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The role of student-teachers' imagined identities in their investments in English in an "Integrating Content and Language in Higher Education" (ICLHE) Catalan pre-service teacher education context

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## **CHAPTER 5: STUDYING PRIMARY EDUCATION IN ENGLISH: SOCIOLINGUISTIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED THE STUDENTS' CHOICE OF DEGREE (Study 1)**

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### **5.1. CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This chapter presents Study 1 (S1), which examines the data and the findings addressing RQ1. RQ1 addresses the key sociolinguistic factors that played a role in the student-teachers' decision to study the degree in Primary Education in English and not in Catalan (see Chapter 3).

The study uses constructs such as “imagined identities”, “imagined communities”, “community of practice” (CoP), “English as an International Language” (EIL), “investment”, “cultural capital”, or “symbolic capital”. Direct quotes from the participants' accounts have been marked in italics and words in bold print are words considered particularly interesting.

First, section 5.2. introduces the study and reminds the reader of the main methodological approaches that were followed, as well as of the data sets included in the study (5.2.3.). Section 5.3. outlines the preliminary results. More specifically, section 5.3.1. presents the resulting codes that emerged from the data analysis of qualitative data, section 5.3.2. describes the results from quantitative data in Q2, and section 5.3.3. provides the results from qualitative data in Q2. Next, in section 5.4. the integrating results obtained through triangulation of all data are provided. Following, section 5.5. presents a discussion on the findings. Finally, section 5.6. provides a chapter summary.

### **5.2. INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

The present study attempts to obtain a broad view of the factors that might have influenced a group of student-teachers' decision to study the English-medium degree in

Primary Education. The analysis carried out in this chapter is led by the following research question:

*What sociolinguistic factors influenced the student-teachers' decision to study the degree in Primary Education in English?*

In order to answer this question, it was necessary to weigh these students' opinions towards English, as well as their previous experiences in English environments. Thus, for the purpose of this study, the list presented below summarizes that data sets that have been analysed in the present study.

- ✓ **Data Set A:** closed-ended questions Q2
- ✓ **Data Set B:** open-ended questions Q2
- ✓ **Data Set C:** Individual Interviews 1
- ✓ **Data Set D:** Focus Group 1

All coded data included in S1 can be found in Appendix 6, while all data translations can be found in Appendix 5.

### 5.2.1. GENERAL ANALYTICAL APPROACH

As far as the **data treatment and analysis**, Table 13 schematizes how each data set was analysed:

**Table 13. Data treatment S1**

<b>Data set</b>	<b>Type of analysis</b>
<b>(A)</b> Closed-ended questions Q2	Interpretive analysis of quantitative data
<b>(B)</b> Open-ended questions in Q2	Qualitative content and narrative analysis
<b>(C)</b> Individual Interviews 1	
<b>(D)</b> Focus Group 1	

## 5.2.2. ANALYTICAL APPROACH: STEPS

### Data Set A: Closed-ended questions Q2

A qualitative analysis of quantitative data obtained through the closed-ended questions in Q2 was carried out:

- Step 1: data from the tables in Q2 were compiled into a general table including all participants' responses.
- Step 2: a preliminary analysis of such quantitative data (Data Set A) was undertaken to obtain meaningful data from the closed-ended questions in Q2.

### Data Sets B, C, D, E, F: open-ended questions in Q2, Individual Interviews 1, Focus Group 1, Individual Interviews 2 and Focus Group 2.

An extensive content analysis combined with thematic analysis within the narrative approach to qualitative data has been the main method for analysis of Data Set B (open-ended questions in Q2), Data Set C (Individual Interview 1) and Data Set D (Focus Group 1).

Steps 1 to 3 were the preliminary approach to data (data preparation for the analysis). Steps 4 to 7 were the deep thorough analysis (content analysis combined with narrative analysis). The procedures undertaken were the following:

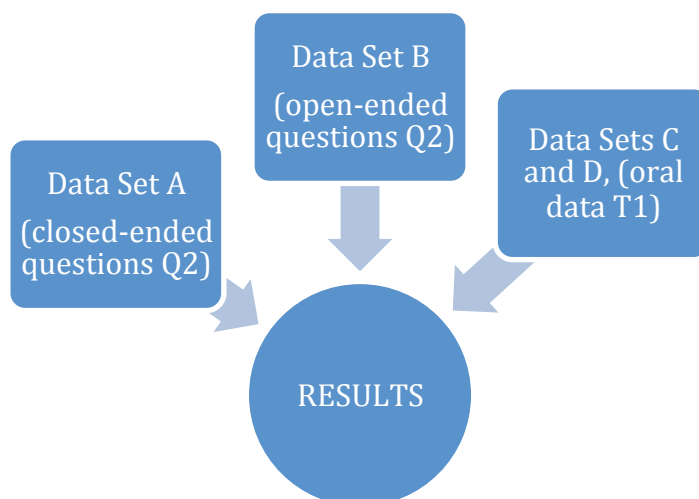
- Step 1: Familiarization with the data.
- Step 2: Data reduction (Miles and Huberman, 1994).
- Step 3: Data display (Miles and Huberman, 1994) in order to organize the information that had been collected.
- Step 4: Search for regularities among data and labelling of such data (color-coding) (*coding*, Punch, 2005).
- Step 5: Grouping of codes that seemed to pertain to the same phenomena (*coding*, Punch, 2005).

- Step 6: Writing down of ideas and relationships found during the coding procedure, creating new patterns, ideas and connections among data (*memoing*, Punch, 2005).
- Step 7: Development of propositions to capture a thick interpretation of all the findings (*developing propositions*, Punch, 2005).

As argued in Chapter 4, the fact that the analysis was a recursive process needs to be emphasized. All steps presented took place, although they were not necessarily consecutive. The analysis was, thus, a recursive process, as each phase affected the other steps of the process. For further details on the analysis of qualitative data, see 4.7.3. Similarly, as mentioned in Chapter 4, the data analysis carried out in the present doctoral dissertation has been the same in all three studies included, although the weight and proportion of narrative analysis varied depending on the aim of the study. In case of the present study, since it aimed at providing a snapshot of the factors that might have influenced the student-teachers' choice of degree, the degree of narrative analysis undertaken here was lower than in the other two studies. Still, a narrative lens incorporated further information that has been useful when discussing the findings.

### **5.2.3. COMPILED RESULTS**

Due to the amount of data sets included in this study, it was considered helpful to present the preliminary analysis of results from some data sets before moving on to the results reached through the triangulation of all data. Thus, before presenting the general results of this study, the preliminary analysis of Data Set A (closed-ended questions in Questionnaire 2) and Data Set B (open-ended questions in Questionnaire 2) will be presented.

**Figure 6. Data Sets S1**

The final results and interpretation in section 5.4. were reached through the triangulation of all data sets presented above in Figure 6. The data were analysed through the literature review's lens, while also allowing for more precise issues to emerge (see section 4.7.).

It is worth mentioning that the data analysis took into account themes that were directly referred to by the participants as reasons for their choice of degree, while it also includes an analysis that attempts to go beyond the students' straightforward comments. Hence, it seeks to obtain an in-depth sociolinguistic interpretation for the reasons that this group of student-teachers to choose the EMI-PEBD over the Catalan-medium degree.

### **5.3. PRELIMINARY RESULTS**

#### **5.3.1. RESULTING CODES**

The qualitative data that were analysed included textual data in written form, coming from open-ended questions in Questionnaire 2, and in oral form, coming from Individual Interview 1 and Focus Group 1.

Such data were analysed through content analysis and through a thematic analysis (Guest, 2012), requiring a narrative approach (Pavlenko, 2007). Miles & Huberman's (1994) approach to data analysis was followed, consisting of their first two phases: *Data reduction* and *Data Display*. Similarly, the search for patterns and conclusions in the data consisted of three phases, which took place concurrently: *coding*, *memoing* and *developing propositions* (Punch, 2005). During the coding procedures, different labels were assigned to different pieces of data, while grouping such data into more abstract themes. Simultaneously, the memoing process consisted of writing up any ideas and connections emerging from the data while coding, something that contributed to coming up with new themes and patterns. Finally, developing propositions was another step that had to be taken in order to integrate the entire analysis purposefully and eloquently (see section 4.7.3.2. for further details). All data coming from open-ended questions in Questionnaire 2 (Q2) and from Individual Interview 1 and Focus Group 1 were analysed using the same procedures.

As explained in section 4.7., coding procedures (content analysis) was the main method used to analyse the data. However, it was combined at all times with narrative analysis, since such an approach contributed to the coding and categorizing processes, as it cannot be forgotten that the present dissertation deals with identity issues and lived experiences.

With the aim to find answers to RQ1, and bearing in mind that we are dealing within a qualitative study within an interpretive research paradigm, the codes are connected to each other, forming higher categories that help to find explanations to the research question. Several codes helped me to define the possible factors that might have affected the student-teachers' choice of degree. Table 14 shows the codes in which data were classified. Two main categories, "significance of English" and "willingness to invest in English practices" take into account the theoretical framework of the study and aim to look at the issues that were considered important from the students' perspective.

Most codes match up with the notions, concepts and ideas that give shape to the literature review presented in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, as a data-driven study, the students' comments led to the emergence of more precise themes that needed to be taken into account. Thus, the code "interest towards English", for example, was needed due to the student-teachers' general and straightforward comments connected to their "liking" for this language and its relationship with their choice of degree. In other words, when asked "Why did you decide to study the degree in Primary Education in English" in Questionnaire 2, most students referred to a mysterious interest towards English (e.g. because I like/love English"). When asked in Questionnaire 2, most students referred to an enigmatic interest towards English. Similarly, the student-teachers' intention to live experiences abroad also appeared during the data analysis process and thus, they were coded as a meaningful information that needed to be taken into account.

**Table 14. Codes and Categories S1**

CATEGORIES	CODES
<b>Significance of English</b>	Interest towards English
	Role of English worldwide
	CoPs through English
	Imagined Identities *Experiences abroad *Cultural/Symbolic Capital
<b>Willingness to invest in the practices of the CoP they seek to belong to</b>	Previous English CoPs
<i>Note:</i> <i>CoP(s): Community(ies) of Practice</i>	

Let us now briefly present each of the identified codes:

- "INTEREST TOWARDS ENGLISH" was the code chosen to mark those comments referring to the students' general positive (or negative, in one case) opinions towards English. Most of the participants referred to their interest towards English as one of the factors that influenced their choice of degree, even though this code does not include the reasons behind such interest.



- The code “**IMAGINED IDENTITIES**” marks those comments which refer to the participants’ visions of themselves in the future.
  - The subcode “*CULTURAL/SYMBOLIC CAPITAL*” covers those comments which undercover the students’ present or future visions of themselves as individuals who carry certain social and cultural values attributed to the mastery of English. Even though it was not directly listed as a factor that influenced their choice of degree, it appeared during the data analysis and thus, their awareness towards the society’s recognition was considered worth mentioning. This code only appeared in the interview data.
  - The subcode “*EXPERIENCES ABROAD*” points at those comments specifically referring to the participants’ desire to live experiences abroad in the future.
- “**COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE THROUGH ENGLISH**” was the code chosen to mark those comments addressing previous experiences in communities of practice through English, such as previous stays abroad, travelling experiences, English media, etc. Such data were highly analysed through thematic analysis (Guest, 2012) .
- The code “**WILLINGNESS TO INVEST IN ENGLISH PRACTICES**” covers those comments in which students explicitly express their interest in keeping learning English during their participation in the EMI-PEBD.
- The code “**ROLE OF ENGLISH WORLDWIDE**” addresses those comments related to the student-teachers’ opinions towards English.

The following table (Table 15) aims to provide a broad idea of the amount of times each code appeared on the analysed data from the open-ended questions in Q2 and from Individual Interview 1 and Focus Group 1. Bearing in mind the fact that in this study the weight of content analysis was greater than narrative analysis, as RQ1 mainly looked for themes/factors that played a role in the students’ choice of degree, this information was considered a positive contribution to the presentation of the results.

Table 15. Codes counting S1<sup>1</sup>

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUM.	CODE	NUMBER OF TIMES IT APPEARS	EXAMPLE
Q2	Interest towards English	29	<i>Sempre m'ha agradat aprendre llengües i sobretot l'anglès.</i> I've always liked learning languages and especially English. (Roser, Q2)
	Imagined Identities	52	<i>Quan penso en el meu futur no em veig a Espanya treballant.</i> When I think about my future I don't see myself working in Spain. (Alicia, Q2)
	Experiences Abroad	17	<i>Sempre he volgut marxar fora a viure, en especial el Regne Unit.</i> I've always wanted to work abroad, especially in the UK. (Silvia, Q2)
	Cultural/Symbolic Capital	4	<i>M'ofereix la possibilitat d'ampliar moltíssim el meu nivell cultural (cosa imprescindible en un mestre o mestra).</i> (English) offers me the possibility to broaden my cultural level so much (something essential in a teacher ) (Natalia, Q2)
	CoPs through English	22	<i>Des dels 3 anys estudio anglès a l'escola i ho agraeixo moltíssim.</i> I've been studying English at school since I was 3 and I am very grateful for that (Sònia, Q2)
	Willingness to invest in English practices	14	<i>A més a més dels motius estudiantils per mi fer la carrera en anglès em permet augmentar el meu nivell com aquell qui diu dia a dia.</i> In addition to the studying reasons, I think that studying the degree in English allows me to improve my level every day (Sara, Q2)
	Role of English	26	<i>Sobretot per les oportunitats a nivell laboral que comportava el bon domini de l'anglès.</i>

<sup>1</sup> The total recount of the code "Imagined Identities" also includes the subcodes "Experiences Abroad" and "Cultural/Symbolic Capital".

			Mostly because of the professional opportunities that the mastery of English implies. (Mercè, Q2)
Individual Interview 1	Interest towards English	10	<i>M'agraden les llengües.</i> I like languages. (Sònia, I2)
	Imagined Identities	65	<i>Per anar pel món, ara per ara, et continua fent falta això. I és el que s'ha de fer, vull dir... com si diguéssim, si et limites al català i... al castellà, t'estàs limitant com geogràficament a un lloc.</i>  Nowadays, to move around the world, you need it (English)... I mean... if you only master Catalan and... Spanish... you are geographically limited. (Sara, I1)
	Experiences Abroad	9	<i>Jo me n'aniria a fora i me'n vull anar. Perquè realment m'agrada... mmm... marxar, conèixer món...</i>  I would go abroad and I want to go abroad. Because I really like it.. mmm... going abroad, discovering the world... (Sònia, I1)
	Cultural/Symbolic Capital	8	<i>Mira, tens la carrera, tens títols, tens doctorats o postgraus o lo que tinguis, màsters, i mentrestant a sobre t'has mogut pel món! Pues! que guai!</i>  You have the degree, you've got certificates, PhDs or postgraduate courses or whatever, masters, and on top of that in the meantime you've been able to travel the world! It's cool! (Alicia, I1)
	CoPs through English	38	<i>Quan estava estudiant ciències, la majoria d'articles que m'havia de llegir, la majoria de investigacions que s'han fet al voltant d'un tema, jo què sé, les cèl·lules mare, la majoria de tota la informació que trobes és en anglès.</i>  When I was studying Sciences, most of the articles I had to read, most of the research that has been done on any field... I don't know, stem cells, most of the information you find is in English (Roser, I1)
	Willingness to invest in English practices	7	<i>El fet de fer-ho en anglès ja t'està dient que en general el teu nivell d'anglès el milloraràs.</i>  The fact that you're doing it in English is already assuring you that your English level

			will improve (Alicia, I1)
	Role of English	22	<p><i>Et permet relacionar-te amb qualsevol persona de qualsevol cultura, pràcticament, llavors... crec que tothom l'hauria de poder conèixer i parlar.</i></p> <p>It allows you to interact with anyone from any culture, practically, then... I believe that everyone should be able to speak it (Alicia, I1)</p>
Focus Group 1	Interest towards English	10	<p><i>Sempre em diuen també, per què no aprens alemany o xinès o italià... però és que és diferent, perquè l'anglès m'ha agradat tota la vida.</i></p> <p>I'm always asked, why don't you learn German or Chinese or Italian... but it's just different, because I've loved English my entire life (Patricia, FG1)</p>
	Imagined Identiteis	42	<p><i>t'obre un ventall de possibilitats a l'hora de poder marxar, de poder ser superior a la competència per tenir.. més... una altra llengua, un plus de més... eh... també no sé.. és el que ha dit la Natalia abans, és un enriquiment personal</i></p> <p>It grants you so many possibilities to go abroad, to be better than others to have... more... another Language, another plus... also I don't know... it's what Natalia said before, it is a personal enrichment (Arnau, FG1)</p>
	Experiences Abroad	10	<p><i>Personalment tinc ganes de sortir, descobrir, començar potser amb un Erasmus, i a veure com va.</i></p> <p>Personally I feel like going abroad, discovering, maybe starting with an Erasmus, and see how it goes (Natalia, FG 1)</p>
	Cultural/Symbolic Capital	13	<p><i>A nivell social, és com... si saps anglès hm... algo bo trobaràs, sempre.</i></p> <p>At a social level... if you master English... you'll always get something good (Neus, FG1)</p>
	CoPs through English	13	<p><i>Ell treballa a Anglaterra, i em va passar l'email d'una alumna seva, i ... una vegada al mes ens enviàvem un correu electrònic, parlant sobre el què fèiem.</i></p>

			(He) is working in England, and he gave me the email address of one of his students, and... once a month we exchanged emails, chatting about what we did. (Ester, FG1)
	Willingness to invest in English practices	3	<i>Jo per millorar l'anglès.</i> To improve my English level (Neus, FG1)
	Role of English	16	<i>Així com l'anglès sí, perquè no sé el parla tothom, o sigui vagis on vagis , més o menys tothom parla més o menys l'anglès.</i> While English does, because ... I don't know, everyone speaks it, I mean, wherever you go, everyone sort of speaks English... (Silvia, FG1)
<p><i>Notes:</i></p> <p><i>*Q2: Questionnaire 2; I1: Individual Interview 1; I2: Individual Interview 2; FG1: Focus Group 1; FG2: Focus Group 2; CoP(s): Community(ies) of Practice</i></p> <p><i>*Direct quotes from the participants' accounts have been marked in italics and inappropriate or incorrect expressions in Catalan were preserved in order to present the real messages as they were conveyed.</i></p>			

See Appendix 6A for coding of open-ended questions and see Appendix 6B for coding of learners' talk in Individual Interview 1 and Focus Group 1.

Results will be presented organised in the following way:

- (1) Findings from Data Set A (closed-ended questions in Q2) (section 5.3.2.)
- (2) Findings from Data Set B (open-ended questions in Q2) (section 5.3.3.)
- (3) Comprehensive thematic interpretation including all data sets: Data Set A; Data Set B; and Data Sets C and D (section 5.4.)

The data sets listed above will be presented and analysed in the following sections.

### 5.3.2. RESULTS FROM QUANTITATIVE DATA. CLOSED-ENDED QUESTIONS IN QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (DATA SET A)

Questionnaire 2 helped the students to get familiarized with some of the issues that would be addressed during the length of the study, as well as it helped the researcher to have an even amount of initial information about each participant (see section 4.5.1.1.). It was composed of 9 questions. Questions 1 and 2 provided basic information about the participants. As far as the rest of the questions, questions 3, 4 and 5 were closed-ended questions, while 6, 7, 8 and 9 were open-ended questions. The first closed-ended question (question 3) asked the students to answer “yes” or “no”, regarding whether they had ever studied/lived abroad. The other two closed-ended question offered the students different options: while the first one (question 4) concerned how often they undertook several activities, they were required to tick the extent to which they agreed with several assertions in the second one (question 5) (see section 4.5.2.1.).

Following, I will present the data obtained from the three closed-ended questions in Q2. I will present an interpretive analysis of quantitative data obtained through question 3 and through the tables in questions 4 and 5.

Table 16 shows that half of the participants have had experiences living outside of Spain for a certain period of time before starting the EMI-PEBD. Given the potential that communities of practice have to shape individual’s identities (Lave & Wenger, 1991), it was of prime importance to take this issue into consideration.

**Table 16. Stays abroad**

<b>Question 3: Have you ever studied/lived abroad?</b>	
<b>YES (7/14)</b>	<b>NO (7/14)</b>
<b>Alicia</b>	Gisela
<b>Arnau</b>	Ester
<b>Júlia</b>	Mercè
<b>Neus</b>	Montse
<b>Roser</b>	Natalia
<b>Sara</b>	Patricia
<b>Sònia</b>	Silvia

Table 17 below reveals how often the participants engaged in activities through English in their daily lives, at the time of the first data collection (May 2013). English, according to this table, seems to be an important part of the student-teachers' lives, as it reaches them through TV, films, radio, books, magazines or music. Being Spain one of what Kachru (1992) named the Expanding Circle countries, it is easy to assume that it is English as a global language (Crystal, 2003) what affects these participants' lives through media, new communication technologies... Carrying out activities through the target language seems to be part of a certain reality that many young generations nowadays have incorporated into their routines and thus, such practices might be affecting the types of communities these individuals envision. While most of these practices have become part of their daily lives, studying English with a textbook does not seem to fall into such type of naturally incorporated activities. Therefore, taking into account that these practices are part of the student-teachers' daily lives is of extremely importance in order to understand the types of communities in which they engage.

**Table 17. Use of English at home**

*Question 4. I use/learn English at home...*

	Never	Sometimes	Every week	Almost every day
Watching TV in English	1	7	1	5
Listening to radio programmes in English	10	2	2	0
Listening to songs in English			1	13
Reading books/magazines in English	0	9	1	4
Speaking English with friends (phone, skype...)	3	6	3	2
Studying with a textbook.	4	7	3	0
Using internet (e.g. e-mail, chatting, games...)	0	1	3	10

Table 18 below reveals the extent to which the 14 participants agreed on several statements that were related to their possible interest towards English and their possible desires for the future.

**Table 18. Being an English speaker**  
*Question 5. I like being an English speaker because...*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
of the personal development opportunities that it involves			1	1	12
of the professional development opportunities that it involves				2	12
I can communicate with people from all over the world (not just from English-speaking countries)				2	12
I like travelling all over the world				2	12
I can access a wide variety of resources: films, books, magazines, information on the internet...			1	2	11
It increases my social prestige	1	7	5	1	
I feel more connected to the world thanks to English speaking media (TV, films, newspapers...)		3	4	7	
It helps me to have a broader perspective of the world.		4	2	8	
I can work abroad if I want to				2	12
I love learning English				4	10
I love learning languages in general	1	1	7	5	
I like meeting/keeping in touch with people with different customs and values.		2	5	7	
It is an international language		1	4	9	

The previous table (Table 18) shows various issues connected to their identities and the communities they aim to be part of through the mastery of this language. The assertions they graded depending on whether they agreed or not seem to indicate that issues related to their identities might have played a key role in their choice of degree. However, interview data was much richer and provides more clear insights into this issue. It is interesting to note that when asked to rate the assertion “it increases my social prestige”, the participants’ opinions seem to be quite varied. However, leaving behind whether they consider it increases their prestige or not, their comments throughout the interviews, which will be shown later on, illuminate the fact that, although probably subconsciously, such prestige or, as Bourdieu names it, such cultural



and symbolic power, did have something to do with their interest towards this degree. This will be further discussed in the findings in discussion section.

The previous tables broadly unveil themes that had to be taken into account when looking at the data. In spite of that, it was data from the interviews what uncovered the most important reasons behind what they seemed to indicate in the questionnaire responses. This will be further discussed in section 5.4.

### **5.3.3. RESULTS FROM QUALITATIVE DATA. OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS IN QUESTIONNAIRE 2 (DATA SET B)**

Open-ended questions in Q2 provided the student-teachers with the opportunity to express themselves more freely and, thus, data gathered in these questions added a higher degree of complexity if comparing with the data displayed in the tables presented above. The students' comments added more interpretive possibilities to understand the factors that might have played a role in the student-teachers' decision to study the EMI-PEBD. Q2 included 4 open-ended questions (question 6, 7, 8 and 9), which have been listed below<sup>2</sup>:

*6. Why did you decide to study Primary Education in English?*

*7. To what extent was your decision to study Primary Education in English related to your personal motivations? In what ways is it related?*

*8. English is important in my life because...*

*9. Do you think that your motivation to keep learning English and to keep accessing English resources has anything to do with your personal aspirations? In what ways?*

Coded data in all textual data pertaining to this study is displayed in the Appendices: the codes that emerged from open-ended questions and the codes assigned to each piece of interview data and focus group data (see Appendix 6).

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<sup>2</sup>The original questions were in Catalan, see Appendix 2.

Q2 included a lot of information that was particularly relevant for the issues under investigation in this study. Even though only two questions in Q2 directly referred to the motives under the student-teachers' choice of degree (see Figure 7), other questions provided very meaningful information that seems to help to find answers for the research question that concerns the present study.

**Figure 7. The students' choice of degree in Q2**

<i>Please answer the following question..</i>
Why did you decide to study Primary Education in English?
<i>Please answer the following question. If you need more space, please continue overleaf..</i>
To what extent was your decision to study Primary Education in English related to your personal motivations? In what ways is it related?

Preliminary content analysis (coding and categorizing) of student-teachers' questionnaires demonstrated that all of them mostly drew on the same themes and topics to present the reasons behind their choice of degree (see Table 19). In the two questions in Q2 that were directly related to this issue (questions 6 and 7, see Figure 7), out of 14 participants, 12 students linked their decision to their passion towards the language, 10 referred to the opportunity to continue learning English, 9 of them discussed the personal opportunities and experiences that this degree would make possible and, finally, 11 referred to the importance of English nowadays (both in terms of its role worldwide and in terms of its professional value in their own country). It is worth mentioning, though, that when further discussing such issues during the interviews, the themes tended to interweave and they seem to intertwine with the complexities that are hidden behind a person's desires for the future. Similarly, other themes that were not directly mentioned by the students emerged. This will be discussed in detail when doing the interpretive analysis of the findings in section 5.4.

**Table 19. Reasons behind the students' decision (questions 6&7 Q2)**

N. of students	Topic mentioned
12	passion towards English (IntEng)
10	opportunity to continue learning English (WillInvest)
11	personal opportunities/ experiences (ImagId)
11	importance of English nowadays (RoleE)

The ideas beneath the student-teachers' decision to study the English-medium degree in Primary Education seem to be connected to the significance that this language entails for them. The overall impression is that this language was already an important part of their lives and that the decision to enrol in the English-Medium degree in Primary Education was one step forward towards something they are pursuing, something that requires them to master this language. When asked directly about this issue, the participants in this study seem to show a wide range of reasons that hide further motives and explanations. Even though they do not seem to find a simple and straightforward answer, the complexity of the reasons for their degree choice reflects upon their comments throughout the interviews that will follow next, and in the more general questions in the questionnaire. It is important to mention that out of the 14 participants in this study, three of them (Alicia, Silvia and Gisela) did not choose this degree as their first option. However, the fact that it was in English led them to consider this issue as a positive point to be taken into account, which brought the three of them to conclude that, in the case they were only given this option, it was still a very good and compelling choice.

#### **5.4. INTEGRATING RESULTS / TRIANGULATION**

This section includes the interpretation of all the data included in this study: closed and open-ended questions in Q2, Individual Interview 1 and Focus Group 1 (data Sets A, B, C and D.). The section is organized according to the interpretations of such analysis, as well as these are organized on the basis of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter 2. As this chapter will show, the findings are believed to be conjointly determining and decisive. The findings are yielded by all data found in the

questionnaires and interviews, as well as by the detailed analysis that has been carried out and that can suggest meaningful answers to RQ1. This study is backed up with pieces of relevant data, as well as references to some of the theoretical constructs presented in Chapter 2, which help to illuminate the arguments and analysis presented.

Data excerpts will be presented along with the general findings and discussion that follows. The categories presented (“Significance of English” and “Willingness to invest in English practices”) emerged through and after the analysis of both written and oral data. These categories are the hierarchy through which the thematic analysis has been organized. The codes belonging to each category are included (see Table 9) within such categories. In other words, there is a direct relationship between Table 9 and the presentation of the findings.

The interpretation emerges from the codes and categories obtained, as well as from the narrative analysis carried out. By interconnecting the codes and their relationships, broader categories have surfaced, each one of them including their group of codes. A brief reminder of such codes and consecutive constituted categories follows:

- **SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH:**
  - ✓ Interest towards English
  - ✓ Role of English worldwide
  - ✓ CoPs through English
  - ✓ Imagined Identities
    - \* Experiences abroad
    - \*Cultural/Symbolic capital
  
- **WILLINGNESS TO INVEST IN THE PRACTICES OF THE COP THEY SEEK TO BELONG TO**
  - ✓ Willingness to invest in English practices

Data from the questionnaires and interviews and focus group show how two main issues, which are highly interlinked, arise from the 14 student-teachers’ answers: (1)

the significance of English as a global language (for an individual and in society), and (2) their willingness to invest in the practices of a community they seek to belong to: a global community of English users (Ryan, 2006)<sup>3</sup>.

#### **5.4.1. SIGNIFICANCE OF ENGLISH: THE STATUS OF ENGLISH WORLDWIDE AND THE STUDENT-TEACHERS' IMAGINED IDENTITIES**

This category was constituted on the basis of the codes that emerged from the data. The student-teachers' interest towards what has been called the "international language" (Kuo, 2006) hides a wide range of factors that affect and influence each other. In very simple questions addressed at the participants, what seems to be an apparent and simple interest towards English turns out to encompass complex issues that aroused from deep conversations during the data collection process. Such interest towards the target language was said to be one of the reasons for choosing the English-medium Degree in Primary Education. There were comments such as: "*I've always liked learning languages, and especially English*" (Sònia, Q2); "*I've always found languages interesting*" (Alicia, Q2); "*I've always liked learning languages and especially English*" (Roser, Q2); "*I've always liked it*" (Silvia, Q2); and one of the participants even described her English achievements as something to be proud of (Ester, Q2). Overall, when asked about the reasons for their degree choice most participants gave these short and straightforward answers to refer to their interest towards English.

However, despite the apparent simplicity of these comments, it appears that such interest might be guided by complex issues that came to the foreground during the interviews and in the more general questions in Q2. In other words, even though such issues were not clearly expressed at the beginning, the questionnaires and interviews provided very relevant data that disclosed the complexity of the issues under investigation: the nature of their interest towards English and the role that this language plays in their lives.

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<sup>3</sup> Preliminary results from Study 1 can be found in Torras-Vila (2015) and in Torras-Vila & Evnitskaya (forthcoming 2017).

When asked to further expand on her reasons for liking English, Patricia provided very interesting insights that show higher motives lying beneath this apparently genuine interest.

*A mi sempre em diuen també, per què no aprens alemany o xinès o italià... però és que és diferent, perquè l'anglès m'ha agradat tota la vida, llavors és una motivació constant a aprendre més, en canvi l'italià... mmmm bueno sí, puc aprendre, però no no em motiva tant, perquè no m'agrada l'idioma (Patricia, FG)<sup>4</sup> [Excerpt 5.1.]*

Patricia's comment illuminates the fact that English is positioned at a different level and is clearly privileged among the others. She states that she likes it, even though in Q2 she did not clarify why. However, Natalia and Mercè report something different:

*Natalia: a mi personalment no m'agrada especialment l'anglès  
Mercè: a mi tampoc (FG)<sup>5</sup> [Excerpt 5.2.]*

Both students declare that they do not particularly like this language, but Natalia, when asked about the reasons for wanting to master it, provides a very straightforward answer:

*No sé, jo tampoc ho veig com una cosa tan... també pràctica, però... també perquè és un coneixement que tens i una mica ptes tot el que vas fent et va enriquint, no? i... poc a poc.... Millorar aquests aspectes també t'ajuda a canviar com a persona, no? I a lo millor agafes nous valors, i et fixes en coses que abans no et fixaries, i... també personalment, no tan pràctic, de treballar o anar a fora, sinó per sentir-te també millor amb tu mateix (Natalia, FG)<sup>6</sup> [Excerpt 5.3.]*

Therefore, the reasons for "liking" or "being interested in English" appear to go beyond the target language itself. Following Natalia's argument, all participants addressed identity issues and the status of this language in the world as the factors that led them to like or to be interested in this language, two factors that were always interweaved. Thus, taking Patricia and Natalia's comment as way of examples, the

<sup>4</sup> I'm always asked, why don't you learn German or Chinese or Italian... but it's just different, because I've loved English my entire life, and then it's like a constant motivation to learn more and more, while with Italian... m... well yes, I could learn it, but it doesn't motivate me as much as English, cause I don't like the language.

<sup>5</sup> Natalia: personally I don't particularly like English // Mercè: neither do I.

<sup>6</sup> Don't know, I don't see it as something as.... It's also practical but... it's also because it is knowledge that you have and then... little by little you enrich yourself, right? And then maybe you learn new values, and you pay attention to things that you would have never paid attention to and.... Also personally, not from a practical perspective in terms of jobs or travelling abroad, but in order to feel better about yourself

significance of this language seems to lie on two levels: the significance of English in the world and the significance of English for oneself. Taking into account the data excerpts presented above, these two issues arise from the data and help to illuminate such higher reasons for having chosen the English-medium degree. On the one hand, the status of English nowadays (its significance worldwide), was generally considered a key point when choosing this degree. On the other hand, the student-teachers' imagined identities (Norton Pierce, 1995) and the possibilities for identity expansion (the significance of the language for oneself), were determinant when discussing and presenting their interest towards this language. These findings will be discussed next.

#### **5.4.1.1. The role of English in society nowadays**

Crystal (2003) defines English as a "global language":

*You hear it on television spoken by politicians from all over the world. Wherever you travel, you see English signs and advertisements. Whenever you enter a hotel or restaurant in a foreign city, they will understand English, and there will be an English menu. Indeed, if there is anything to wonder about at all, they might add, it is why such headlines should still be newsworthy (Crystal, 2003:2).*

As it was mentioned above, one of the key factors that were found to influence their decision to study the English-medium degree was the status that English has worldwide. I use the word "influence" because in many cases, references to such status were implicit, or indirect in the student-teachers' comments. However, understanding the role of English in the world and how it affected their decision and their interest towards English in general is of prime importance for the present study. As far as the status of English is concerned, the role of this language nowadays, both in the participants' own country and worldwide, encompasses social meanings and implies power relations that do not seem to be unnoticed by the student-teachers. Therefore, even if unconsciously, they are aware of the advantages that mastering this language implies, as they notice the meanings hidden behind this language.

It was not only Patricia who was particularly interested in English, and not in other languages. In one of the grids in Q2 some participants explicitly stated that they liked learning English but not other languages. This was further discussed in the interviews.

Their answers below may hint that these participants were actually interested in what this international language encompasses, rather than in the language itself. Whether it was to acknowledge its international status or to emphasize the career possibilities that the English-medium Primary Education degree could offer them in their country or abroad, the following excerpts show the value the participants place on this language, being very aware of its status: *“it’s very important nowadays”* (Gisela, Q2), *“at a job level”* (Gisela, Q2; Mercè, Q2), *“nowadays you need to have a good level of English in order to be hired”* (Patricia, Q2); *“it opens doors, both professionally and personally”* (Mercè, Q2); it gives them *“access to more information”* (Natalia, Q2). The participants also defined it by saying that *“English is an international language, one of the most widely spoken worldwide”* (Arnau, Q2), *“I consider that English is an international language”* (Alicia, Q2); it could offer them *“more job possibilities than if I studied it in Catalan* (Neus, Q2).

*Pensava que fer la carrera en anglès **em permetria millorar el meu propi nivell**, ja que tot i que em costaria més seguir les classes el fet de fer-les en anglès m’ajudaria a millorar i per tant **tindria més possibilitats de trobar feina quan acabi la carrera, tant dins com fora de Catalunya o Espanya*** (Alicia, Q2)<sup>7</sup> [Excerpt 5.4.]

In Q2, there was a grid in which the participants were asked to “tick” the most appropriate answer according to their opinion, in relation to several realities or situations. The grid was titled “I like speaking English because...”. Out of 14 participants, these were their answers:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
<b>It is an International Language</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>

The participants’ answers evidence that they were fully aware of the nowadays reality in which English has become a “global language” (Crystal, 2003) or an “international language” (Kuo, 2006). The participants seem to accept the role that English plays worldwide, as well as they are fully aware of the practicalities that go

<sup>7</sup> I thought that studying in English would help me to improve and therefore I would have more possibilities to find a job when I finish, both within the country and abroad.



hand in hand with such status. Moreover, according to the table above, the status of English clearly affects their interest towards this language.

Besides, all participants in the focus group discussed the role of this global language and its situation in their country:

**Mercè:** [...] *d'aquí a uns anys si no saps angles no seràs res!* [...] *En el món global en el què estem vivint, és súper necessari dominar llengües internacionals.*

**Silvia:** *potser és com avançar-se, no?* [...]

[...]

**Interviewer:** *creus que ja aneu tard?*

**Silvia:** *jo crec que, en general, Espanya va tard.*

*(riuen)*

**Silvia:** *tu te'n vas a qualsevol país, i més o menys, la gent de la nostra edat tothom parla anglès. Aquí a Espanya, què vols que et digui....mmm no...[...]*  
*Aquí lo que estem nosaltres fent és com avançar-se a Espanya, no a tot el món (FG)<sup>8</sup> [Excerpt 5.5.]*

Given these remarks, it is important to locate Spain and the role that English has in this country. The on-going globalisation process, has brought the idea of “world Englishes”: “linguistic diversity is inevitable and variation in the aspect of phonology and morphosyntax has already been seen within inner-circle Englishes and among outer-circle varieties” (Kuo, 2006:213). Spain and many countries in Europe are part of what Kachru (1986) called the Expanding Circle, that is, countries in which English is a foreign language. Despite the fact that English has no official functions in these countries, it appears that it is the users in these countries who are turning English into an international language (Kuo, 2006).

Therefore, by arguing that Spain is already late in relation to the role that English has acquired worldwide, these participants might be trying to pursue something in

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<sup>8</sup> Mercè: [...] in a few years if you don't speak English you'll be nothing! [...] In the global world in which we live, it is extremely necessary to master international languages.

Silvia: maybe it's like being one step ahead of others[...]

Interviewer: do you think you're already late ?

Silvia: I believe that, in general, Spain is late.

*(they laugh)*

Silvia: when you go to any country... people more or less... people our age all speak English. Here in Spain, what can I say... mmm no... [...] Here what we are doing is like being in a more advanced position in relation to Spain, not to the rest of the world.

order not to be left behind. The student-teachers in this study seem to be generally aware of the role that English has gained in globalisation processes, although they might see it as a reality worldwide and as a mark of social prestige in Spain. The students probably seek to be provided with opportunities to gain “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1986) with regard to the rest of their society and other recently graduate teachers and also with regard to an international community of English users, whose “oldtimers” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) might then allow them full access to participation (Wenger, 1998). They are “newcomers” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) who are learning through practice and who seek for opportunities to play a role in the worlds that English comprises. They seek to shorten the distance between what this language embraces and what they themselves can embrace.

In sum, students are aware of the status of English as a “global language”, while they are also aware of the social and cultural meanings that mastering this language in their society and worldwide presuppose. Silvia, for example, feels like there is something that distinguishes English among other languages:

*La meva mare sempre està sobre meu, per què no aprens alemany, aprens italià, aprens alguna altra llengua que no sigui l'anglès, i jo... però és que no em motiva... o sigui no.. així com **l'anglès sí, perquè no sé, el parla tothom**, o sigui vagis on vagis, més o menys tothom parla més o menys l'anglès... (Silvia, FG)<sup>9</sup> [Excerpt 5.6.]*

Silvia's view is in accordance with Seidlhofer's (Seidlhofer, 2005) notion of “lingua franca”. In the same vein, when further discussing this issue, another participant, Arnau, added more information:

*També és una **eina que et permet marxar a fora...** tu dius que vols marxar... i **l'anglès és precisament la llengua que et permet poder-te comunicar**, vagis a Londres, vagis a la Xina, vagis a Estats Units [...] (Arnau,FG)<sup>10</sup> [Excerpt 5.7.]*

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<sup>9</sup> My mum is always going on at me ... why don't you learn German, Italian... another language that is not English, and I... it's like it doesn't motivate me... it's... while English does, because ... I don't know, everyone speaks it, I mean, wherever you go, everyone sort of speaks English...

<sup>10</sup> It's also a tool that allows you to go abroad... you say you wanna leave.... And English is precisely the language that allows you to communicate, whether you go to London, China, USA.

As Table 2 shows, together with the comments made throughout the interviews and questionnaires, the role of English was one of the reasons for choosing the English-medium degree in Primary Education, but, however, data imply that it was the meanings behind this role what mattered to the participants. Even though all participants, with no exception, pointed to the future career possibilities that pursuing the English-medium degree would offer them as one of the factors that had influenced their decision to study it, when further discussing the role of English in their lives, it was noted that these reasons were merely the tip of the iceberg, as I will show below. Instrumental reasons (Gardner, 1985), thus, cannot be considered one of the factors that pushed these students to enrol in the English-medium degree. Very interestingly, although the vast majority directly referred to the professional benefits of becoming teachers with a good English command (specially taking into account the economic situation in Spain), all participants stated that they would not have chosen this degree only because of its professional advantages (the possibility to find a job more easily).

The practical reasons behind their decision, thus, seem to be subordinated to a much more important factor. They felt they gained something else from learning English, something that went far beyond practicality. English seems to be the door to something bigger. In fact, there was one participant, Ester, who explained that she would not have chosen the Degree in Primary Education if it had not been taught in English. In other words, she did not consider studying Primary Education in Catalan. Similarly, another participant, Silvia, stated she was not sure about it. In Q2 Ester provided the following explanation about her reasons for studying the degree:

*A mi sempre m'han agradat els idiomes i en un principi volia fer Traducció i Interpretació, però vaig adonar-me que m'agraden els nens també, i **al trobar una carrera que m'oferia les dues possibilitats** va fer més fàcil la decisió (Ester, Q2)<sup>11</sup>. [Excerpt 5.8.]*

Therefore, in Ester's case, and probably Silvia's too, the language of instruction was as important as the degree itself. From this comment and from the information Ester provided in the focus group interview it might be concluded that she would probably

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<sup>11</sup> I've always liked languages and initially I wanted to study Translation and Interpreting, but I realized that I like children too, and when I found a degree that offered both possibilities, the decision became easier.

have chosen Translation and Interpreting if she had only been left with the possibility to study Primary Education in Catalan.

Through the role that English occupies in the world nowadays, students envision an imagined community of English users. As Norton (2001:166) signals, “a learner’s imagined community invite[s] an imagined identity, and a learner’s investment in the target language must be understood within this context”. It is important to highlight that the role of English worldwide is what defines the “imagined community” they envision. Through such community, they also envision their L2 imagined identities, something that increases these learners’ willingness to engage in English learning practices.

These possibilities for identity expansion that the “global language” facilitates are what turned out to be another key factor when deciding to enrol in the EMI-PEBD. This is what will be discussed below.

#### **5.4.1.2. Imagined Identities**

*Identities are negotiated in and through linguistic practices* (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004)

When analysing the data, behind the widely repeated idea that these students liked learning English, it appears that the interest towards the target language constantly overlaps with what seems to be another key factor for their choice of degree: the person they want to become or what Norton (2001) calls the “imagined identities”. These “imagined identities” were found to be a very relevant factor for the participants to choose this degree.

When asked whether personal motivations had affected the participants’ decision to study the English-medium degree in Primary Education, all participants answered affirmatively. They gave a wide range of ideas, experiences and opinions that shed some light into the role that identity and the investments in the learning of English had played in such decision. Below are two representative examples.

[...] *Sempre he sigut una noia molt aventurera, i des que conec què és viatjar a l'estranger he tingut molt clar que no em quedaré sempre al mateix lloc treballant o estudiant, per això he intentat mantenir un bon contacte amb la llengua anglesa. Tinc moltes ganes de començar a fer pràctiques i treballar per poder posar en pràctica el que sempre he volgut que és ensenyar! A part tinc ganes de viatjar i conèixer noves tècniques educatives (Montse, Q2)<sup>12</sup> [Excerpt 5.9.]*

*Des de ben petit he tingut la sort de viatjar amb la família, i degut a això, he pogut veure com d'important és saber llengües. L'anglès és una llengua internacional de les més parlades del món, i sempre m'ha agradat aprendre noves llengües així que sempre he intentat anar-la treballant. No va ser fins fa uns tres anys quan, degut a l'esquí (esport al que dedico la gran part del meu temps lliure), en un viatge amb l'equip em vaig adonar que sense l'anglès no hauríem pogut desplaçar-nos a la destinació, i un cop allà, no hauríem pogut comunicar-nos amb ningú. Des de llavors vaig veure que l'anglès i el seu domini són imprescindibles per moure'm i relacionar-me (Arnau, Q2)<sup>13</sup> [Excerpt 5. 10.]*

English is considered to be important in these student-teachers' society and the understanding of its role and status entails numerous other factors that cannot be neatly understood in a compartmentalised way. These other factors imply meanings that go hand in hand with the mastering of English and that cannot be understood without bearing in mind the person who speaks it and the reasons and social meanings that have brought such person to be able to master it. The status of this language, as Arnau points out, leads to the fact that being able to master it and to possess knowledge and skills in English imply higher power relations and status as Spanish and world citizens. Furthermore, this language places them on the worldwide map, as it might allow them to position themselves as international English users. English seems to be important in their lives due to numerous and multifactorial reasons and sociocultural realities. In fact, what the participants in this study might be chasing is a sense of

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<sup>12</sup> I've always been a very adventurous girl, and since I know what travelling abroad is, I've known for sure that I won't be staying still in the same place working or studying, that is why I've always tried to maintain my English [...] Besides, I want to travel and get to know new teaching methodologies.

<sup>13</sup> Since I was very young I've been lucky enough to travel with my family and, because of that, I've been able to see how important it is to learn languages. English is an international language, one of the most spoken ones in the world, and I've always liked learning new languages so I've always tried to work on it. It was not until three years ago when, because of my skiing environment (a sport I dedicate most of my free time to), during a trip with my team I realized that without English we wouldn't have been able to reach our destination and once we were there we couldn't have communicated with anyone. Since then I realized that English and its mastery are a must to move around and to communicate.

“international posture” (Yashima, 2002) that drives them to want to be proficient English speakers. While in Yashima’s study English symbolized the world around Japan, in this case English might be the symbol for the world around Spain.

It is important to point out that the person they want to become and the role of English in this identity cannot be understood without examining the experiences that these participants have engaged with through English in the past. Yet, this issue is beyond the scope of the given paper.

All participants in this study were aware of the role of English nowadays and most of them had already engaged to some extent in international settings, interacting with English users from around the globe, shaping their sense of self. Mastering a language also seems to imply the mastery of social and cultural situations and encounters, and all participants were aware of this reality, as their self-image had been shifting to different positions as they had engaged in communities through English. Student-teachers were aware of the fact that the time-space that this language occupies nowadays is the entrance door to their aspired imagined community (Wenger, 1998). According to Giddens (2000:4), “in a globalising world, where information and images are routinely transmitted across the globe, we are all regularly in contact with others who think differently, and live differently, from ourselves”.

The data from the questionnaires and interviews reveals that students may invest in English because it is a communication tool that appears to be strongly connected to their sense of changing identities in a globalizing world, where they need to use it in order to engage in a wide variety of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998): “*It gives you the possibility to communicate with anyone in the world... to be able to work anywhere and to go anywhere*” (Alicia, I1). It might be understood, then, that what could be called an “interest” towards the English language is in fact an “investment” (Norton Pierce, 1995) in their own identity. When asked about the importance of English in their lives, numerous and multifactorial reasons and sociocultural realities emanate from the participants’ comments, all of them being strongly connected with their future personal and professional possibilities and their future access to certain communities. The following quotes serve as interesting representative examples:

*Perquè m'enriqueix. M'obre moltes portes que en el cas contrari em serien molt difícils d'obrir. M'ha permès conèixer i mantenir una relació normal amb gent d'arreu del món. M'ha permès viatjar i sentir-me còmoda relacionant-me amb la gent. M'ha permès gaudir sovint, de molt i molt material audiovisual que no es tradueix al castellà. I finalment m'ha permès entrar en beques que requerien un nivell d'anglès, i aquestes beques han significat molt per mi a nivell de relacions i experiències (Roser, Q2)<sup>14</sup> [Excerpt 5.11.]*

*M'ajuda a poder comunicar-me i viatjar. Em permet tenir una visió del món en altres perspectives, no només les que el castellà i el català m'ofereixen (Arnau, Q2)<sup>15</sup> [Excerpt 5.12.]*

*M'enriqueix molt a nivell personal. M'agrada aprendre idiomes, i l'anglès en especial perquè és molt important a nivell laboral. He treballat molts anys en empreses on era necessari parlar i entendre l'anglès, per tant ha format part del meu dia a dia sempre. Poder comunicar-me amb persones d'altres països, conèixer noves cultures i tradicions i viatjar sense en handicap de l'idioma... Aquestes són les coses que trobo que m'aporta l'anglès (Gisela, Q2)<sup>16</sup> [Excerpt 5.13.]*

Hence, these quotes point to the fact that the notion of “investment” helps to understand the participants’ interest towards “global language” (Crystal, 2003). Investing in its learning implies an investment in who they want to become, since mastering this international language carries a series of implied meanings, and it is these meanings what the student-teachers are strongly pursuing by choosing this degree. Thus, they seem to “like” English due to the kinds of experiences and opportunities that this language might offer them (due to their identity possibilities for identity expansion).

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<sup>14</sup> Because it enriches me. It opens many doors that would otherwise be very difficult to open. It has allowed me to get to know and to have a normal relationship with people from all over the world. It has allowed me to travel and to feel comfortable getting to know people. It has permitted me to enjoy a lot of sources of media that have not been translated into Spanish. And finally it has allowed me to access scholarships that required a certain level of English, and such scholarships have meant a lot to me, both in terms of relationships and experiences

<sup>15</sup> It helps me to communicate and to travel. It allows me to have a way to look at the world with more perspectives, not only with the ones that Spanish and Catalan offer me.

<sup>16</sup> It enriches me a lot at a personal level. I like learning languages, and particularly English, since it is very important at a job level. I've been working for many years in companies where it was necessary to speak and understand English, and thus, it has always been part of my daily life. Being able to communicate with people from other countries, getting to know other cultures and traditions, travelling without the language handicap... These are the things that I find English provides me with...

Besides, and bearing in mind the issue of the status of English discussed in the previous section, English is no longer associated with Anglophone countries (see participants' comments in section 5.4.1.1.). As Kanno & Norton (2003:246) argue, "to envision an imagined identity within the context of an imagined community can impact a learner's engagement with educational practices". In fact, Sara's imagined identities, for example, cannot be understood without taking into account the notion of EIL or, in other words, the role of English as a global language. In her own words, "*if you think that something follows both requirements, it is useful and at the same time it motivates you, you devote more time to it and you try to do your best*" (Sara, Q2). Sònia provided similar insights: "*I've always liked learning languages, and especially English*" (Sònia, Q2), while she added that its importance lies in the fact that it has helped her to "*explore the world*". It might be the usefulness of mastering English from a personal perspective what drives these students to want to invest in it. Similarly, in Arnau's excerpt above, he clearly defines the target language as a tool that allows him to move around and to communicate with everyone.

The status of English worldwide and its mastery implies easier access to a wider community and, in fact, mastering it seems to be a requirement to be able to access certain communities, as it is Roser's case with a scholarship she was given. It is this community they seek to belong to, a community that will provide them with the identity they envision, their L2 imagined identity. Imagined ties can expand both spatially and temporally (Anderson, 1991).

The fragments from the data corpus below show that "imagination" plays a key role when envisioning this future "global identity" they might be searching for.

*Jo crec que el fet de veure que l'anglès és una llengua que **a més d'agradar-me pot aportar-me certs avantatges en la meva vida futura fa que encara m'agradi més*** (Sara, Q2)<sup>17</sup> [Excerpt 5.14.]

*[...] si realment quan acabes les coses estan malament, sempre pots marxar... Vull dir a mi realment aquí on visc estic molt bé i m'agrada molt, però **jo he anat a fora i he vist llocs de dir -pues aquí una***

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<sup>17</sup> I believe that the fact that I see English as a language that not only do I like but it can also provide me with certain advantages in my future life makes me like it even more.



**temporadeta- també m'hi estava, saps? És que pots fer moltes més coses, te'n pots anar a fer classes per tot arreu... (Sara, I1)<sup>18</sup> [Excerpt 5.15.]**

The central argument I wish to make is that the globalisation process that surrounds the daily life of these participants contributes to their aspirations and identity possibilities and future. Students might seek to position themselves as global or world citizens, an aspired identity that they have not fully acquired. These findings suggest that “there is an integral relationship between language learner investment and language learner identity” (Norton & Williams, 2012:317).

The relevance of the students' imagined identities as English speakers/users<sup>19</sup> was such that, as the following excerpt indicates, two of the participants would not have chosen to study Primary Education had it not been for the degree's language of instruction:

**Interviewer:** *Hauríeu estudiat Educació Primària ah... igualment? Si no hagués estat en anglès?*

*(molts assenteixen)*

**Silvia:** *no ho sé*

**Ester:** *no no...*

**Interviewer:** *Qui qui era que...*

**Ester:** *jo no...*

**Interviewer:** *Era el fet de... l'anglès*

**Ester:** *era el fet de l'anglès, sí... Si no m'hagués anat a alguna cosa relacionada amb idiomes, alguna Filologia o algo, però ... (FG)<sup>20</sup> [Excerpt 5.16.]*

Therefore, most of the student-teachers imagined identities were those of primary school teachers with a good mastery of English which could provide them with the

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<sup>18</sup> If when you finish things are really bad, you can always leave... I mean I really like living here, but I've been abroad and seen places that...-actually staying here for a while... I could do that, you know? You can do so many other things, you can go teach anywhere...

<sup>19</sup> The reasons behind the ambiguity in using the terms “user” / “speaker” in this dissertation will be discussed in section 5.5.

<sup>20</sup> I: would you have studied Primary Education anyway? If it had not been through English?

(most of them nod)

Silvia: I don't know

Ester: no no...

Interviewer: who was it that...

Ester: I wouldn't...

Interviewer: It was the issue of... English

Ester: It was the issue of English, yes... If not I would have done something related to languages, some Philology or something... but...

sufficient cultural capital in order to be better positioned by the rest of their society. However, in Ester and Silvia's cases, their imagined identities as English users/speakers were even more important than their imagined identities as primary teachers.

Overall, the imagined identities these student-teachers aspire to bring them closer to clear ideas of who they want to be or how they want to be defined. Two recurrently mentioned factors when referring to future desires were clearly identified: the possibility to live experiences abroad and the cultural capital that this degree will provide them with.

### ***Experiences abroad***

*Les meves aspiracions personals són **treballar fora d'Espanya** ja que aquí **la feina de mestre no està prou valorada** i a l'hora perquè **m'agrada viatjar i conèixer món** (Sònia, Q2)<sup>21</sup> [Excerpt 5.17.]*

*El cursar aquests estudis **m'assegura l'opció de poder buscar feina fora d'Espanya** (Natalia, Q2)<sup>22</sup> [Excerpt 5.18.]*

*Un altre motiu va ser **les possibilitats d'ensenyar en un país estranger a l'acabar la carrera** i, si la sort ho permet, trobar feina (Ester, Q2)<sup>23</sup> [Excerpt 5.19.]*

***Tinc ganes de viatjar i conèixer noves tècniques educatives.** [...] Sense l'anglès no podria fer la majora de coses que vull fer (com per exemple ensenyar en un país estranger) (Montse, Q2)<sup>24</sup> [Excerpt 5.20.]*

Together, these quotes suggest that the idea of living experiences abroad was something that all participants in this study mentioned one way or another. Table 20 clarifies the student-teachers comments on this issue:

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<sup>21</sup> My personal aspirations imply working outside of Spain, since the teaching profession is not sufficiently valued here and also I like travelling and discovering the world.

<sup>22</sup> Studying this degree assures me the option of being able to search for a job outside of Spain.

<sup>23</sup> Another reason was the possibility to teach in a foreign country when I finish the degree and, if I'm lucky, to find a job.

<sup>24</sup> I can't wait to travel and discover new teaching techniques [...] Without English I could not do most of the things I want to do (for example, teaching in a foreign country).

**Table 20. The aim behind the students' experiences abroad**

EXPERIENCES ABROAD	
Aim	Participants
WORK ABROAD (as a final objective or as a temporary option)	9
OTHER EXPERIENCES (travelling, volunteering, stays abroad...)	5

While in 9 cases there was a clear objective of working as teachers abroad, in others it was more about gaining the necessary cultural capital in order to be able to engage in international (by doing volunteering work, travelling, etc.) but the 14 student-teachers mentioned such experiences. For example, Arnau exclusively stated the following when asked about the reasons for choosing his degree: *“because this language would give me the option to go abroad when finishing my studies”* (Arnau, Q2). On the other hand, Júlia and Natalia’s comments show a different idea:

***La meva intenció no és acabar treballant a l'estranger sinó que em prenc l'aprenentatge de l'anglès com un repte personal, una manera de superar-me dia rere dia. [...]m'agradaria viatjar i poder aprendre d'allà on vaig. En aquest cas, millorar el meu nivell d'anglès em serviria com a llengua a fer server per tal d'entendre i fer-me entendre arreu del món. (Júlia, Q2)<sup>25</sup>*** [Excerpt 5.21.]

***Sé que tinc la inquietud de viatjar força i conèixer altres cultures i creences que em podrien semblar interessants i que de ben segur que m'ajudaran a obrir la meva ment i que m'enriquiran com a persona. [...] També tinc molt clar que vull anar-me'n a fora, a algun país a fer un voluntariat durant uns quants mesos. Si fos possible, seria perfecte que aquest voluntariat estigués relacionat amb l'Educació. [...] Per a poder arribar a complir aquest objectiu també necessito idiomes i la clau torna a ser, de moment, la llengua anglesa (Natalia, Q2)<sup>26</sup>*** [Excerpt 5. 22]

The ways in which globalisation has placed English in these student-teachers' daily life has led to their clear envisioning of the imagined community they want to belong to.

<sup>25</sup> My plan is not to work abroad eventually, but I take the learning of English as a personal challenge, a way to better myself [...] I'd like to travel and to be able to learn from wherever I go. Improving my English skills would be useful as a language to use in order to understand and to make myself understood all over the world.

<sup>26</sup> I know I have the curiosity to travel and to get to know other cultures and beliefs that I might find interesting and that, for sure, will help me to open up my mind and to enrich me as a person. [...] I also know for sure that I want to go somewhere abroad to volunteer for a few months. If this volunteering project was related to education that would be perfect.[...] In order to be able to fulfil this objective I also need languages and again, and for now, English becomes the key.

Murphey, Jin & Li-Chi (2005) reported a lack of imagined communities available for learners to invest in the learning of English, as in their study the participants did not know why they were supposed to learn English, something that affected their learning process. Unlike their study, these student-teachers seem to know very clearly why they want to invest in this language and they clearly identify the imagined community they want to be part of. This might be due to the purposive sampling process that was followed in this study, together with the fact that the decision to enrol in this Degree already shows a bid deal of how far these learners are willing to go as far as the learning of English is concerned. However, it is important to highlight that they envisioned such imagined community and decided to invest in English only after having engaged with communities that had allowed them to position in different ways, that is, after having experienced identity expansion. Not before. Having been in touch with what Block (2007a, 2002a) called “critical experiences”, these participants might have entered “a period of struggle to reach a balance” after having received “new and varied input” that might have disturbed their “taken-for-granted points of reference” (Block, 2007a:20). These critical experiences might have taken place through different trajectories/paths. On the one hand, as it is the case with some of the participants, through international experiences abroad. On the other hand, through international experiences that English, as a global language, might have brought to the local level (in the case of those participants who had never directly engaged with an international community but who had envisioned it through imagination). In both cases, their willingness to move abroad may imply, to some extent, their need to become full legitimate members of a community, participants of an international community of English users, something that would allow them to fully acquire their new L2 identity.

Due to this readiness to accomplish that, the idea of moving abroad for a certain amount of time, specifically, was one that was repeatedly found in the participants’ comments. Being a person who crosses borders and who can feel comfortable anywhere, leaving behind cultural differences, is something these students were trying to accomplish:

*Montse: o sigui per marxar també està bé, si ja tens la llengua i no has de fer un suplement, vull dir... si no hi hagués aquesta carrera i estiguéssim fent tots Primària, i volguéssim marxar a fora, potser el nivell d’anglès que portaríem no seria l’adequat. I ja que fas això, pues mira, et dona un impuls més per marxar, si és el que vols, clar.*

**Natalia:** sí

**Interviewer:** *i la idea de marxar? Per quin motiu?*

**Tots:** (somriuen)

**Silvia:** *perquè no vull dir que no m'agradi Espanya, però és com que m'agrada canviar, no? I veure coses diferents, i he estat per exemple a Anglaterra ja unes quantes vegades de viatge, i no sé.. em crida molt l'atenció tot. I... és bastant diferent d'aquí i no sé..*

**Interviewer:** *creus que té a veure amb el que deia la Natalia? D'enriquir-se?*

**Silvia:** *sí també potser, no? O sigui estar amb gent diferent, que... perquè per exemple a Londres, sobretot, no només hi ha gent d'allà, o sigui, hi ha gent de tot arreu [...] i tens contacte amb gent de tot arreu, amb diferents costums... no sé...*

**Arnau:** *jo sí... sempre he volgut marxar a fora... i a la que vaig veure la oportunitat d'aquesta carrera.. a mi m'agradaven bastant els nens i és... [...] en veure que el que volia era marxar i a sobre podia fer-ho tenint una carrera que m'ho permetia i m'ajudava, a sobre, doncs no vaig tenir cap dubte que era la meva (FG)<sup>27</sup> [Excerpt 5.23.]*

In order to position themselves as more “legitimate” English speakers (Bourdieu, 1977), the idea of moving abroad or spending periods of time in international settings is something they want to experience or have already experienced. Moreover, Arnau also added: “*but to New Zealand, I want to go to Canada, I want to go as far as I can*”. These opinions might be related to their commitment to acquire an “international posture” (Yashima, 2002). As Silvia states in the interview, it is more about meeting and interacting with international citizens than, in her case, British citizens. Besides, Sara, Roser, Alicia and Sònia, the four participants that were interviewed individually, had all

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<sup>27</sup> Montse: it's sort of good in case you wanna leave as well... if you already have the language and you don't have to do an extra... I mean... if this degree didn't exist and we were all studying Primary Education and we wanted to go abroad, the level of English we would probably have would not be enough. And since you are doing this, then well it gives you a push to leave, if that's what you want, of course

Natalia: yes

I: and the idea of going abroad? Why?

Everyone: (they smile)

Silvia: because it's not that I mean that I don't like Spain, but it's like... that I like changing, right? And seeing different things, and I've been to England, for instance, a few times already, on holiday, and don't know...everything grabs my attention and... it's quite different and I don't know...

Interviewer: do you believe that it had anything to do with what Natalia was saying? The idea of enriching yourself?

Silvia: yes probably, right? I mean being with different people, who.. cause for example in London, there is not only people from there, I mean, there's people from all over the world [...] and you are in touch with people from all over the world, with different cultures,... don't know...

Arnau: yes... I've always wanted to go abroad... and the moment I saw the opportunity of doing this degree,... I liked children quite a lot and it...[...] the moment I saw that what I really wanted was to leave and, on top of that I could do it while having a degree that allowed me to and helped me to... well I had not doubt it was made for me.

spent periods of time abroad, taking EFL courses, living abroad for a while (see section 4.3.)

Interestingly, all the student-teachers taking part in this study were dreaming of going abroad with the Erasmus programme before completing their degree (which however highly depended on economic issues). Furthermore, none of them ruled out the option of working abroad after finishing their studies as there actually was a strong shared desire to live such experiences. As Papastergiadis (2000) argues, the turbulent nature of contemporary global migration strongly affects and shapes communities and individuals' identities, at the same time it facilitates the process of globalisation.

The comments below show the value they placed on becoming people with an international background and perspective. Alicia, when asked about what she thought about her flatmates, as she had defined them as “*people who have moved around and who master English*”, answered the following:

*Dius... ojalà jo quan tingui tres o quatre anys més igual que tenen elles ara també m'hagi pogut moure tant...és.... És super xulo!!! (riu). Dius, mira, tens la carrera, tens títols, tens doctorats o postgraus o lo que tinguis, màsters, i mentrestant a sobre t'has mogut pel món! Pues!!! Que guai! (Alicia, I1)<sup>28</sup> [Excerpt 5.24]*

When asked about the reasons why they wanted to be defined as someone who mastered English, Sònia answered the following:

*Doncs home... tota la formació que he fet... vull dir... no he estat davant d'un llibre estudiant anglès, sinó que realment m'he mogut... he après, ja sigui mirant una pel·lícula o ja sigui anant a for a (Sònia, I1)<sup>29</sup> [Excerpt 5.25]*

Her comment shows how the idea that truly drives them to learn this language, the idea behind their investments, is absolutely connected to their imagined identities, to the person they want to become and how they want to be defined and positioned by others. In Sònia's case, she wanted to be someone “who had moved around”. When discussing the sociolinguistics of globalisation, Blommaert (2003:619) argues that “the

<sup>28</sup> You say... I hope when I'm three or four years older I've moved around so much... It's so cool! (laughs). It's like, you have the degree, you've got certificates, PhDs or postgraduate courses or whatever, masters, and on top of that in the meantime you've been able to travel the world! It's cool!

<sup>29</sup> Well... all the training you've done... I mean... I haven't had my head in a book studying English, but I've actually moved around... I've learned, whether it was watching a film or staying abroad.

process of mobility creates difference in value". While these participants might see themselves as valued citizens with cultural capital in their baggage in Spain, they might want to prove themselves to be true and full members of an international community, by moving geographically and having to be positioned at an international level.

As far as their teacher identity is concerned, this issue also appeared during the data collection process. As future teachers, they wanted to be positioned as "good teachers", searching for social recognition as educators by planning to move to countries where they could gain a more positive teacher identity. Some of their aspirations imply additional training, working or learning abroad:

*Jo penso que a fora hi ha moltes coses, moltes oportunitats...[...] A Noruega tenen un sistema educatiu que és una passada...[...] I si m'hi quedés tampoc m'importaria quedar-m'hi (Alicia, I1)<sup>30</sup> [Excerpt 5.26]*

*Potser hi ha molts mètodes que potser aquí a Espanya no s'apliquen i que són interessants de veure, de conèixer-los, i clar, si no entens l'anglès dius no sé com els podré conèixer, no? (Silvia, I1)<sup>31</sup> [Excerpt 5.27]*

*Les meves aspiracions personals són treballar a fora d'Espanya ja que aquí la feina de mestre no està prou valorada i a l'hora perquè m'agrada viatjar i conèixer món (Sònia, Q2)<sup>32</sup> [Excerpt 5.28]*

*Realment jo no sé on estaré quan .. clar bueno a veure sí que és que jo què sé, et passen vídeos o documentals de ... educació a Finlàndia, i és com utòpic...[...]. és que és que ens el van passar el dimarts passat, i va ser una cosa de dir "jo també vull" però bueno vull dir que en el fons potser cal aspirar a tant, [...] però realment trobo que potser t'obre portes a triar, i a no haver-te de quedar a un lloc que et diguin "te toca aquí perquè no tens per més (Sara, I1)<sup>33</sup> [Excerpt 5.29]*

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<sup>30</sup> I think that there are so many things abroad, so many opportunities... [...]. In Norway they've got an amazing education system...[...] And if I eventually stayed I wouldn't mind at all

<sup>31</sup> Maybe there are many methodologies that are not being implemented here in Spain and that might be interesting to explore, and, obviously, if you don't understand English you won't be able to get to know them, right?

<sup>32</sup> My personal aspirations are working outside of Spain, as here the teaching profession is not sufficiently valued and, besides because I love travelling and discovering the world.

<sup>33</sup> In fact, I don't know where I'll be when.. well yes I do know that... don't know... they show you videos and documentaries about.... Education in Finland, and it's like utopian... [...] it was like something like I want that too but well maybe in fact we don't have to aspire to so much, [...] but in fact I do believe that it opens doors to choose, and not to have to stay where you are because it's like you have to stay here cause you don't have any choice.

The idea of being someone with cultural background and international experiences in their baggage also affects the way they see themselves as future teachers. That is, they aim to be good teachers from an international perspective, something that, in their case, may imply training themselves abroad, working abroad, learning abroad... Thus, international practices associated with their profession also enhanced their investments. In Silvia's case, one of her imagined identities was that of an internationally trained teacher, while in Alicia, Sònia and Sara's case their professional imagined identities were those of international teachers. In brief, their aspired identity is in line with the imagined teacher identity that they pursue. As Neus' comment below shows, her future contributions as a "global and English-speaking citizen" to her future students also plays a role in her professional imagined identities:

*En un futur suposo que educaré els meus alumnes en anglès, i per tant he d'esforçar-me per aprendre i perfeccionar la llengua (Neus, Q2)<sup>34</sup>*  
[Excerpt 5.30]

In case of one participant, Mercè, her imagined teacher identity not only required her to master English and teach it properly to her students, as it was the case of other participants, but also to contribute to their future knowledge in terms of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986):

*M'agradaria que, com a mestra, la meva influència arribés lluny i pogués ajudar com més nens millor, i gràcies als idiomes pots viatjar, provar de viure i treballar a altres llocs, aprendre d'ells i fer-los conèixer les teves maneres de fer. M'agradaria poder marxar a fora i ensenyar als nens que, malgrat hi ha formes de vida molt diferents al món, totes són igual de vàlides. I, evidentment, l'idioma em permet fer-ho (Mercè, Q2)<sup>35</sup>* [Excerpt 5.31]

Mercè's words connect her desire to live experiences abroad with her desire to become a good teacher for her students in order to help them become better and more open-minded citizens. As future educators, this comment relates to Silvia's idea in Excerpt 5.5. when say says that the learning of English places them in a more advanced

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<sup>34</sup> In the future I guess I'll educate my students through English, and therefore I have to make an effort to learn it and to become as proficient as possible.

<sup>35</sup> I would love it if my influence as a teacher went very far and I could help as many students as possible, and thanks to languages you can travel, try to live and work abroad, learn from others and get to know different ways to do things. I would like to go abroad and to teach my students that, even though there are many different lifestyles around the world, all of them are equally valid. And obviously, English allows me to do that.



position in relation to Spain, as she considers that in the world there already exist such open-minded attitudes towards other cultures, traditions and lifestyles.

Even though most participants seemed to envision an imagined community of world citizens, Patricia's and Silvia's data point to slightly different perceptions. Patricia argued the following:

*El meu objectiu en aquesta carrera i en aquest idioma és **poder viure en el Regne Unit de manera indefinida**, o sinó **qualsevol país de llengua anglesa**. És a dir que m'agradaria ser professora i construir enllaços a l'estranger" (Patricia, Q2)<sup>36</sup> [Excerpt 5.32]*

*Sempre he volgut marxar fora a viure, **en especial el Regne Unit**, i per tant **l'anglès és essencial** per aconseguir-ho! (Silvia, Q2)<sup>37</sup> [Excerpt 5.33]*

In Patricia's case, at the time of choosing her degree, the determination to move to an English-speaking country was of primary importance. Her comment might be in line with Silvia's imagined identity as an English speaker. In the case of these two participants, they might be striving for an identity as English speakers rather than as English users, by envisioning an imagined community of native English speakers rather than as international English users who communication through a lingua franca. However, the issue would need much more data in order to delve into the type of imagined identities Patricia and Silvia envision.

### ***Gaining Cultural /Symbolic Capital***

The second recurrently mentioned factor when discussing some of their future desires was the cultural capital that the EMI-PEBD would provide them with. While social prestige might not be a direct goal, the participants seem to be aware of the fact that English increases it, as their identities were constantly negotiated through English also in terms of social power and cultural capital ( Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu, 1991). Gaining

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<sup>36</sup> My aim in doing this degree and through this language is to be able to live in the United Kingdom indefinitely, or in any English-speaking country. In other words, I'd live to work as a teacher and to build connections abroad.

<sup>37</sup> I've always wanted to live abroad, especially in the United Kingdom, and therefore English is essential in order to achieve that.

cultural capital implies gaining symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1986, 1991), which places individuals in a higher hierarchy in society. The participants in this study seemed to value what English brings to their life and that is something they pursue by learning it. Besides, while social prestige might not be a direct objective, they seem to be aware of the fact that English increases it.

In Q2, there was a grid in which the participants were asked to “tick” the most appropriate answer according to their opinion, in relation to several realities or situations. The grid was titled “I like speaking English because...”. Regarding the statement “It increases my social prestige”, out of 14 participants, these were their answers.

	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
It increases my social prestige	0	1	7	5	1

As the table above shows, the issue of social prestige was a bit controversial, as most of the student-teachers chose the “neutral” option. However, data from the questionnaire and from the interviews gives more insights into the topic. The students saw their cultural capital and social power gradually increasing as they positioned themselves and were positioned by others as English users:

***També pel prestigi que té saber anglès, no? Per la concepció que té la societat de relacionar saber l'anglès amb ser una persona més apta per fer una feina o... més culta [...] (Natalia, 11)<sup>38</sup> [Exerpt 5.34]***

From Natalia's point of view, mastering English implies being able to be defined as someone with certain characteristics, to be positioned in their society as people with a desire to learn, to know, to move and to be independent.

Although in these cases this reality was explicitly verbalized, the social meanings in terms of social power and positioning that mastering English encompasses seem to be factors that played an indirect role when choosing the English-medium Degree in

<sup>38</sup> Also because of the prestige that mastering English has, right? Because of the conception that society has as they connect English mastery with being a more qualified person or... more cultured as Arnau said earlier...

Primary Education. In other words, the participants did not report that this was a factor that influenced their choice of degree, but it seems from the data that it did influence the positive side of such decision.

Arnau, when asked about the reasons why he liked to be defined as an English user, replied the following:

**Arnau:** *com una persona que es pugui espavilar, i.. que vegi bueno que la puguis veure amb possibilitats de ser una persona autònoma i que se'n surti bé de tot el que pugui fer...*

**Montse:** *tens aquesta llibertat, el decidir què vols fer, què vols treballar, si vols marxar o et vols quedar aquí... [...] O sigui està molt bé personalment, jo crec que t'enriqueix molt, però també en general, o sigui, professionalment, a la vida, si tens un bon nivell , pots arribar fins i tot a parlar només en angles als teus fills, per exemple.*

**Neus:** *jo crec que lo que ha dit la Natalia abans, a nivell social... si saps angles... algo bo trobaràs, sempre.*

**Mercè:** *I jo crec que ja no només això, sinó que ara, dominar l'anglès, significa prestigi, però jo crec que d'aquí a uns anys no significarà prestigi, significarà prestigi tenir l'anglès, i a més l'alemany, el xinès, el que sigui. O sigui que d'aquí a uns anys si no saps angles no seràs res! Per tant, ja és ara mateix, a nivell de prestigi, i ja més endavant, perquè si vols ser algú jo crec que és necessari. I és... en el món global en el què estem vivint, és que és súper necessari dominar llengües internacionals (FG)<sup>39</sup> [Exerpt 5.35]*

It can be suggested that it is because the teacher-students want to position themselves in relation to society, rather than think that they might be better because of the fact of mastering English. To place oneself in a social hierarchy, mastering English seems to be a form of symbolic power (Bourdieu, 1991). By saying “*in a few years, if you don't speak English, you will be nothing*”, Mercè is imagining how one could be

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<sup>39</sup> Arnau: as someone who can get their act together and that... well that you can see them as people with possibilities to become an independent person who can manage well...

Montse: you have this freedom, you can decide what you want to do, in what you want to work, whether you want to go abroad or not or you want to stay here... [...] I mean at a personal level it's great, I think it enriches you, but in general, I mean, at a professional level, in your life, if you have a good level of English, you could even end up speaking only English with your own children, for example.

Neus: I believe that what Natalia said before... at a social level... if you master English... you'll always get something good

Mercè: and I think that not only that, but nowadays, mastering English means prestige, but I think that in a few years it won't mean prestige anymore, what will mean prestige will be to master English, plus German, plus Chinese, whatever. I mean that in a few years without English you will be nothing! Thus, nowadays, in terms of prestige, and in a few years, if you want to be someone I think it will be necessary. And it is... in the global world in which we live in, it is super important and necessary to master international languages.

positioned by others without this language, and her answer implies that she is referring to “the knowledge, credentials, and modes of thought” that characterize the community she envisions and wants to be part of:

*Learners ‘invest’ in the target language at particular times and in particular settings, because they believe they will acquire a wider range of symbolic and material resources, which will, in turn, increase the value of their cultural capital. As the value of learners’ cultural capital increases, so learners reassess their sense of themselves and their desires for the future (Norton & Toohey, 2011:420)*

The investments that these student-teachers make in the learning of English should be understood in relation to the status that this language has worldwide and the symbolic power that mastering it gives to its speakers, offering them more identity possibilities. As Giampapa argues when referring to Bourdieu’s notion of “marketplace”, “the exchange of linguistic and cultural capital and the position that agents hold within the marketplace are dependent on the ‘legitimacy’ of who is speaking, under what social conditions and the nature of what is being said” (Giampapa, 2001:284). The following excerpt from the focus group interview discloses how the student-teachers’ friends and family reacted at their decision to study the EMI-PEBD:

**Silvia:** *a mi tothom em diu que estic boja... [...] “com pots fer la Carrera, universitat, tot en anglès, com pots?”, “no ho entenc”*

**Natalia:** *és com un canvi.. perquè primer dius que estàs fent Educació Primària...*

**Mercè:** *... I tothom et mira amb cara de pfff...*

**Júlia:** *Sí!*

**Natalia:** *I llavors dius, “en anglès” i és com “òstia, en serio?”*

*(tots assenteixen)*

**Natalia:** *és un canvi, o sigui que passen de dir-te que pintes amb plastidecors tot el dia a...*

**Júlia:** *sí sí a dir “eh cuidao que domina!”*

**Natalia:** *sí sí és com si haguessis... com si canviés tota la Carrera (FG)<sup>40</sup>*

*[Exerpt 5.36]*

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<sup>40</sup> Silvia: everyone says I’m crazy... [...] how can you study a degree in English, everything in English, how can you do it? I don’t understand

Natalia: something changes... Cause you first say you’re studying Primary Education...

Mercè: ... and everyone looks at you like pfff...

Júlia: Yes!

Natalia: and then you say , in English and it’s like wow, really?

(everyone nods)

In fact, the conversation around this issue went on for a while, and all participants revealed to be very concerned about society's reactions towards what they were studying. However, as they all reported, the language of instruction made a big difference when it came to people's reactions. Sara also commented on this:

*Amb la gent és molt còmic, perquè tu li dius a una persona -jo faig Educació Primària- i fan -ah...- ...-en anglès, i fan -ah!- I llavors no sé perquè l'anglès realment els hi fa un canvi de xip. [...] **La gent es queden com si estiguessis fent Telecomunicacions!** (Sara, I1)<sup>41</sup> [Exerpt 5.37]*

This need for society recognition may have also affected their choice of degree, even if it was in a very subtle way. They were being positioned as future teachers with a special value and they were fully aware of that. Most of the participants' remarks were in line with this distinctive position in relation to other future-teachers:

*Va ser **molt important per mi el fet que és un grau nou i per tant això suposa que a l'acabar els estudis hi haurà un grup reduït de mestres amb aquest títol.** Aquest fet és un gran avantatge a l'hora de trobar feina dins d'Espanya (Natalia, Q2)<sup>42</sup> [Exerpt 5.38]*

*Penso que em pot oferir més sortides que si la faig en català, com molts altres estudiants que ho han fet o ho estan fent en català. De moment, i sobretot la meva proporció, **tindrem uns estudis un tant "exclusius"**, ja que som els primers (Neus, Q2)<sup>43</sup> [Exerpt 5.39]*

*A nivell professional, crec que **fer-la (la carrera) en aquest idioma suposa un avantatge vers la resta d'educadors**, que l'anglès t'obre moltes portes vagis on vagis (Patricia, Q2)<sup>44</sup> [Exerpt 5.40]*

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Natalia: there is a change, they first tell you that you spend all day long colouring stuff with colouring pencils

Júlia: yes yes and then they say hey careful she knows her stuff!

Natalia: yes yes it's like you had... As if it was a different degree

<sup>41</sup> It's very funny, because you tell someone – I study Primary Education – and they are like –ah...- ... in English-, and they go –ah!!!- . It's like I don't know why, but English makes them like...there's a change of attitude. [...] People get stunned, it's as if you were studying Telecommunications!

<sup>42</sup> The fact that it was a new degree was very important to me since that means that, when we finish the degree, there will be a small group of teachers with this degree. This fact is a big advantage when it comes to finding a job in Spain

<sup>43</sup> I believe that it can offer me more possibilities than doing it through Catalan, as many other students have done or are now doing. For the time being, and specifically my cohort, we'll have a sort of exclusive degree, as we are the first ones

<sup>44</sup> At a professional level, I think that doing it (the degree) through this language implies an advantage over other educators, as English opens many doors wherever you go.

As the previous remarks show, the student-teachers knew how English could help them to be positioned in different and more valued ways within the society. Moreover, the role of English in their society would also offer more job possibilities:

*Ara veient que no surten oposicions i que moltes escoles privades estan potenciant que des de petits hi hagi immersió lingüística i que hi hagi professors que imparteixin qualsevol assignatura en anglès, això t'obre moltíssimes portes... (Mercè, I1)<sup>45</sup> [Exerpt 5.41]*

*També crec que actualment la necessitat emergent de donar classes en anglès de diferents assignatures, al marge de la llengua mateixa, fa que mestres amb capacitats per dur a terme aquesta tasca siguin necessaris (Júlia, Q2)<sup>46</sup> [Exerpt 5.42]*

It is worth mentioning that the role of their family also appeared in some comments. Roser puts forth this view:

*També ha influït molt, això no ho he dit, que els meus pares li donaven molta importància. Molta. I llavors, l'escola que anava des de P3 ja feies bastant anglès, després em van apuntar ja des de molt petita a una acadèmia (Roser, I1)<sup>47</sup> [Exerpt 5.43]*

Finally, before moving on to the following section, I would like to include the answer of one of the participants, Natalia, who very clearly summarizes some of the key points that have been discussed in this section:

*Per moltíssimes raons. En primer lloc, perquè m'ofereix la possibilitat d'ampliar moltíssim el meu nivell cultural (cosa imprescindible en un mestre o mestra) i per tant em dona moltes més opcions de coneixement que traspasar als meus alumnes. En segon lloc, perquè em permet comunicar-me amb un nombre enormement major de gent d'arreu del món així com també viatjar i enriquir-me encara més com a persona: penso que el món és massa gran i ens ofereix masses oportunitats com per quedar-nos on som.*

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<sup>45</sup> Now, seeing that there are no "oposicions" and that many private schools are boosting language immersion since very young ages and looking for teachers who can teach any subjects through English, that opens up many doors...

<sup>46</sup> I also believe that nowadays the emergent need to teach different subjects through English, beyond the language itself, leads to the need of having teachers with the capacity to do that!

<sup>47</sup> It has also played a key role... I haven't said that, but my parents used to give English a lot of importance. A lot. And then, at the school I used to go we started English at 3, and then my parents signed me up to an English language school when I was very little

*En tercer lloc, perquè **em brinda l'accés a molta més informació i coneixements** i perquè amb ell sóc més autònoma a l'hora de cercar, aconseguir o tractar aquesta informació. El fet de ser més autònoma és molt important per a mi, el fet de no dependre de ningú i poder fer les coses per mi mateixa. Al mateix temps, **l'oportunitat de poder ajudar a tots els alumnes i "alumnas" que sigui possible a ser-ho ells també és una motivació molt forta per a mi ja que penso que és imprescindible.** I per últim, perquè **m'obre moltíssimes portes més per a poder aconseguir els meus objectius i accomplir les meves motivacions en el futur.** Per a mi és com una **inversió de futur** que va lligada a la meua qualitat de vida (Natalia, Q2)<sup>48</sup> [Exerpt 5.44]*

All in all, all student-teachers seemed to value the cultural capital that English encompasses, as well as they seemed to be aware of the social prestige that such cultural capital implies.

#### **5.4.2. WILLINGNESS TO INVEST IN THE PRACTICES OF THE COMMUNITY THEY WOULD LIKE TO BELONG TO: A COP OF INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH USERS**

*To envision an imagined identity within the context of an imagined community can impact a learner's engagement with educational practices (Kanno & Norton, 2003:246).*

The participants' interest to invest in the practices of a community (or communities) they wanted to belong to was found to be a factor that was explicitly mentioned by all

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<sup>48</sup> For many reasons. First of all, because it offers me the possibility to broaden my cultural level so much (something essential in a teacher) and thus, it gives me more knowledge possibilities that I might convey to my students.

Secondly, because it allows me to communicate with a much higher number of people worldwide, as well as to travel and to enrich myself even more as a person: I believe that the world is so big and it can offer us so many possibilities.

Thirdly, because it grants me access to much more information and knowledge and because, with such information and knowledge, I am more autonomous when it comes to dealing with such information. The issue of being more autonomous is very important to me, not having to depend on anyone and being able to do everything by myself. Similarly, the opportunity of being able to help as many students as possible in being also more autonomous is also a very strong motivation for me, as I think it is essential.

Lastly, because it opens up many more doors in order to reach my goals and to fulfil my motivations in the future. To me it's like an investment in the future that is linked to my quality of life.

student-teachers. It was explicitly mentioned by the vast majority of student-teachers: 11 of them directly listed this factor in the four open-ended questions in the questionnaire and Mercè referred to it during the FG. In Arnau's and Patricia's cases, such willingness to invest in English practices is implicit in their comments related to their imagined identities.

They consider that engaging in practices such as studying in English, taking notes or reading in English will help them to become better English users. E.g.

*Perquè donava la oportunitat de **combinar l'educació primària amb el manteniment de la llengua anglesa**. [...]. Fer aquesta Carrera vaig veure que em permetia, a més d'estudiar el que volia, **mantenir l'anglès a tots nivells i també agilitzar l'oïda**. [...] (Sara, Q2)<sup>49</sup> [Exerpt 5.45]*

*Perquè m'agrada molt la llengua anglesa, a més, crec que **és una molt bona oportunitat per millorar el meu nivell** (Júlia, Q2)<sup>50</sup> [Exerpt 5.46.]*

*És una **oportunitat per acabar d'aprendre aquesta llengua del tot i dominar-la molt més** (Neus, Q2)<sup>51</sup> [Exerpt 5.47]*

*Em va semblar una **bona oportunitat per millorar l'anglès en sentit de fluïdesa** [...] (Silvia, Q2)<sup>52</sup> [Exerpt 5.48]*

The comments above are in accordance with Norton & McKinney (2011:76)'s idea that learners' affiliations with imagined communities "might affect their learning trajectories". state that In this sense, their choice of degree might also be seen as an investment in the practices of their imagined community. According to Norton (2010:3), the notion of investment "signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language and their sometimes ambivalent desire to speak, read, or write it".

In Sara's case, to give an example, when asked about the reasons why she wanted to maintain her English skills, she provided a very meaningful answer:

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<sup>49</sup> Because it gave me the opportunity to combine primary education and the maintenance of my English. Studying this degree not only allowed me to study what I wanted to study, but also to maintain my English level, at all levels, also to sharpen my listening skills.

<sup>50</sup> Because I like English very much and also I believe it is a great opportunity to improve my level

<sup>51</sup> I think it is a great opportunity to fully master this Language.

<sup>52</sup> I found it a good opportunity to improve my English in terms of fluency.



*És una eina de futur, realment pot ajudar molt en un futur laboral, i a més a més trobo que és com una clau que obre moltes portes, a nivell social i cultural a l'hora de poder viatjar a (pràcticament) tot arreu amb el domini d'aquesta llengua. A mi m'ha permès conèixer persones i cultures que no hauria conegut sinó, he viscut moltes experiències molt enriquidores, coses que només fa que en vulgui aprendre més per poder-ne viure més (Sara, Q2)<sup>53</sup> [Exerpt 5.49]*

Sara's comment shows how "English is both the means and the end" (Lamb, 2004:16). The practices she will engage with during her studies will offer her possibilities for identity expansion, with the sociocultural gains that this implies, that will in turn allow her to have easier access to her imagined community. Her answer may indicate that it was the practicalities that the status of English encompasses, together with the personal gains from mastering this language what brought Sara to decide to invest in a degree that would probably ensure her a certain level of English and that would define her as a competent speaker. The same explanations could be applied to Roser's case. Both Sara and Roser had had powerful life-changing experiences abroad, interacting with an international community of English speakers that had probably widened their sense of self and that had helped them to envision the community they now want to take part in, as they become more and more proficient in English. In other words, they aim to learn more English in order to live more lifetime experiences that they consider to be meaningful and life-changing, experiences that shape their identity and help them to grow as individuals. In their case, the learning of English is linked to the possibilities to live vital experiences that expand their identity. They seem to have decided to study in English in order to keep on learning this language, in order to keep shaping their identity through English.

Mercè's case is worth mentioning. She wanted to invest in these practices due to the future professional gains this degree would provide her with. As it has been stated above, at the time of the first interview, Mercè explained that it was the professional reasons and the possibilities to find a job what guided her to her degree choice. Thus,

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<sup>53</sup> It's a tool for the future, it can help you a lot in your professional future, and besides I think it is like a key that opens many doors, both at a social and cultural level, to be able to travel anywhere if you master it. It has allowed me to get to know people and cultures that I would have never met otherwise. I've lived many enriching experiences, which only makes me feel like learning more English in

practical reasons, namely, her professional identity, was what brought Mercè to choose this degree. Before starting university, Mercè did not envision any kind of community. At the time of this first interview (May 2013), however, she has already engaged with university practices through English:

*Abans de començar la carrera en anglès, a mi l'anglès, pues ni fu ni fa, m'era bastant igual, però ara pues com que em veig que sí que l'he de millorar, i que de cara al meu futur professional, ja que he fet la carrera en anglès, estaria bé que el meu nivell d'anglès fos alt, doncs sí que m'agafo llibres en anglès, o sigui **m'ha com encès la metxa i ara coses que abans feia que no li donava importància si triava una llengua o una altra, doncs ara aprofito i trio anglès per... per practicar** (Mercè, I1)<sup>54</sup> [Exerpt 5.50]*

Furthermore, during the focus-group interview she gave several remarks that shed some light into what might have been her higher reasons for having chosen this degree. She was also aware, as the rest of the participants, of the personal gains that English could offer her as a future primary teacher. She gave the following remark when discussing the possibility to do a stay abroad:

*Ja que marxés és per veure coses noves, gent diferent, cultures diferents.... I nosaltres com a mestres, o sigui clar, aquí tu tens molt clar, la teva tasca com a mestra, i saps mol bé com funcionen les coses a casa, com és la societat, **però si tu te'n vas a lo millor a Londres, pues ja no coneixes tant, és diferent, i tu com a mestra, doncs, ja veus coses noves, que també és interessant, no?** (Mercè, I1)<sup>55</sup> [Exerpt 5.51]*

Having envisioned an imagined community (either before having started the degree or during its first year) clearly affects their investments in the target language. These student-teachers' choice of degree, therefore, can be understood as an investment in the practices they want to make theirs. The practices that this degree offered them ranged from having to take class notes in English, to use this language as the main medium of

<sup>54</sup> Before starting the degree in English, English to me... well,... I really didn't care, but now since I realize that yes, I do have to improve it and that, looking at my professional future, since I've studied the degree in English, it would be nice if my level of English was high... Then yes, now I borrow or buy books in English, I mean it sort of has lit the fire and now there are things that I used to do and I didn't care about the language... so well now... I choose English... to practice.

<sup>55</sup> The reason you go abroad is because you want to see new things, new people, new cultures... And we, as teachers, I mean, of course, here you see it so clearly, your role as a teacher, and you know very well how things work here at home, what the society is like... but if you go let's say to London, well then you don't know as much, do you? It's different, and you, as a teacher, well, you already see new things, which is also interesting, right?

communication or to address their professors in such language. Moreover, they were also interested in having the possibility to study or to do their practical training abroad. Studying the Degree in Primary Education through English was a very important step towards these participants' goals. While in some cases it was one of the many steps they had done in order to get closer to such community (as it is the case with those who had already engaged with communities of practices through English) for others this was a very important first step. For all of them, this was considered an opportunity to engage in an English-speaking community of practice that would provide them with identity-changing experiences that would bring them closer to the person they wanted to become.

Leaving behind the decision to invest in this English-medium degree, the fact that English practices were already part of their lives should be noted. Even before having started their degree, the participants explained that English was, somehow, already part of their life: through twitter or skype, with stays abroad, through films and TV shows in the original version... All participants were already used, to some extent, to engaging in these kind of practices. Put another way, due to their contacts with the target language, they had already envisioned the community they sought to belong to, and this fact had already been affecting their investments in English for a long time, prior to their university studies.

The student-teachers willingness to further invest in such practices influenced their desire to invest in the practices at a university level, creating a direct community of practice where they could use the target language as the main medium of instruction. Furthermore, the data suggest that practices associated with the learning of English were also found outside university during their first year at university: reading about personal interests, reading books, watching TV in the original version or skyping with international friends through the target language. Their willingness to invest in English practices also drives them to do that outside of the classroom walls.

An investment in these practices is what, according to these student-teachers, would provide them with the English command that they were pursuing. Whether they had explicitly mentioned their interest in maintaining or improving their level of English or they had done it implicitly, when delving into the reasons of their interest in

becoming fluent and competent English speakers, all participants' comments revealed the key role of "imagination" in this process. As a way of example, while some argued that they wanted to improve their English skills during the degree, others only stated that their reason for choosing it was because they wanted to reach a good level of English that would allow them work abroad. The central argument I wish to make here is that whether it was expressed explicitly or implicitly, all participants were strongly interested in making English part of their daily life practices due to its possible future gains, since imagination can drive future actions and investments in the target language (Ryan, 2008). As Kanno & Norton (2003:241) argue, it is possible to connect to imagined communities "through the power of the imagination". These authors expand on that:

*Humans are capable of connecting with communities that lie beyond the local and immediate and that investment in such imagined communities strongly influences identity construction and engagement in learning (Kanno & Norton, 2003: 247)*

Thus, "imagination" helped them to envision the community they want to make their. As Wenger (1998:178) states, imagination is a distinct form of belonging to a community of practice, and it is also a way to locate oneself and others to a certain community while also giving their identities "other meanings, other possibilities, other perspectives".

In short, their desire to keep learning English was also found in the activities through English they undertook during their first academic year.

**Table 17. Use of English at home**

	Never	Sometimes	Every week	Almost every day
Watching TV in English	1	7	1	5
Listening to radio programmes in English	10	2	2	0
Listening to songs in English			1	13
Reading books/magazines in English	0	9	1	4
Speaking English with friends (phone, skype...)	3	6	3	2

Studying with a textbook.	4	7	3	0
Using internet (e.g. e-mail, chatting, games...)	0	1	3	10

Very interestingly, even though they already invested in such practices before their first year, interesting changes took place throughout the year, as it was found that they invested much more time in these practices than they ever did before. These findings will be further discussed in S3, as they move away from the purpose of this study.

#### 5.4.2.1. One of their imagined communities: an international community of English speakers/ users

The notion of “imagined identities” cannot be understood apart from the “imagined communities” these student-teachers have in mind, since “imagined communities expand our range of possible selves” (Kanno & Norton, 2003:246). Their future desires and projects within the imagined community they want to belong to may have influenced their choice of degree, as explained in section 5.4.1.2.

In the previous sections, the students’ comments helped to illuminate one of the “imagined communities” that most participants envision. It is precisely because of the role of English in globalisation processes and how it serves as the link between multicultural interactions, information exchanges, world travel and so forth that it has become the communication tool among an international community of English speakers and users who interact through this “lingua franca” (Jenkins, 2009; Seidlhofer, 2005). In order to more clearly define one of the communities these student-teachers envision, the following quotes disclose how the growing identities as future “multicompetent” speakers (Cook, 1992, 1999; Pavlenko, 2003) allowed some of the participants in this study to reimagine themselves in a positive light:

*No m'enriqueix en el sentit de que saber anglès és millor que saber català, sinó que **saber anglès i saber català i castellà és millor que saber només un llengua**. Si saps català et pots comunicar amb la gent de Catalunya, si saps català i castellà, que és el privilegi que tenim els d'aquí,*

*de Catalunya, el pots comunicar encara amb més gen [...] (Roser, I1)<sup>56</sup>*  
[Exerpt 5.52]

*Clar ja tothom parla anglès i per tu és la teva segona llengua, però clar tu el plus a fora és que tu també tens l'espanyol i tens el català, no? Llavors és com, òstia **aquí tinc el plus de l'anglès, i a fora tinc el plus del castellà!** (Silvia, I1)<sup>57</sup>* [Exerpt 5.53]

Thus, most participants in this study might want to see themselves as “multicompetent speakers” (Cook, 1992, 1999; Pavlenko, 2003). This notion offers a much more positive view that allows them to position themselves as competent and legitimate English users (Cook, 1999; Jenkins, 2009; Yano, 2001). In fact, Silvia and Patricia’s cases should be further investigated, as their limited data regarding this issue seem to indicate they have native-speaker communities in mind.

With the aim that English fully becomes part of their life and of who they are, the student-teachers in the present study wanted to incorporate it as a work and expression tool, “in order to keep learning it” (Sara, Q2), as they say, to keep investing in the learning of this language. The reasons behind this interest are found in the significance of English discussed in the previous section (the status of this language and its impact on their identities). The English-medium degree signifies a community that probably makes them feel closer to the imagined community they have in mind (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007), an imagined community of international English speakers/users, that allows them both to develop and shape their identity and to feel closer to their aspired identity.

That is the reason why an investment in this language is seen as an opportunity to open up possibilities of identity expansion, as many of the participants explicitly stated that the experiences they had engaged with through English had broadened their sense

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<sup>56</sup> It does not enrich me in that mastering English is better than mastering Catalan, but in that mastering English, Catalan and Spanish is much better than just mastering one language. If you speak Catalan you can communicate with people from Catalonia, if you speak Catalan and Spanish, which is the privilege of those of us who live here, you can communicate with even more people. Thus mastering English opens up many doors.

<sup>57</sup> When you go abroad... everyone speaks English and it is a foreign language for you, but of course when you are abroad you have the advantage of mastering Spanish and Catalan, right? And then it's like, look, here I have the advantage of English and abroad I have the advantage of Spanish!

of self and had changed the way they saw things. Participation in English CoPs and its relationship with changing identities will be further discussed in S2.

## **5.5. SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION**

The themes and topics discussed so far all appeared to be very important factors when it comes to the student-teachers' decision to enrol in the English-medium degree. All the issues that have been presented showed up in the participants' comments and it is important to bear in mind that, possibly due to the purposive sampling procedures undertaken, the themes that emerged from the questionnaires and interviews were mentioned to some extent by all the participants in this study. Having said that, the fact that the issues under investigation are complex and are continually influencing each other is very important to highlight.

First, data suggests that issues related to the student-teachers' imagined identities as English users/speakers (Norton Pierce, 1995) were the ones which played the most important role in their decision to choose the English-medium degree in Primary Education. None of the other issues mentioned as factors that influenced their decision were out of touch with what Norton called "imagined identities". Had it not been because of the role that identity plays in their interest towards English, these students would not have chosen this degree. The student-teachers imagined identities as English users/speakers were key to the extent that, in the case of two participants, such future identities were even more powerful than their imagined identities as primary school teachers. While most of them acknowledge the cultural capital that mastering English might provide them with as future educators, Ester and Silvia seem to emphasize their future identities as English users/speakers and their imagined identities as primary teachers seem to fade into the background.

Furthermore, their imagined identities and their connection to their interest to learn English cannot be understood without taking into account the role that English plays around the globe and the globalisation process that is currently taking place.

When talking about states and its political and cultural borders, Rizvi (2005) points to the fact that cultural borders have become “increasingly porous”, as people tend to move beyond national cultures and they can see themselves as individuals who pertain to more than one place. Ray (2007) discusses how geographic mobility and contact with people from other cultures might lead to challenges to one’s own sense of identity and belonging within a community. Within this context, the role that English plays in these student-teachers’ life is of extreme importance and needs to be taken into account.

As it has been presented above, the role of English was widely discussed and mentioned by the student-teachers, as they were all aware of its significance in the world as a “lingua franca” (Seidlhofer, 2005). Within this future identity they imagine, they envision possibilities of experiencing periods of time abroad (working, travelling, volunteering...). In some cases, such experiences abroad would answer to their need to pursue a certain “imagined teacher identity” or to pursue the gaining of the “cultural capital” that “moving around” implies. As part of their imagined identities, they also envision the possibility to be positioned by society as citizens with a certain cultural background, which might in turn provide them with greater value as teachers in future. In this sense, some of the students’ comments implied that, as Bourdieu argues, cultural capital is accumulated according to one’s family background:

*But the most powerful principle of the symbolic efficacy of cultural capital no doubt lies in the logic of its transmission. On the one hand, the process of appropriating objectified cultural capital and the time necessary for it to take place mainly depend on the cultural capital embodied in the whole family-through (among other things) the generalized Arrow effect and all forms of implicit transmission (Bourdieu, 1986:49).*

This need for society recognition, from family, friends and even from other primary school teachers who had not studied in English also seemed to be factors defining their imagined identities. These were two very defined aims, although, as the data analysis has revealed, their imagined identities went much further than that.

Subordinating this factor to their aspired identity at all times, the practicalities of mastering English were also mentioned and considered as a factor that influenced their choice of degree. The student-teachers did not miss the fact that English has achieved a



very powerful role worldwide and also in their own society. Therefore, mastering this “tool” was considered practical in terms of its usefulness to engage in a wide variety of activities worldwide and also in terms of future job possibilities in Spain. On the one hand, the English role worldwide can contribute to the formation and expansion of their identity (imagined identities), by allowing them to engage in life-changing experiences. On the other hand, the status of English worldwide provides this language with social meanings that are found in these participants’ society, turning this language into a very valuable tool to be positioned as more valuable citizens (and therefore, to find jobs more easily). Most important, as indicated in many occasions, all these factors were conjointly determining in many cases.

Secondly, their willingness to invest in the practices of the community they seek to belong to was found to be another relevant factor. While their L2 imagined identities helped them to envision an international community of English speakers and users, the opportunity to engage in practices through English along their university degree was considered a very important point by all participants. As Pavlenko (2003:253) argues, “imagination plays both an educational and an identitary function”. Thus, it should be noted, that such willingness to invest in certain practices loses meaning without the first factor, that is, the students’ imagined identities. An investment in the practices that the English-medium degree dispenses provides these participants with easier and more direct access to a “community of the imagination”, a desired community that might offer them possibilities for the identity options that they are pursuing (Norton & Williams, 2012).

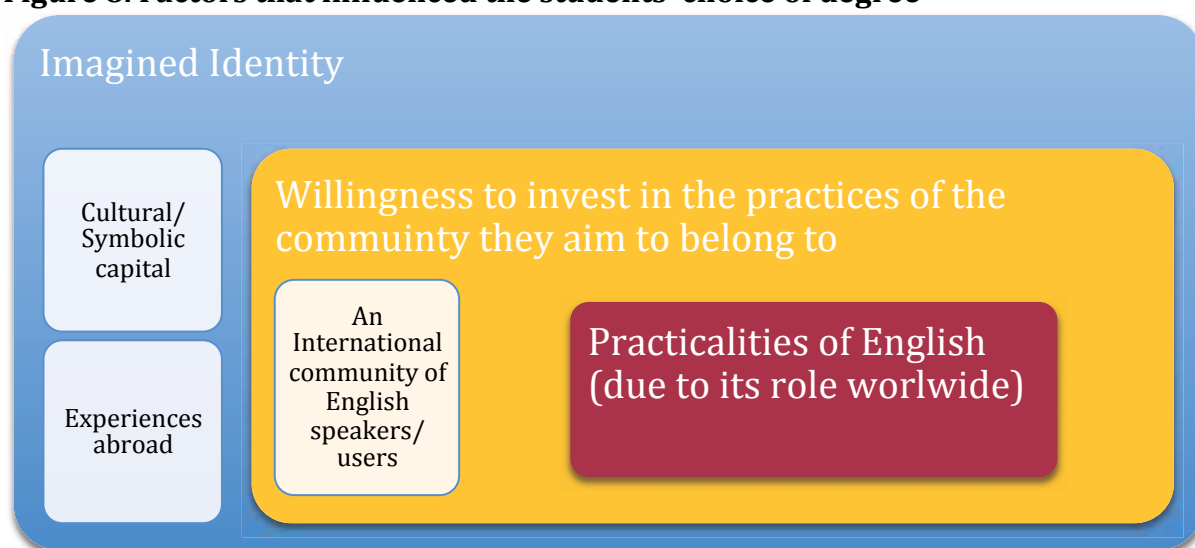
Furthermore, even though the study looked at these group of students as English learners, their future identities as teachers or what Block (2005) calls their “occupational identities” also seem to acknowledge the role that English can play in their future role as educators, in terms of experiences abroad gaining teacher training abroad or in terms of cultural capital that will allow them to forward knowledge and values to their future students.

To sum up, the person they want to become, who they want to be and the experiences they want to engage with in the future, pushed these student-teachers to

study Primary Education through English. At the same time, this was also considered a good opportunity to keep investing in the learning of the target language, as well as it was also considered a very positive point careerwise.

The following diagram (Figure 8) helps to understand how the different factors that played a role in their decision were related to each other.

**Figure 8. Factors that influenced the students' choice of degree**



Globalisation has resulted in “a new society, in which English is shared among many groups of non-native speakers rather than dominated by the British or Americans” (Warschauer, 2000:512) This reality surrounds the daily life of these participants and it contributes to both their aspirations and identity possibilities and their nearest future. According to Block (2007a:113), “an engagement with English as an international language [...] can have a significant impact on an FL learner’s sense of self”.

Mastering English seems to afford these student-teachers opportunities to gain cultural capital regarding the rest of their society, other recently graduated teachers and an international community of English speakers, whose “oldtimers” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) might then allow them access to full participation in the CoP. They are “newcomers” (Lave & Wenger, 1991) who are learning through practice, seeking for opportunities to play a role in the worlds that English comprises. They seem to be

aware of the status of English worldwide and their comments discussed where they, as Spanish/Catalan citizens, are in relation to the world.

From a European perspective, a certain common ground is trying to be reached (Council of Europe, 2011; Little & Perclová, 2002; Eurydice, 2005), but still the level of English in the Spanish educational system and in institutions is considered not to be sufficient (CIS, 2014). For such reasons, these students' willingness to master this language and to become professionals with a certified level of English might eventually imply certain social meanings. The role of the target language from an international perspective gives it a high status in these future teachers' society, since the Spanish and Catalan administration are making great efforts to achieve a certain level of English command among citizens. E.g. in Spain, through the "Program for the improvement of foreign language learning" (*Programa de mejora del aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras*) (*Ley Orgánica 8/2013*, 2013); in Catalonia, through the "Plan to boost the learning of English" (*Pla d'impuls de l'aprenentatge de l'anglès*) (Bayón et al., 2009).

According to Yano (2001), in the European Union "English is used daily in media, business, professional discourse, higher education and other international communication along with the mother tongues (and a few other languages) as well as a global lingua franca". The author argues that there might be a shift from EFL to ESL in these countries, as the use of English is spreading and its nativization seems to be increasing. It is under these circumstances that many young people realize the need to master this communication tool in order to access a wide variety of resources which could not be mastered without English. The notion of English as a lingua franca entails that the status that this language has achieved leaves behind the old idea that the learning of English had to be based on native speaker norms, as they were the ones who owned the language. When talking about EIL or ELF, Erling (2005:40) emphasizes that their conceptualization emphasises "functional uses of the language instead of geographical varieties" and that, therefore, "English can be used as a language of communication without necessarily being a language of identification". This change of perspective has gained importance after many researchers re-examined this issue. The idea that the learning of English had to be based on native speaker norms, as they were the ones who owned the language, started to change after many researchers re-

examined this issue (Caine, 2008; Crystal, 1997; Higgins, 2003; Jenkins, 2009; McKay, 2002; Phillipson, 1992; Widdowson, 1994, 1997) . According to Widdowson (1997:145), “such an approach presupposes that the purpose for learning is to prepare learners for engagement in social interaction with primary communities in native speaking countries”. This is not the case for the participants in this study, as their purpose to use this language is more directed at possible interactions with international English speakers. In fact, by saying that “*Spain is late*”, an opinion that was shared by all members of the focus group, they are positioning their country in the world map. The increasing need to travel, to move to foreign countries, to process information from the other side of the world, to consume TV programmes in English might be inevitably turning EIL into a tool for the present generation’s daily life. Yet, it is important to highlight that the practicalities the participants continually emphasize and that Gardner would have called “instrumental” reasons for acquiring the target language do not fit into the results of this study.

These findings suggest that there is a strong connection between a language learner’s investment and their identity. It is this role in the globalisation processes what makes English different, in that it serves as a door to endless possibilities of identity expansion, a door to lifetime experiences these student-teachers are seeking and a door to the identity they are pursuing. As Bourdieu (as cited in Norton & McKinney, 2011:78) argued, “the value ascribed to speech cannot be understood apart from the person who speaks” while “the person who speaks cannot be understood apart from larger networks of social relationships”. A good command of this language carries a series of meanings behind: a good cultural level, in some cases a family background, a certain economic power to move around and travel and to interact with people from other corners of the Earth... All in all, it implies being a person who meets certain requirements to be positioned by others in a certain way. Mastering the “global language” helps them feel closer to the person they want to become or, in other words, in order to become who they want to become, they are required to be efficient English users (Cook, 1992).

Therefore, on the one hand, instrumental reasons (Gardner, 1985) cannot be considered one of the factors for choosing the EMI-PEBD. On the other hand, Blommaert

argues that “the process of mobility creates difference in value” (Blommaert, 2003:619), and that is what the participants seem to pursue by wanting to live experiences abroad. Similarly, they seem to be aware of “the knowledge, credentials, and modes of thought” that characterize the CoP they envision (Norton & Toohey, 2011:420). As Kanno and Norton (2003:247-248) point out:

*We argued that a conception of imagined communities enables us to enhance our understanding of learning on both temporal and spatial dimensions. On a temporal dimension, the notion of imagined communities enables us to relate learners’ visions of the future to their prevailing actions and identities. It is a way of affirming that what has not yet happened in the future can be a reason and motivation for what learners do in the present. On a spatial dimension, we can examine the interaction between national ideologies and individual learners’ identities on the one hand, and the influence of globalization and transnationalism on language learning and identity construction on the other.*

This community can also be defined as an “imagined global language community” (Ryan, 2006) of world citizens, a label that is appropriated after having acquired certain cultural capital: life experiences and power in relation to those who stay “local” (Arnett, 2002). The English command is a requirement to be part of such community.

Yano (2001) stated that the centre of authority as far as the language is concerned would shift from native speakers once non-native speakers of English outnumbered native speakers, and this has already happened. Jenkins (2009:87) argues that “when English is used as an international lingua franca among Expanding Circle speakers, then these speakers own their lingua franca English and it therefore makes no sense to describe them as non-native English speakers”. The native/non-native speaker distinction fails to empower L2 users (Cook, 1999) with the ownership of English and it keeps disregarding their real needs. Along with this idea, and following Jenkins (2002:85)’s distinction between EFL and EIL (see 2.4.1 and 2.4.2. in Chapter 2), EIL speakers are considered international speakers rather than “foreign” speakers of English. Having said that, these student-teachers’ need for mastering English fits into what L2 users see as an “international community in which all participants have an equal claim to membership” (Jenkins, 2002:85).

These findings are in line with Lamb’s (2004) study, in which his participants’ role models were not English native speakers, but rather co-citizens from their own country

(Indonesia) who had already acquired what he calls a “global identity”, which brought them “access to financial, social and cultural resources” (Broady, 2007:70). In the case of the student-teachers in this study, seeing themselves as “multicompetent speakers” helps to illuminate the kind of community they want to belong to, as it offers them the possibility to imagine themselves as “legitimate” members of such community (Bourdieu, 1986).]

The student-teachers’ comments about keeping learning English through the EMI-PEBD are in accordance with Kanno & Norton’s (2003:246) idea that the imagined community and identity they envision “may compel learners to seek certain kinds of educational opportunities they might otherwise not seek”. Their need to engage in English practices is guided through imagination, as it is possible to connect to imagined communities “through the power of the imagination” (Kanno & Norton:241), driving future actions and investments in a language.

## **5.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

After a brief introduction to the chapter (section 5.2.), in which the main methodological approaches were reminded, section 5.3. presented the preliminary results. Included in section 5.3. were section 5.3.1. with the description of the resulting codes, section 5.3.2., which described the quantitative data in Q2, and section 5.3.3., outlining the main results from qualitative data in Q2. Then, in section 5.4. the main findings of the present study were provided, and they were divided into the main themes that emerged from the analysis. On the one hand, the significance of English (section 5.4.1.), which included the role of English in society and the students’ imagined identities. On the other hand, the students’ willingness to invest in English practices (section 5.4.2.). Finally, section 5.5. provided a chapter synthesis and a discussion.

