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Centre for Languages,  
Culture and Communication

# Raising the Profile of Spanish as a Language for/of Science, one Student at a Time

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13<sup>th</sup> SRUK/CERU International Symposium  
Collaborate to Innovate  
Oxford, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2026

# Act 1: the paradox

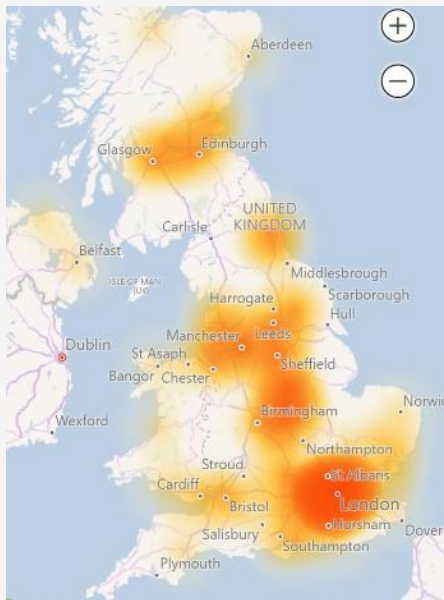


At school:

- GCSE Spanish +55%
- Most popular A-level 6<sup>th</sup> year running 



In STEM: *“A powerful carnivore gobbling up the other denizens of the academic linguistic grazing grounds” (Swales, 1997)*



At University:

- Spanish: -27% / -39%
- Modern Language closures: 28+
- IWLP: c 50k students

*Sorry, Messi*



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- C. 2k language students
- C. 380 Spanish students
- Language for Science degrees
- Placements

# Act 2: the evidence

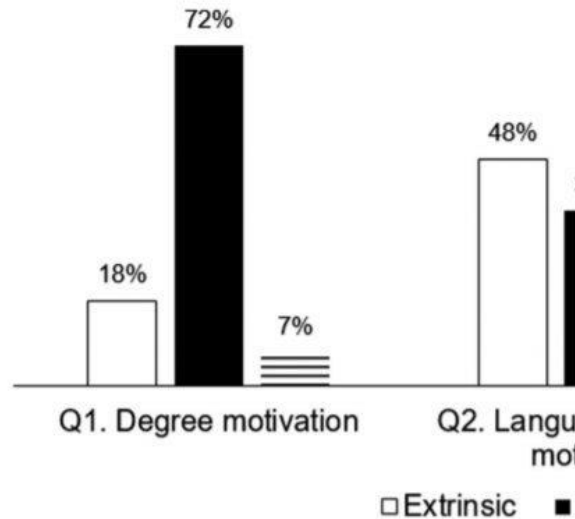


**Figure 2.** Motivation type per subject area.

**Sample profile (n=363):** 61% male  
Sciences | 42% UK, 37% non-EU | 5

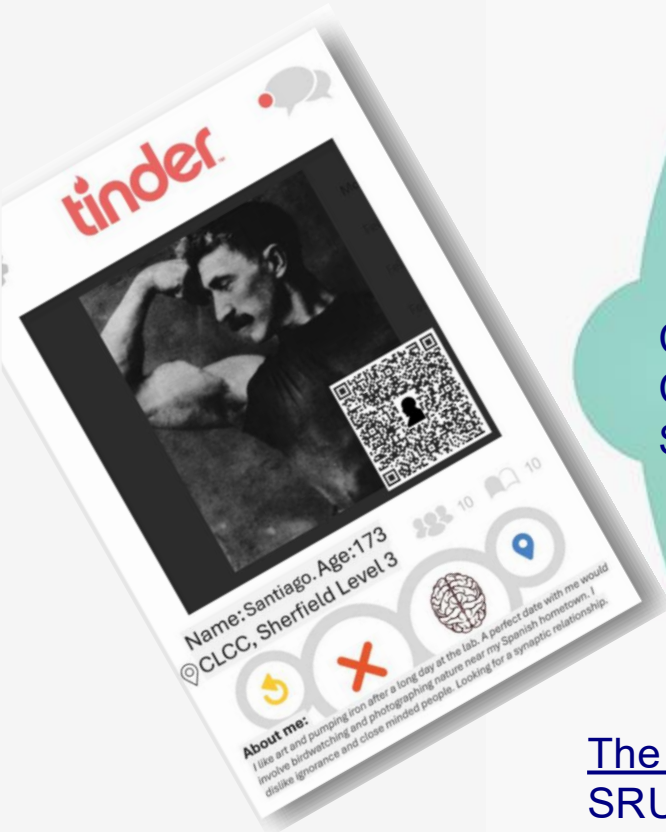
*“I like perspective, I like understanding(...) I don’t just want to be an engineer”*

**Table 6**

*Motivational map: reasons to take up languages and their prevalence*

|                  | Social                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Personal                                                                                                                                                                                    | Educational                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Extrinsic</b> | Instrumental (1)* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employability</li> </ul> International posture (5)<br>Ethnolinguistic vitality (6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• L2 status</li> <li>• Demographic factors</li> <li>• Institutional support</li> </ul> |                                                                                                                                                                                             | Instrumental (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduateness</li> </ul> Avoidance (3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Away from science</li> <li>• Easier ancillary</li> </ul> Opportunity (4) |
| <b>Intrinsic</b> | Tackling monolingualism (10)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Linguist at heart (2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enjoyment</li> <li>• New ways of thinking</li> </ul> Looking for a challenge (7)<br>Enrichment (8)<br>Cultural curiosity (9) |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

# Act 3: the ecosystem



Competition – Women in Science,  
Consejería de Educación & Women  
SRUK

Quan Zhou Wu, Instituto  
Cervantes Londres

The Art and Legacy of SRyC,  
SRUK/CERU Neuroscience  
Committee

IMPERIAL  
Latin  
America  
STEMB  
Network

... and forthcoming collaborations.

González-Becerra, I. (2026). Contested hybridities and powerful selves. In Cerda & Winchester (Eds.), *Language and Identity in the University*. Exeter Press

González-Becerra, I. (2019) 'Language learning among STEM students: motivational profile and attitudes of undergraduates in a UK institution', *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(3), pp. 385–401. doi: 10.1080/09571736.2017.1320421.

Gonzalez-Becerra, I. (2020). *Something Good? the value of foreign language learning in a STEM context* (Doctoral dissertation). <https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/studentTheses/something-good-the-value-of-foreign-language-learning-in-a-stem-c>