levels of learner motivation. Yet a decreasing, but non-significant, level of motivation is perceived from 1st to 2nd EOI, although the investigation carried out in two consecutive years cannot show the evolution of this tendency. In any case, in comparison with the results of other studies of different educational levels in which the same questionnaire has been used, EOI results (1st EOI: GMot: 5.54, IMot: 5.43, EMot: 6.52; 2nd EOI: GMot: 5.45, IMot: 5.26, EMot: 6.43) are higher than those of a group of Secondary learners (GMot: 5.32; IMot: 4.54, EMot: 6.39) (Fernández Fontecha 2010), and higher than for a group of CLIL Primary students (GMot: 5.28, IMot: 5.17, EMot: 5.78), although lower than for a group of EFL Primary students GMot: 6.02; IMot: 5.86, EMot: 6.60) (Fernández Fontecha and Canga Alonso, 2014). These series of results are in line with Williams, Burden and Lanvers (2002), Cenoz (2003) Ágreda (2006) and Ghenghesh (2010), who identify a decrease of the motivational level with age, Primary students being more highly motivated than Secondary students. However, as stated above, non-conclusive results about the evolution of levels of motivation in the compulsory schooling years are also evinced in longitudinal studies (Fernández Fontecha 2010; Fernández Fontecha and Terrazas Gallego 2012).

The highest results are obtained in extrinsic motivation (1st EOI mean=6.52, SD=0.78, 2nd EOI mean=6.43, SD=0.83). This result is expected in this type of language teaching, where many learners are enrolled because they urgently need to learn a foreign language. Thus, it is not illogical that in our sample most learners should perceive EFL as *necessary*, *important* and *useful* rather than *nice*, *attractive*, *pleasant* or *interesting*.

In our sample, the relationship between receptive vocabulary achievement and motivation is not statistically significant. This result follows the tendency in Fernández Fontecha and Terrazas Gallego (2012), who identified no link between receptive vocabulary and motivation in a sample of 180 2nd Grade secondary school students. Yet, as explained in the review of the literature, Fernández Fontecha (2010) found a positive correlation between motivation and productive vocabulary in a group of 250 2nd Secondary students, to which the sub-sample of Fernández Fontecha and Terrazas Gallego (2012) belongs. A possible interpretation of this result refers to the sense of wanting to express a meaning in productive tests. As Nation (2001: 28) states, learners need to be

highly motivated to produce words because this is a more demanding task than recognizing words. However, we also find contradictory evidence in the same study by Fernández Fontecha and Terrazas Gallego (2012), who identified a significant relationship between the level of motivation and three receptive vocabulary tests (1K, 2K and 3K VLT) in the sample of 180 learners in 3rd grade Secondary school.

6. Conclusion

Although the difference in learner level of general, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation during the two years is not statistically significant, the findings of the present study show that our learners are motivated or highly motivated in their 1st and 2nd years of the Official School of Languages, intermediate level. These results could be influenced by the non-compulsory-adult-oriented nature of the studies at Official Schools of Languages in Spain. A typical EOI student profile corresponds to an adult who urgently needs to acquire foreign language skills in order to find a job or improve his/her working conditions. This reason could explain why it is that in both years the highest scores are obtained for extrinsic motivation, which seems to point to the conclusion that the learners enrolled in this EOI programme need to learn English for an external rather than an internal reward.

As for the correlation between learner scores in the 2K VLT, receptive vocabulary growth and degree of motivation towards EFL, our data reveal that there is a significant growth in vocabulary size at the end of the second year, which indicates that the students' receptive vocabulary size grows as exposure to and proficiency in the foreign language increase. The relationship between general, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and receptive vocabulary knowledge is not statistically significant. This result suggests that learners have improved their receptive vocabulary knowledge during the period examined but this improvement does not seem to be influenced by their motivation towards English learning, which was quite high from the beginning of the project.

These outcomes also highlight the difficulty of estimating learner motivation with great accuracy. This is a subject for further research. For example, other tests for motivation could be applied, such as a written adaptation of the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) test (MacIntyre et al. 2002), the Foreign Language Attitudes and Goals Survey (FLAGS) by Cid, Granena, and Tragant (2009), or Dörnyei's (2005, 2009) L2 Motivational Self System. Moreover, in subsequent studies with EOI learners it would be interesting to see how a preference for intrinsic or extrinsic motivation might affect language achievement.

Students' receptive vocabulary knowledge can also be correlated with the six levels of the Common European Framework of Reference [CEFR] (2001), and therefore X_Lex (Meara and Milton 2003; Milton 2010) could be implemented to test whether learners receptive vocabulary knowledge corresponds with the word estimates suggested by Meara and Milton (2003) for the B1 level of the CEFR (2750-3250 words). Finally, longitudinal studies are needed to identify the relationship between motivation and vocabulary. Furthermore, these studies could be complemented with qualitative research that would offer a more complete picture of learner performance.

Notes

[1]. This study has been funded through the project FFI2010-19334/FILO.

[2]. EOI studies are regulated by the Organic Law 2/2006 of Education, Royal Decree 806/2006 of 30 June, which establishes the timetable for the implementation of the new management education system and Royal Decree 1629/2006, of 29 December, by fixing the basics of teaching curriculum of specialized language regulated by Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 May, on Education.

[3]. Although we are aware of the differences between the terms Second Language (L2) and Foreign Language (FL), in this article we are using both indistinctly to mean any language different from the mother tongue.

[4]. ESO stands for Educación Secundaria Obligatoria which is compulsory for 12-16 year-old Spanish students. The word "grade" refers to its equivalent level in the British educational system.

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