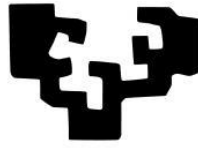


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# **Beliefs about Individual Differences and Instructional Settings in Secondary Education Learners**

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## **Abstract**

During the last few decades, social-psychological theories have gained popularity in Second Language Acquisition (SLA), as they consider individual differences, which are often disregarded by linguistic approaches, relevant factors that shape SLA. Consequently, experts have conducted a vast amount of research on learner individual characteristics, examining how individual differences such as age, motivation, intelligence or aptitude influence second language (L2) acquisition. Additionally, over recent decades, most European countries (including Spain) have introduced English, the current lingua franca, into school curricula at an early age and have promoted language immersion through English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL), Content-and-language-integrated-learning (CLIL) and Study-Abroad (SA) programmes as opposed to traditional English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) lessons. Therefore, a good bulk of research has examined the benefits and shortcomings of the aforementioned instructional settings.

Since the 1980s, studies analysing the nature of learner beliefs have proliferated. These studies have examined students' perceptions (without making gender distinctions) only on five areas of language learning, based on Horwitz's (1985) Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) questionnaire. These areas are difficulties of language learning; foreign language aptitude; the nature of language learning; learning and communication strategies; and motivations and expectations. However, learners' perceptions outside this fixed questionnaire, its variations and the effect of gender on these perceptions are still under researched topics. Thus, this paper will aim at contributing to this under researched area by examining male and female learner beliefs about current issues in the SLA literature: individual differences (i.e. covering variables such as aptitude and motivation already examined by Horwitz's BALLI but also personality, intelligence, gender and age, which are not included in Horwitz's inventory) and instructional settings.

More specifically, I will present an experimental study conducted with secondary school students in the Basque Autonomous Community, in which the answers to a questionnaire on beliefs adapted from BALLI are examined. The purpose of the study is to assess (i) the beliefs Basque-Spanish learners hold about individual differences and instructional settings as well whether those beliefs match the relevant findings from the literature and (ii) the extent to which their beliefs differ according to gender. The analysis of the results obtained reveals that learners hold strong fixed assumptions about variables such as age,

gender or motivation. Furthermore, the study has also shown learners' disconformity with CLIL instruction.

Key words: Second Language Acquisition, individual differences, instructional settings, learner beliefs.

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## **1. Introduction**

Traditionally, Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories have derived from first language (L1) acquisition theories and thus, their focus has often been on what is shared among learners (i.e. examining language universals or the route of acquisition). Nonetheless, in an attempt to explain the reasons for learner variance in L2 attainment, during the last decades, experts have employed social-psychological approaches to SLA and consequently, there has been a substantial amount of research conducted on the role of individual differences (e.g. aptitude, learning style, anxiety).

Likewise, as a result of an increase of awareness about the importance of English in our modern world, different European countries have incremented the amount of exposure to the current lingua franca in school curricula by implementing methodologies such as Content-and-language-integrated-learning (CLIL) that seem to be now in competition with traditional English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) lessons. Consequently, research examining the benefits and shortcomings of the new instructional settings has also been carried out.

Nevertheless, learner beliefs about the aforementioned issues have been disregarded. Considered as one of the areas of individual differences (Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Skehan, 1991), learner beliefs are said to influence their learning process. Despite their importance, very little research has been done. In addition, the vast majority of studies on beliefs have mainly analysed students' perceptions through Horwitz's (1985) Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) questionnaire which incorporates just five areas of language learning: foreign language aptitude; the nature of language learning; learning and communication strategies; and motivations and expectations. However, learners' perceptions outside this fixed questionnaire and its variations have not been examined in depth. Furthermore, when examining learner beliefs, no gender distinctions have been made, and considering the differences found in boys and girls regarding motivation and attitudes (an area connected to learner beliefs), gender variances would also be expected in this area. Thus, this paper attempts to fill the existing gap by examining male and female students' assumptions in relation to two relevant issues of the current state of SLA research: instructional settings and individual differences.

The present paper is organised as follows. Firstly, section 2 will provide a literature review of individual differences and instructional settings. More specifically, an overview

of research on six major areas (age, gender, motivation, intelligence, aptitude and personality) in the field of individual differences, as well as the most important findings in three instructional settings will be offered (EFL, CLIL and Study Abroad (SA)). Then, in section 3, I will examine the most relevant research on learner beliefs, primarily Horwitz's (1985) model and its derivations will be tackled. Then, section 4 describes the study on learner beliefs about individual differences and instructional settings. Finally, section 5 presents the main conclusions of the paper.

## **2. The effect of individual differences and instructional settings on SLA**

The present section is devoted to the state of the art regarding two factors that are believed to account for success in L2 acquisition<sup>1</sup>: learner characteristics which have been widely studied since the 1970s (e.g., Ellis, 1985; Gardner, 1985; Skehan, 1991) and more recent studies on the role of different instructional settings such as CLIL (e.g., Aguilar & Muñoz, 2014; Lasagabaster, 2009; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2009 ; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2011) or SA (e.g. Juan-Garau, 2015). Before focusing on these factors in section 2.1, it must be noted that *rate* of acquisition and *ultimate attainment* are the only components of acquisition that are influenced by external factors, whereas *route of acquisition*, that is, the order in which different features of the target language are acquired is invariable (Ellis, 1985). Therefore, when analysing the effect or the influence of certain factors on L2 acquisition, it will be done taking into account that the *route* of acquisition is never affected.

### *2.1 Individual differences*

The typical trend in research on language acquisition seems to be to analyse and study universal processes that affect every learner such as the *route* of acquisition that all learners follow (e.g., the sequences in which linguistic features are acquired) or fossilization and linguistic transfer processes that have a negative effect on L2 acquisition (Skehan, 1991). Nevertheless, it is pivotal to highlight that even though the aforementioned processes are universal, there is a major difference between L2 learners. As pointed out in Lightbown & Spada (2006) “children are almost always successful in

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<sup>1</sup> Krashen (1982) established a distinction between the terms *acquisition* and *learning*. According to his theory, acquiring a language is a subconscious process “similar, if not identical, to the way children develop ability in their first language” (p.10) whereas learning is believed to involve a conscious rule-learning process. Nevertheless, the present paper will employ both terms interchangeably.



acquiring the language or languages that are spoken (or signed) to them in early childhood, provided that they have adequate opportunities to use the language over a period of several years” (p. 53). That is, as long as exposure and interaction conditions are adequate, almost every human being is successful in acquiring their mother tongue whereas not every learner is successful in acquiring a L2. In an attempt to examine the reasons for this variance in success, a number of studies have analysed learner individual characteristics, which are defined by Dörnyei (2005) as “enduring personal characteristics that are assumed to apply to everybody and on which people differ by degree” (as cited in Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012, p. 639).

These personal traits can be classified into socio-structural elements (e.g. age and gender), cognitive elements (e.g. intelligence or aptitude), characteristics related to personality such as extroversion and social-psychological elements such as motivation<sup>2</sup>. Along the following lines, each variable will be developed in turn.

### 2.1.1 Age

Even though *age* has been widely investigated in the SLA literature, it is still regarded as a complex and controversial variable (Dekeyser, 2013; Ellis, 1985; Gallardo del Puerto, 2007; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Ellis (1985) points out two reasons for the existing vast amount of research; its apparent ease of measurement (i.e., *age* can be accurately measured and thus, it would ideally provide valid and reliable data) and the need for a response to the widespread belief that “children are better language learners than adults” (p.104). As it will be shown, there are several areas to consider when providing a response for that statement.

The majority of studies investigating the *age* variable have focused on the following five hypotheses: ‘younger better’, ‘older better’, ‘younger better in some respects’ ‘younger better in the long run’ and ‘critical period’ (Singleton, 2003, as cited in Gallardo Del Puerto, 2007). These statements consider both *rate* of acquisition and *attainment* or *success*. However, in order to analyse them, the kind of setting where the acquisition takes place (i.e. natural or formal) should be taken into account.

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<sup>2</sup> Even though considering the social-psychological elements as “enduring” or permanent could be argued to be inaccurate, Dörnyei (2014) noted that *motivation* is often used as an umbrella term to refer both to permanent and transitory states, thus ensuring the accuracy of the definition.

Regarding formal settings (i.e. school instruction), the popular belief that children are the fastest learners when compared to adolescents and adults (Dekeyser, 2013), is not supported by scientific evidence. In fact, in purely formal settings, adolescents seem to be the group that progress more rapidly (Cenoz, 2003; Gallardo del Puerto, 2007). As for *success or attainment* in formal contexts, it should be noted that only school attainment can be examined for practical issues, so ultimate attainment cannot be considered. In this setting, the popular belief of ‘younger better’ does not seem to be supported by the literature (e.g. García Mayo, 2003; Ruiz de Zarobe, 2006). Ruiz de Zarobe (2006) compared the acquisition of English negation between two groups with different onset ages; 4 and 8 respectively, and no statistically significant differences were found between them (as cited in Gallardo del Puerto, 2007). In the study conducted by Garcia Mayo (2003) related to grammaticality-judgement tasks and age, she found that late learners (starting age 11-12) outperformed early learners (8-9 yrs.). Possible explanations for adolescents’ superiority in school settings revolved around a more advanced cognitive maturity and greater experience in academic tasks, among others (García Lecumberri & Gallardo del Puerto, 2003; Muñoz, 2003, as cited in Gallardo del Puerto 2007).

In natural settings on the contrary, research shows that the findings differ from those of formal contexts. Regarding *rate*, Snow & Hoefnagel-Höle (1978) (as cited in Ellis, 1985) examined the naturalistic acquisition of L2 Dutch learners and stated that adolescents were the fastest learners, surpassing children (in morphology and syntax, as no relevant differences in pronunciation were found), even though then, after one year, children outperformed older learners. As for *ultimate attainment*, Oyama’s study conducted with sixty Italian immigrants in the United States proved starting age to be a decisive factor in the acquisition of second language pronunciation (Oyama, 1976, as cited in Ellis, 1985). However, amount of exposure should also be taken into consideration. In natural environments, the studies conducted with immigrant children and adults show that children surpass older learners (at least in oral production) when exposure is sufficient and held constant (Ekstrand, 1975; Oyama 1976, as cited in Ellis, 1985). Although as stated by Gallardo del Puerto (2007) “an earlier starting age happens to be beneficial once a certain quantity of FL exposure is accumulated” (p.225), contrary to the natural environment, a formal context is unlikely to provide the early learner with the necessary amount of exposure to surpass older learners.

All in all, the tendency seems to be in favour of a later starting age in the formal contexts (i.e. school instruction) that is, formal settings are beneficial for older learners, whereas younger learners benefit from a natural context.

### 2.1.2 Gender<sup>3</sup>

Regarding gender and its effect on L2 acquisition, the popular belief among learners seems to be that there are no gender differences in L2 acquisition. However, research has shown that girls learn a L2 differently from boys (e.g., Oxford, 1993; Young & Oxford 1997, as cited in Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). In this variance between boys and girls, other variables (e.g. motivation or age) that have been found to interact with gender should be taken into consideration. That is to say, this variable cannot be analysed on its own, in fact, it is usually studied in relation to the aforementioned individual characteristics.

Regarding the interaction between gender and motivation, the general agreement in the literature is that overall, girls usually feel more motivated than boys and they display higher levels of integrative motivation<sup>4</sup>. In fact, ‘boys tend to show less overall commitment to the learning of the foreign language (FL) than girls’ (Dörnyei, Csizér & Németh, 2006 p. 76, as cited in Heras & Lasgabaster, 2014). Similarly, girls employ a wider range of learning strategies (i.e. strategies such as self-talk, repetition or translation among others that facilitate language acquisition) and thus, their performance could be regarded as superior (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012). However, other researchers have advocated a more complex relationship between gender and neurological, cognitive, affective, social and educational factors (Lopez Rua, 2006), arguing that gender variances are based on different combinations of those factors that provided boys and girls with different abilities. López Rua (2006) states that girls possess “superior verbal intelligence, high aptitude, more motivation, a social role of modelling behaviour and supporting communication, the assumption of tasks requiring verbal interaction (teaching, child-caring)” (p. 112).

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<sup>3</sup> Even if a distinction is usually made between sex (a biological feature) and gender (social construct), throughout this paper gender will be used.

<sup>4</sup> Gardner & Lambert (1972) proposed the integrative/instrumental orientation distinction. The former applies to learners who enjoy the culture and community of the target language and thus, they intend to enter that community, whereas the latter corresponds to more practical and direct goals where the language is employed as an “instrument” to attain a purpose (i.e. job or academic-related goal).

Overall, girls seem to be better language learners, although it is a combination of different variables and not gender itself, what accounts for success in L2 acquisition.

### 2.1.3 Intelligence

The generally held opinion about intelligence and language learning appears to be that the former is positively reflected on the latter. Nonetheless, there seems to be a difficulty measuring the extent to which intelligence affects L2 acquisition, due to the complexity of the term itself. Intelligence, has often been related to higher scores in traditional Intelligence Quotient (IQ) tests that measure general reasoning abilities and thus, learners with a high score in those tests were believed to be more successful in L2 Acquisition.

Nevertheless, intelligence is now believed to affect only metalinguistic capacities of language proficiency, whereas learners' communicative ability is not influenced by higher IQ scores. An example of this would be Genesee's (1976) study (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006) conducted in French Immersion Programmes in Canada, where intelligence was found to be an important predictor of L2 French success in areas related to linguistic analysis and rule-learning, while communicative skills were not affected at all.

Other researchers relate this to the division of proficiency into Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). The former accounts for "non-academic or cognitively undemanding tasks" whereas the latter is related to "academic and cognitively demanding tasks" (Roessingh, 2006). Taking this division into account, intelligence as traditionally measured by IQ tests would only have an effect on CALP. Moreover, other researchers have developed and widened the meaning of intelligence, such as Howard Gardner and his theory of multiple intelligences (1983) where he proposed the existence of 9 different intelligences; linguistic intelligence, musical, logical-mathematical, kinaesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, spatial-visual intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and natural intelligence. Based on his division we could assume that learners with a more developed linguistic intelligence would be better language learners (which could also be related to aptitude, examined later on).

All in all, the difficulty to delimit the meaning of intelligence and the difficulty of measuring it (or them according to H. Gardner, 1983) are obstacles for examining its relationship with L2 proficiency.

#### 2.1.4 Aptitude

Even though the popular assumption that ‘some people are good at languages’ might seem to lack scientific support, there is evidence supporting the existence of this belief. Aptitude refers to a specific talent or ability useful for learning languages, unrelated to intelligence or previous learning experiences (Skehan, 1991). This ability can be understood as applicable to any aspect of language learning, or as Carroll (1991) stated, “the ability to learn quickly” (as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006, p.57).

Traditionally, there are two main tests to measure aptitude: Modern Language Aptitude Test (MLAT) and Pimsleur Language Aptitude Battery (PLAB). These batteries aim at measuring the four independent skills (i.e. possessing all of them is not necessary for L2 proficiency) that comprise aptitude; phonemic coding ability (i.e. discriminating and memorizing sounds), inductive ability (i.e. recognizing patterns in language and inferring rules), associative memory (i.e. establishing connections between L1 and L2) and grammatical sensitivity (i.e. understanding the functions of words in a sentence).

The findings obtained from these tests are then correlated with proficiency (Skehan, 1991). As shown in Dörnyei & Skehan (2003) studies conducted both in naturalistic and instructed settings have found aptitude to be a strong predictor of success when focus on form is guaranteed.

Overall, there is significant evidence showing the correlation between aptitude and proficiency, that is, research shows that this variable has an effect on L2 acquisition (Gardner, 1980 as cited in Ellis, 1985; Ranta, 2002 as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

#### 2.1.5 Personality

When referring to this variable, there seems to be a popular belief mainly regarding one specific personality trait: extroversion. The general assumption is that extroverted students are better language learners than introverted students. Nonetheless, as it will be examined later on, this assumption lacks sufficient supporting evidence.

Regarding the influence of personality on L2 acquisition, this variable is believed to account for learners' strategy choices. That is, as stated by Ehrman (1996), "there is a clear relationship between personality and SLA as personality determines what people feel comfortable with. As a result, people tend to choose and consequently do what they feel comfortable with and get better at the given skills" (p.101 as cited in Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012).

Researchers examining the role of personality often point to traits such as anxiety or extroversion-introversion. Even though experts have often believed that extroversion facilitates acquisition for several reasons such as preferring group activities or communicative approaches and thus, receiving greater amount of interaction and input (Krashen, 1981a, as cited in Ellis, 1994; McDonough 1986, as cited in Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012), several studies have found no correlation whatsoever (Naiman *et al.*, 1978; Swain and Burnaby, 1976, as cited in Ellis, 1994). In fact, there is evidence showing introverted students being more successful in the classroom than extroverted students (Lili Wong-Fillmore, 1979, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Moreover, studies on anxiety investigating the effect of inhibition in language acquisition have proved its negative influence on pronunciation when participants under the influence of alcohol (in small amounts) performed better in pronunciation tests than the rest of participants (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Nevertheless, results concerning the role of *anxiety* are not that narrow. Learner Anxiety (i.e. apprehension, worry or stress) has often been regarded as a negative factor that could interfere with the acquisition of language. Recently however, anxiety has been divided into debilitating anxiety (i.e. hindering the learning process) and facilitating anxiety, (i.e. a certain amount of stress that can provide the necessary force to complete a task) (Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012).

All in all, it seems that popular beliefs concerning the role of personality are not sustained by supporting evidence.

#### 2.1.6 Motivation

Even though there seems to be a common agreement about the importance of 'feeling motivated' in order to complete any task (i.e. learning a language), the general belief fails to acknowledge the complexity of this factor.

Together with age, motivation is the most frequently studied trait in the field of individual differences. The two main trends in the theory of motivation are Gardner's socio-psychological model (1985) and Dörnyei's L2 motivational self-system (2014).

Gardner and Lambert's socio-psychological model defines motivation as "the desire to command the language through effort, want, affect or attitude" (Fernandez-Fontecha, 2014, p. 28). That is, motivation is the driving force to complete the task of learning a language. Although Gardner developed the definition of motivation by posing the distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations previously explained, his model was criticized for being too static. In consequence, alternatives such as Dörnyei's L2 motivational system (2014) were proposed where motivation is regarded as dynamic factor connected to the psychological theories of *selves*: the *ideal self* "if the person we would like to become speaks an L2" and the *ought to self*, "the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to avoid possible negative outcomes" (Dörnyei, 2014, p. 8). That is, the desire to become a certain future *self*, appears to trigger motivation.

A vast amount of research has been conducted examining the relationship between motivation and L2 proficiency. As pointed out by Fernandez-Fontecha, (2014) several studies (Csizér & Dörnyei, 2005; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001) have yielded positive correlations between high motivation and proficiency in the L2, making it a strong predictor of language learning success.

As for the aforementioned distinction between integrative and instrumental orientations, studies examining their effect on L2 acquisition have yielded diverse results. Although initial studies (mostly carried out in Western contexts) supported a major influence of integrative orientation on success, research conducted in an Indian context (Lukmani, 1972) showed a superior effect of instrumental orientation (cited in Skehan, 1991). Therefore, it should be concluded that both orientations serve different purposes, thus, resulting superior in different contexts. When examining this variable, it should be taken into account that a clear interaction with gender has been found. Research has shown that girls usually hold more positive attitudes towards learning a L2 than boys (Akram & Ghani, 2013), which influences positively their acquisition. Similarly, Fernández Fontecha (2014) claims that a substantial amount of research argues for higher levels of both integrative and instrumental motivation on females. In fact, as explained in section 2.1.2 (gender), researchers (Heras & Lasagabaster, 2014) point to these gender

differences in motivation as the main factor that influences girls' superiority in L2 learning.

In line with the popular belief, experts agree on the existing influence of this factor on L2 learning, although whether success yields motivation or motivation yields success is not yet clear (Ellis, 1985; Skehan, 1991; Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012).

Having reviewed these learner characteristics and shown their influence on L2 acquisition, the following section will provide an overview of the three main current instructional settings (CLIL, EFL & SA).

## *2.2 Instructional settings*

Over the past decades EFL traditional lessons have begun to be complemented with participation in CLIL and SA programmes. In European countries (including Spain), CLIL has increased rapidly during this last decade due to factors such as the little presence of English in mass media or the small number of proficient speakers among others (Lasagabaster, 2009). Furthermore, the effects of CLIL (in comparison to EFL lessons) have been widely examined. Nevertheless, the amount of research available for the benefits of SA programmes is still considerably low.

### *2.2.1 CLIL vs EFL*

According to Heras & Lasagabaster (2014), 'CLIL is a teaching approach in which an additional language is used for the teaching and learning of subjects with a dual focus on language and content' (p. 71). Influenced by Canadian immersion programmes, CLIL instruction provides learners with higher levels of L2 exposure and greater opportunities for interaction (Heras & Lasagabaster, 2014). The popular belief is that students find this instruction more effective than traditional EFL lessons, which goes in accordance with research on general beliefs showing that students do not tend to perceive their EFL lessons too useful to meet their communicative needs (Martínez Agudo, 2013). Attitudes towards CLIL lessons on the contrary, seem to be more favourable (Lasagabaster, 2009) and given the influence of motivation and attitudes on L2 acquisition, we would expect this type of instruction to be more successful than EFL. Furthermore, it should be noted that gender-differences regarding motivation explained in section 2.1 tend to diminish in CLIL



instruction, as boys' level of motivation seems to increase (Lasagabaster 2008, as cited in Heras & Lasagabaster, 2014).

Regarding the linguistic benefits of CLIL, as these lessons are believed to assume a passive or implicit acquisition of the L2 (Xanthou, 2011), its benefits are linked to receptive skills rather than productive skills as supported by Dalton Puffer (2007) (as cited in Aguilar & Muñoz, 2013).

There is substantial research on the way CLIL students differ from traditional EFL students. Xanthou (2011) conducted a study with primary education students in Cyprus to assess whether CLIL played a role in vocabulary acquisition. The study yielded positive results for the CLIL group who acquired a significantly higher breadth of receptive vocabulary skills. Regarding grammar and listening skills, the study carried out by Aguilar and Muñoz (2013) with Spanish postgraduate CLIL and non-CLIL engineering students concluded that listening skills were affected by the CLIL course whereas grammar was not, showing again the benefits of content lessons on receptive skills. Aguilar and Muñoz (2013) make further reference to a number of studies (e.g. Agustín Llach 2009; Jimenez Catalán and Ruiz de Zarobe, 2007; Márquez 2007) where CLIL lessons have resulted more beneficial than traditional EFL lessons again in areas related to vocabulary acquisition, lexical transfer and listening skills.

Nevertheless, there seems to be a lack of agreement regarding the effect of CLIL on other areas of language proficiency (e.g. morphosyntax) where authors such as Dalton-Puffer, (2008) and Ruiz de Zarobe, (2008) (as cited in Lazaro Ibarrola, 2012) found it to be positively influenced. Other morphosyntactic studies on the contrary have not yielded differences between CLIL and non-CLIL students (Bongartz, 2003; García Mayo and Villarreal Olaizola, 2011 as cited in Lazaro Ibarrola, 2012; Martínez Adrián & Gutiérrez Mangado, 2015). In an attempt to enhance the improvement of these areas of language proficiency, researchers have argued for a need of more focus-on-form in CLIL lessons in order to develop learners' linguistic accuracy (Basterrechea & García Mayo, 2014; García Mayo, 2011; Ruiz de Zarobe & Lasagabaster, 2010 as cited in Gallardo del Puerto & Martínez Adrián, 2015; Martínez Adrián & Gutierrez Mangado, 2015).

### 2.2.2 Study Abroad

SA merges informal and formal exposure to the L2, thus resulting in an extremely beneficial instructional context (Llanes et al, 2016). That is to say, this combination of formal and natural exposure would appear effective for language learning. Nevertheless, as stated in Juan-Garau (2015), while SA enhances oral fluency, oral accuracy and complexity do not seem to be positively influenced by this instructional context.

Regarding other linguistic skills, Juan Garau (2015) claims that written and reading skills do not seem to be influenced by SA. However, Llanes et al. (2016) examined Spanish university students' English gains after SA in non-Anglophone countries where English was being used as a *lingua franca* and found significant improvements in general English proficiency and written lexical complexity. Nonetheless, as the authors pointed out, these learners' diverse backgrounds and different destinations for SA should be taken into account when considering the validity of the results.

All in all, the literature on instructional settings often highlights the benefits of CLIL on areas such as receptive skills and motivation, as compared to EFL. However, there are still shortcomings related to morphosyntax that should be taken into consideration, and researchers highlight the need for a more explicit instruction and focus on form. Regarding SA, this paper has only focused on a small amount of research, so we cannot draw decisive conclusions. Research on learner beliefs on the contrary, covered in the following section, has received greater attention, even though it has mainly focused on issues related to the BALLI questionnaire.

### 3. Learner Beliefs

Learner beliefs or the commonly held assumptions about how languages are learned (i.e. the role of motivation, the best age to begin the instruction or the best teaching methods, are often not supported by the literature (Altan, 2006), but they exert a direct influence on motivation, expectations, perceptions and strategy choices of learners (Martínez Agudo, 2014). One of those examples is given by Lightbown & Spada (2006), by explaining how students tend to be highly motivated if teaching methods they are exposed to correspond to their beliefs of how instruction should be, whereas they hold negative attitudes towards their learning if those methods do not suit their beliefs.

Since the 1970s, research in this field has mainly focused on the comparison of the beliefs held by more successful students with those of less successful students (with the purpose of correlating success with assumptions) (Altan, 2006). Nonetheless, the greatest contribution to the field was made by Elaine Horwitz (1985), who designed the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory (BALLI), a thirty-four item questionnaire assessing five main areas: difficulty of language learning; foreign language aptitude; the nature of language learning; learning and communication strategies; and motivations and expectations. This questionnaire was designed for adult students of Commonly Taught Languages (CTL) in the United States (e.g. Spanish, German and French). Later on, three versions of the BALLI were created to respond to the demands of different educational groups (1. EFL students, 2. English as a second language (ESL) students and 3. EFL teachers) (Kuntz, 1996).

Nevertheless, Kuntz (1996) herself points to some shortcomings of Horwitz's model. On the one hand, she criticizes that the themes in the BALLI questionnaire are derived from teachers' opinions instead of students'. Thus, they cannot accurately represent students' natural beliefs. On the other hand, some relevant issues of EFL learning are not represented in the survey. However, the questionnaire has been widely employed and altered by researchers all over the world (e.g. Kuntz, 1996; Martínez Agudo, 2014).

In contrast to the substantial amount of research on how individual differences such as anxiety, motivation, gender or personality traits affect learner beliefs (Martínez Agudo, 2014), learners' perceptions of individual differences and instructional settings remains an under researched topic. Given the pivotal role that the aforementioned learner characteristics and contexts of instruction exert on L2 acquisition and taking into account the relationship between characteristics such as gender and contexts like CLIL, I consider it necessary to analyse learners' perceptions about the aforementioned issues. Therefore, this paper aims to fill the existing gap by examining secondary-school learners' beliefs about the role individual differences and instructional settings play in L3 English. In the following section, the study on beliefs conducted with secondary school male and female learners will be presented.

#### **4. The study**

##### *4.1. Research questions*

- a. What sort of beliefs do Basque-Spanish learners hold about individual differences and instructional settings? Do these beliefs match research findings on learner characteristics and instructional contexts?
- b. To which extent do their beliefs differ according to gender?

## 4.2. Method

### 4.2.1. Participants

The present study was conducted in a trilingual school in Gasteiz, a middle-size town in The Basque Autonomous Community. The school offers 33% of class hours in Spanish, 33% in Basque and 33% in English. In pre-school (from age 3 to 5), students receive 10 hours of instruction in English per week; in Primary Education, 9 hours per week (combining EFL and CLIL instruction) for 6 years and in Secondary Education from 6 to 9 hours per week, (depending on learners' subject choice) for 4 years. Therefore, the average estimation of hours of English exposure is 3458.

Data were collected from 2 groups of Basque-Spanish bilingual learners of L3 English in the 4<sup>th</sup> year of Secondary Education. A total of 51 students completed the questionnaire administered, out of which 40 participants (20 males and 20 females) were randomly selected in order to have gender-balanced samples. Experience and length of exposure were the criteria followed for choosing last year students for the study, so as to ensure a certain awareness of their learning process and more fixed beliefs about language learning.

Regarding learners' background information, the majority of respondents attended extracurricular English lessons 2 hours a week, and almost half of the participants have completed short stays abroad.

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the participants.

	Age	Onset Age	Average exposure
<b>Female</b> (n=20)	15-16	3	3458h
<b>Male</b> (n=20)	15-16	3	3458h

Table 1. Participant characteristics

#### 4.2.2. Instruments

Data were gathered first by administering a background questionnaire (see Appendix 1) to collect information about amount of exposure previously received and languages spoken for social use and at school.

Participants also underwent a questionnaire adapted from Horwitz (1985) in which a major modification was included. BALLI assesses learners' beliefs about their own learning in relation to difficulty of language learning; foreign language aptitude; the nature of language learning; learning and communication strategies and motivations and expectations. Our questionnaire on the contrary, examines learners' general assumptions about the role of individual differences and instructional settings in L2 acquisition.

The questionnaire on beliefs is composed of fifteen statements with randomized items, measured by a five-point Likert-scale<sup>5</sup> (where 1 corresponds to strong disagreement and 5 to strong agreement) and five open-ended questions that will facilitate a more qualitative analysis of the results, which will be specifically examined in the discussion section.

In order to classify the results, items have been grouped according to the individual difference they covered and divided into sections. Section I: individual differences, contains 3 items on age (further subcategorized into relevance of age, starting age and rate) 1 on intelligence, 1 on aptitude, 2 on motivation (both instrumental and integrative orientation), 2 on personality (covering anxiety and extroversion) and 1 on gender. Section II containing 3 items on CLIL (its effect on motivation, written skills and overall proficiency), 1 on EFL and another one on Study Abroad.

This questionnaire was administered in Spanish in order to ensure the full understanding of the items. Nonetheless, for the sake of consistency, the original statements have been translated into English.

#### 4.2.3. Procedure

Due to time and availability restrictions, data were collected the same day in a one-hour session in each group. Firstly, students completed the background questionnaire with the help of their English teacher who had total knowledge about the amount of hours of English exposure in the school. An average of 20 minutes were employed for this task.

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<sup>5</sup> Reverse coding was applied whenever negative items (i.e. statement 1) were included.

Then, learners completed the questionnaire on beliefs and even though they were allowed to respond in either Basque, Spanish or English to the open questionnaires, all of them provided their responses in Spanish.

Regarding the analysis of the data, this paper will not follow the typical approach (Martínez Agudo, 2014) where only the statements that generate levels of agreement above a certain number are analysed. Instead, the 15 statements, their agreement levels and overall means will be examined. In the process of data analysis, only descriptive statistics has been employed for calculating percentages, means and standard deviations. As inferential statistics has not been applied, the results obtained cannot be fully generalized to the rest of the population (Dörnyei & Csizér, 2012).

#### 4.3. Results

The results of this study are displayed in tables grouped by items. Tables 2 to 7 will provide the means of boys and girls on items related to individual differences, and table 8 will show the 5 statements related to instructional settings.

Table 2 accounts for age-related beliefs in girls and boys.

<b>Individual differences: AGE</b>	<b>MALES M (SD)</b>	<b>FEMALES M (SD)</b>
<b>Statement 1:</b> Age is an irrelevant factor when learning a language: children, adolescents and adults learn in the same way	2.45 (1.02)	3.45 (1.11)
<b>Statement 2:</b> English should be taught at schools from an early age because an early start guarantees a better proficiency.	4.75 (.43)	4.75 (.43)
<b>Statement 3:</b> Children learn English faster than adolescents and adults	3.70 (.95)	3.70 (.71)

Table 2. Beliefs about age in boys and girls.

Overall, these statements about age have generated high levels of agreement among respondents. Participants' opinions about the benefits of early instruction (i.e. statement 2) seem to be unanimous, with the highest level of strong agreement shown by respondents. In addition, the average mean is the same in both groups, (4.75). As for rate of learning (statement 3), our students also agree (with 3.7 mean in boys and girls) with children being the fastest L2 learners. Finally, statement 1 on the relevancy of age on L2 acquisition, shows different means according to gender, with girls considering it more relevant than boys. However, the results for this statement should be analysed carefully

because as pointed out by one student, respondents might have been confused with its phrasing.

The following table displays the means for the statement on the relevance of intelligence.

<b>Individual differences: INTELLIGENCE</b>	<b>MALES M (SD)</b>	<b>FEMALES M (SD)</b>
<b>Statement 4:</b> Intelligence is an important predictor of language learning success (i.e. people with a higher IQ are better language learners)	3.1 (1.04)	2.40 (1.06)

Table 3. Beliefs about intelligence in boys and girls

As shown in table 3, this statement did not generate a high agreement among female participants. The relatively low mean (2.4) shows that girls do not consider intelligence as relevant in L2 acquisition as boys, who displayed a higher level of agreement (3.1).

As for aptitude, table 4 below reveals similar means between males and females.

<b>Individual differences: APTITUDE</b>	<b>MALES M (SD)</b>	<b>FEMALES M (SD)</b>
<b>Statement 5.</b> Some people are born with a special ability which is useful for language learning	3.75 (0.89)	3.8 (0.74)

Table 4. Beliefs about aptitude in boys and girls

Contrary to beliefs about intelligence, table 4 shows that our participants consider aptitude to be a decisive factor for L2 learning, even though the average rate is still almost one point below the statement on individual differences reaching the highest agreement (4.75), (Statement 2: *English should be taught at schools from an early age because an early start guarantees a better proficiency*).

As for motivation, table 5 displays the means for statement 6 (about motivation in general) and statement 7 (the distinction between integrative and instrumental motivation).

<b>Individual differences: MOTIVATION</b>	<b>MALES M (SD)</b>	<b>FEMALES M (SD)</b>
<b>Statement 6.</b> Motivated students usually obtain better grades in English lessons	4.15 (0.92)	3.85 (0.72)
<b>Statement 7:</b> Students who learn English because they love the Anglophone culture are usually more successful in acquiring the language than those who learn English in order to pass an exam or get a job	3.9 (0.82)	3.7 (1.02)

Table 5. Beliefs about motivation in boys and girls

Table 5 above shows that motivation is an area that generates a high response agreement, with values above (3.5). Regarding the first statement, both girls and boys consider motivation a crucial factor that determines success in the classroom, even though the mean is slightly higher in males (4.15). It should be noted that none of the respondents disagreed strongly with statement 1, that is, they seem to hold positive beliefs about motivation

As for the distinction between instrumental and integrative orientation, we can see that apparently, most respondents agree with the superiority of integrative orientation, (i.e. students who learn English because they love Anglophone culture are more successful). However, the mean is slightly higher in males (3.9).

Table 6 displays the means for the two statements on personality, covering the aspects of extroversion and anxiety.

<b>Individual differences: PERSONALITY</b>	<b>MALES M (SD)</b>	<b>FEMALES M (SD)</b>
<b>Statement 8.</b> Extroverted students are more successful than introverted students in all aspects of language learning (oral, written...)	3.2 (0.81)	3.3 (0.9)
<b>Statement 9:</b> Anxiety hinders English language learning	3.6 (0.86)	3.45 (0.92)

Table 6. Beliefs related to personality in boys and girls

Statement 8 (i.e. extroversion) displayed means close to 3, showing slight agreement among respondents (3.2) in boys and (3.3) in girls.

As for anxiety (statement 9), the means displayed for males (3.6) and females (3.45) are slightly higher than for extroversion above, that is, our participants agreed with anxiety being a negative factor even though boys showed a slightly higher agreement than their counterparts.

The last statement on individual differences deals with the gender variable, as table 7 shows.

<b>Individual differences: GENDER</b>	<b>MALES M (SD)</b>	<b>FEMALES M (SD)</b>
<b>Statement 10.</b> Girls are better language learner than boys	1.8 (0.92)	1.7 (1.02)

Table 7. Beliefs related to gender in girls and boys



This statement obtained the lowest mean (1.8 and 1.7 respectively) as regards the category ‘individual differences’. This will be further developed in the discussion section. These results do not allow us to argue that students believe that there are no gender differences, because the way the statement is formulated (following Horwitz’s example) only enables us to state that students do not believe girls to be at an advantage. We cannot conclude they consider boys to be at an advantage either, or they do not believe gender to be a factor at all.

After examining the results as regards individual differences, results on instructional settings will be described. Table 8 illustrates girls’ and boys’ beliefs about CLIL, EFL and SA.

<b>Instructional settings</b>	<b>MALES M (SD)</b>	<b>FEMALES M (SD)</b>
<b>Statement 11.</b> Content lessons in English are beneficial for improving written skills in that language.	3.8 (0.92)	4 (0.89)
<b>Statement 12.</b> CLIL lessons are more effective for learning English than traditional EFL lessons	3 (1.04)	3.4 (0.96)
<b>Statement 13.</b> I feel more motivated in CLIL lessons than in EFL lessons	3.1 (0.88)	3.1 (0.99)
<b>Statement 14.</b> Having an EFL subject at school for 12 years is enough to maintain a fluent conversation in English	3.55 (0.97)	3.1 (1.26)
<b>Statement 15.</b> English summer courses abroad are always beneficial for improving one’s English level	3.9 (0.94)	4.8 (0.4)

Table 8. Beliefs related to instructional settings in girls and boys

As regards statement 15 (i.e. Study abroad has a positive effect on proficiency), generated the highest level of agreement among both groups of participants, even though girls’ mean is higher (4.8) as compared to boys’ (3.9). In fact, girls strongly agreed with the benefits of studying abroad in second language learning, achieving the highest score of all statements (4.8). Moreover, statement 11 (i.e. CLIL being beneficial for written skills) also received a high score, being slightly higher on girls than boys (4 as opposed to 3.8).

Regarding the effectiveness of both contexts of instruction (i.e. statement 12), most subjects did not either agree or disagree with CLIL being more effective than EFL, even though girls differed slightly (3 points on boys as compared to 3.4 in girls).

Finally, as for attitudes towards these types of instruction (statement 13), it should first be noted that no differences were found among boys and girls and surprisingly, the

majority of participants did not claim to feel more motivated in any of the instruction types. Likewise, when asked about the effectiveness of EFL for achieving the necessary level to maintain a fluent conversation (statement 14), participants did not report an agreement or disagreement, being *neither agree nor disagree* again the most frequent option.

All in all, among the individual differences analysed, the areas which received highest levels of agreement were age (i.e. the benefits of an early instruction), motivation (i.e. its positive effect on L2 acquisition and the superiority of integrative motivation) and aptitude, which was regarded as an important predictor of success. Moreover, the statements related to personality and intelligence received means around 3, showing a fair level of agreement, but the statement about gender (i.e. girls are better language learners than boys) obtained the lowest score of the questionnaire, below 2.

As for instructional settings, SA received the highest mean among all the items from the questionnaire (4.8 & 3.9), and overall, the responses provided for the rest of the items were positive, with means above 3 in all cases.

In the next section, the research questions proposed in section 4.1 will be answered and the main conclusions from the study will be drawn.

#### *4.4. Discussion and conclusions*

As regards research question I (*What sort of beliefs do Basque-Spanish learners hold about individual differences and instructional settings? Do these beliefs match research findings on learner characteristics and instructional contexts?*), based on the responses to the Likert-scale questionnaire and the open-ended questions that have been employed to reinforce the results, we could conclude that overall, learners hold similar fixed beliefs about how different factors account for L2 success or failure.

As shown in the results section, the individual difference in which learners hold the strongest believes seems to be age. As discussed above, *age* is the most controversial yet most analysed variable of individual differences (Dekeyser 2013; Ellis, 1994; Gallardo del Puerto, 2007; Lightbown & Spada, 2006), and in line with the popular belief, our respondents were in favour of the advantage of early beginners being the fastest and better learners; (i.e. younger the better). Furthermore, it should also be noted that when asked about which factors had contributed to students' English learning process in the open

ended section, the majority of respondents pointed to their early starting age (at the age of 3) as the main factor contributing to their actual proficiency.

These results go in accordance with those from Martínez Agudo (2014), in which 75.44% of EFL learner participants also agreed that children are the best language learners. These answers do not match the research findings in the literature, which have shown that adolescents are the fastest learners (Ellis, 1994) and that type and amount of exposure should also be taken into consideration.

As for other variables that received high levels of agreement (motivation and aptitude), participants hold positive beliefs about motivation, which is clearly seen in their responses to the question about which factors have enhanced their learning process (feeling highly motivated was the second most mentioned enhancing factor). Furthermore, they perceived integrative motivation to be more influential than instrumental. Nevertheless, these results should be interpreted carefully, because due to the formulation of the statement, participants' answers might have been too guided by the researcher. Surprisingly, aptitude was an area with a high mean, which leads us to state that our respondents differ significantly from Martínez Agudo (2014), whose statement 22 related to aptitude did not generate a percentage of response superior to (29.24%). This goes in line with the results in the literature on individual differences showing a correlation between aptitude tests and proficiency (Gardner, 1980, as cited in Ellis, 1994; Ranta, 2002, as cited in Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Regarding intelligence, personality and gender, it should be discussed that, in line with the common assumption, our results showed that intelligence (as measured by IQ tests) and an extroverted personality enhance L2 acquisition. Participants also believe that anxiety hinders L2 acquisition (statement 9), which shows that participants do not seem to be aware of the distinction between debilitating and facilitating anxiety, as except for 10 to 15% of respondents, the rest have not disagreed with anxiety hindering learning. In accordance with Martínez Agudo's (2014) study, our learners hold strong beliefs about gender not being a decisive factor for language learning. However, this belief does not match research findings that claim that girls seem to be better language learners than boys because they display higher levels of motivation and employ a wider range of learning strategies (Heras & Lasagabaster, 2014; Zafar & Meenakshi, 2012).

As for instructional settings, most respondents believe in the benefits of CLIL (as seen by their responses to the Likert-questionnaire). Most participants believe that content lessons help them improve their written skills, a belief often not supported by the CLIL literature that is said to affect more receptive than productive skills (Aguilar & Muñoz, 2013). Likewise, regarding motivation and CLIL, our results do not seem to go in accordance with Heras & Lasagabaster (2014) who claim that usually students feel more motivated in content lessons than in traditional EFL lessons. The majority of our respondents on the contrary did not feel more motivated in CLIL instruction than in EFL (statement 13). This might have been influenced by learners' wide experience on trilingualism and immersion in English (13 years having both CLIL and EFL lessons), thus, it might be difficult for them to distinguish their progress separately in the two types of instruction.

Although their responses to the questionnaire suggested positive attitudes towards CLIL, in the open-ended questions, a wide number of participants reported having a preference for EFL lessons (pointing to their usefulness for learning grammar and ultimately mastering the language). Furthermore, some learners displayed a very critical attitude towards what they considered an overuse of CLIL instruction. For example, one respondent argued that the most useful lessons were "EFL traditional lessons because one of the most important areas of a language is its grammar, and that is never learned in CLIL lessons". Another student pointed to a very serious shortcoming of CLIL; "Traditional lessons are more important because if you don't master the language, the rest of subjects in English will be more difficult for you and you may even end up failing history because you are not fluent in English". This is also questioned by Heras & Lasagabaster (2014), who point out that "many empirical studies have focused on general proficiency in the FL, yet little is known about whether content learning has improved" (p. 72). It is interesting to see that a wide number of these learners who have received content lessons in English during their entire academic life, still prefer EFL lessons.

This suggests a lack of attention to form in CLIL that could be sorted by putting more emphasis on language in content lessons, as supported by researchers (Basterrechea & García Mayo, 2014; García Mayo, 2011; Ruiz de Zarobe & Lasagabaster, 2010, as cited in Gallardo del Puerto & Martínez Adrián, 2015; Martínez Adrián & Gutierrez Mangado, 2015).

Additionally, learners show a remarkably optimistic view of SA and its benefits, some of them highlighting that lack of opportunities for participating in these programmes have negatively affected their learning process.

Finally, even though the majority of our participants claimed having been abroad, the few ones who did not, expressed their desire to participate in this type of programmes, because as agreed by all of them “studying abroad is always beneficial”, a belief that does not match the literature on SA, where we find contradictory opinions. Juan-Garau (2015) claims that SA is beneficial only for oral fluency, whereas Llanes et al. (2016) argue for improvements in general proficiency and written lexical complexity.

With respect to research question II (*To which extent do their beliefs differ according to gender?*) there are certain characteristics (e.g. intelligence or study abroad) in which gender differences were found. Boys find the former to be more relevant than girls (3.1 as compared to 2.4) whereas girls hold more positive attitudes towards the latter than boys (4.8 as compared to 3.9). Regarding the reasons for their responses, as participants were not required to justify their answers, we cannot know the rationale behind these differences.

Nonetheless, it should be remarked that apart from the two areas aforementioned, overall, learners’ responses do not reveal significant gender differences. This could be related to their participation in CLIL instruction and their exposure to intense immersion, because as explained in Heras & Lasgabaster (2014), gender differences tend to diminish in CLIL contexts, where both groups seem to be equally motivated. Therefore, even though beliefs are connected to motivation and attitudes and thus, we would expect gender differences to be clear, their instructional setting might have blurred those differences. In order to assess beliefs according to gender, future research could examine EFL groups and learners less involved in immersion programmes.

All in all, our learners’ beliefs do not usually go in accordance with the literature on individual differences, but they are in line with the popular belief or trend, whereas regarding gender, not many differences are found as regards items other than intelligence and study abroad.

Some limitations of this study should be noted and discussed: first, due to time restrictions, the number of participants (40) was relatively small. Thus, examining a

bigger sample would provide more valid data for comparisons. In addition, as this paper only examined learners' beliefs without taking their level of proficiency into consideration, we cannot really assess the extent to which their beliefs have shaped their acquisition and therefore, further research on beliefs about factors that account for language learning could also examine learners' linguistic abilities. Finally, a less restricted formulation of the statements would allow participants to express their own opinions instead of being guided by the researcher's own words. Therefore, in addition to questionnaires, discussion groups or individual interviews could be employed as instruments.

Finally, as this study seems to indicate a dissatisfaction with CLIL among secondary school learners, a reflection on possible measures that could lead to an improvement of this instructional setting should be considered.

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Appendix I: General Background Questionnaire

**BACKGROUND QUESTIONNAIRE**

1. Sexo: H  M
  
2. Edad: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Fecha de nacimiento: \_\_\_\_\_
  
4. Lugar de nacimiento: \_\_\_\_\_
5. Curso: \_\_\_\_\_
  
6. ¿Cuál es tu lengua materna?, ¿Cuál fue la primera lengua en la que empezaste a comunicarte cuando eras niño: euskera, castellano, ambas o alguna otra?  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
7. Lengua dominante de la madre: \_\_\_\_\_
  
8. Lengua dominante del padre: \_\_\_\_\_
  
9. Lengua (s) que hablabas en casa cuando eras niño: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Con la madre: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Con el padre: \_\_\_\_\_
12. Con los hermanos/hermanas: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Con otros miembros de la familia: \_\_\_\_\_
  
14. Lengua (s) que hablaste durante los primeros cinco años de tu vida:  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Lengua (s) extranjeras que has estudiado (incluye el inglés):

	<b>Educación Infantil</b> (cuántas horas a la semana)	<b>Educación Primaria</b> (cuántas horas a la semana)	<b>Educación Secundaria</b> (cuántas horas a la semana)	<b>Otras instituciones</b> (E.O.I., Academia, etc.)  (desde cuándo, hasta cuándo y cuántas horas a la semana)
1ª lengua extranjera		1º: 2º: 3º: 4º: 5º: 6º:	1º: 2º: 3º: 4º:	
2ª lengua extranjera		1º: 2º: 3º: 4º: 5º: 6º:	1º: 2º: 3º: 4º:	
3ª lengua extranjera		1º: 2º: 3º: 4º:	1º: 2º: 3º: 4º:	

		5°:		
		6°:		

16. Lenguas que utilizas

- en casa: \_\_\_\_\_
- en el centro educativo al que asistes: \_\_\_\_\_
- con los amigos: \_\_\_\_\_
- cuando sueñas: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Otras lenguas que

- lees: \_\_\_\_\_
- hablas: \_\_\_\_\_
- escribes: \_\_\_\_\_

18. ¿En qué lenguas te sientes más cómodo en la actualidad?

\_\_\_\_\_

19. ¿Has estado alguna vez en un país de habla inglesa? Sí  No

Si tu respuesta es afirmativa, especifica:

Cuándo: \_\_\_\_\_

Dónde: \_\_\_\_\_

Duración: \_\_\_\_\_

¿Participaste en algún programa de intercambio durante tu estancia? \_\_\_\_\_

¿Asististe a algún curso de inglés durante tu estancia? \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Appendix II: Questionnaire on Beliefs

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON BELIEFS: SPANISH VERSION**

Sección I. Por favor, marca con una X la casilla que se corresponda con tu creencia u opinión.

1. La edad es un factor irrelevante para el aprendizaje de una lengua: los niños, adolescentes y adultos aprenden de la misma forma.

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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2. Los estudiantes motivados normalmente obtienen mejores resultados en clase de inglés como lengua extranjera

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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3. La inteligencia es un factor determinante en el éxito del aprendizaje de una lengua (P. Ej. las personas con un cociente intelectual más alto son mejores estudiantes de lengua)

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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4. El inglés debería enseñarse desde una edad temprana en las escuelas porque empezar más temprano garantiza un mejor dominio de la lengua

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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5. Algunas personas nacen con una habilidad especial que es útil para el

aprendizaje de lenguas

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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6. Los estudiantes extrovertidos tienen más éxito que los estudiantes introvertidos en todos los aspectos del aprendizaje de una lengua (oral, escrito...)

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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7. Los/las niñas aprenden inglés más rápido que los adolescentes y adultos

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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8. La ansiedad dificulta o retrasa el aprendizaje del inglés

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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9. Los estudiantes que estudian inglés porque les gusta la cultura y gente anglófona tienen más éxito y adquieren el idioma mejor que los que lo estudian para conseguir trabajo o aprobar un examen

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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10. Las chicas son mejores que los chicos aprendiendo inglés

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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11. Tener una asignatura de “inglés” en el colegio durante 12 años es suficiente para poder mantener una conversación fluida.

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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12. Las lecciones de contenido en inglés (historia, física o música en inglés) son beneficiosas para mejorar la escritura en dicho idioma

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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13. Las lecciones de AICLE (aprendizaje integrado de contenidos y lenguas extranjeras) son más efectivas para aprender inglés que las lecciones de inglés tradicionales

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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14. Me siento más motivado/a en las lecciones de AICLE que en las lecciones tradicionales de inglés como lengua extranjera

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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15. Los cursos de verano de inglés en el extranjero son siempre beneficiosos para mejorar el nivel de inglés

Totalmente desacuerdo	Desacuerdo	Ni uno ni otro	De acuerdo	Totalmente de acuerdo
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Sección II. Por favor, responde a las siguientes preguntas con honestidad. Recuerda que no hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas. Puedes responder en castellano o euskera.

16. ¿De acuerdo con tu experiencia, qué factores han contribuido más a tu proceso de aprendizaje (por ejemplo, motivación, tener una habilidad especial para las lenguas, la edad a la que has empezado a aprender inglés, las clases de conocimiento del medio en inglés, el haber pasado temporadas en el extranjero, etc.)?

17. ¿Consideras que hay algún factor o factores que hayan dificultado o entorpecido tu proceso de aprendizaje? ¿Cuáles?

18. ¿Qué tipo de lecciones encuentras más efectivas: las lecciones de contenido en inglés (por ejemplo, historia en inglés) o las clases tradicionales de inglés? ¿Por qué?

19. ¿Has participado alguna vez en cursos de verano o programas de estudio en



inglés en el extranjero? ¿En caso positivo, percibiste alguna mejora al volver a casa?

20. Si no has participado en ningún programa de inglés en el extranjero, ¿crees que serían beneficiosos para ti? ¿Por qué?

Este es el final del cuestionario. Muchas gracias por tu participación.