



**UNIVERSIDAD  
DE GRANADA**



## **READING COMPETENCE AND TEACHER TRAINING SPAIN (UGR)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

In the last decades, the university and the world are in a continuous structural, ideological and methodological change attempting to get adapted to the needs and reality of the society of the 21st century. The creation of new degrees and curricular adaptations are based on professional skills. In fact, the current educational context demands people trained at a competence level who are capable of dealing with different challenges, personal and social, responding to the changing demands of the dynamics of life.

Regarding the linguistic competence, the need to improve the reading skills, is common to all European Union countries and, consequently, to all project member countries. Therefore, there is a common interest of all the parties involved in improving language skills, from a wide range of backgrounds (school, university, teacher training institution, etc.).

Moreover, in the case of Melilla, a border Spanish city in the North of Africa where half of Melilla's citizens speak a second language different from Spanish and where most of the schools have students from different ethnic and cultural groups in their classes, dealing with the linguistic competence take on an important role for the students of the degrees of Early Childhood Education and Primary Education. In order to have a better understanding of the current situation of reading literacy and teacher training in Melilla, a theoretical review and the collection of the data has been carried out through a questionnaire for Early Childhood and Primary Education students. This study will undoubtedly broaden and enrich our understanding of reading habits and practices of these university students.

### **2. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDENTS OF THE CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION DEGREES**

The sample is made up of 182 informants: 63 are students of the Degree in Early Childhood Education and 119 of the Degree in Primary Education at the Faculty of

Educational and Sport Sciences (Melilla Campus) of the University of Granada during the 2019/2020 academic year. They were given an online questionnaire with questions regarding their sociodemographic characteristics, the training received, the competencies acquired during their degrees and the activities carried out during their internship by both the students themselves and their tutors in the educational centres.

Figures 1 and 2 show the distribution of the participants by courses. In Early Childhood Education, the 48.2% corresponds to the second grade, the 37% to third grade and 14.8% to the fourth grade. In Primary Education Degree, the 26.9% corresponds to the students of the second grade, the 26.1% to the third and, the largest group, 47.1%, to the fourth grade.

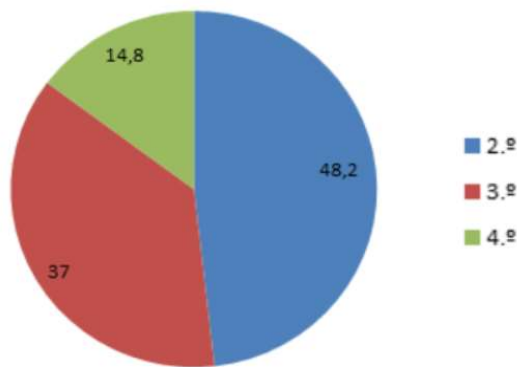


Figure 1. Distribution by courses of students in Early Childhood Education

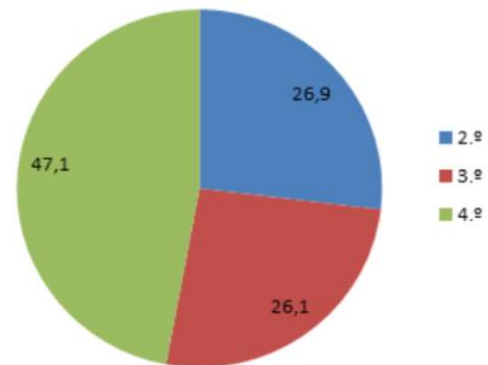


Figure 2. Distribution by courses of students in Primary Education

Regarding the age of the students of the Early Childhood Education degree, their average age is 22.59 years old (SD = 3.17); meanwhile, the average age of the students of the Primary Education Degree is 22.41 years old (SD = 3.37).

With regard to sex, the presence of women among the students of the Early Childhood Education Degree corresponds to 87% compared to 13% of men. On the other hand, in the Primary Education Degree, there is a smaller difference between both sexes: the 70.6% are women compared to 29.4% of men.

The population of the Autonomous City of Melilla is characterized by its multiculturalism and multilingualism. Spanish is the official language, spoken by most of the population. It is also the language of instruction in the different educational levels. However, Berber or Tamazight, both languages are mainly used in the familiar

context and in society within this part of the population. Other languages such as Arabic or French are also spoken as these are languages closely linked to the origins of the latter group. Figures 3 and 4 show the family languages of the students in the Infant and Primary grades, respectively. In the case of the students of Early Childhood degree, 94.4% of them use Spanish with their families, compared to a slightly higher percentage obtained in the students of Primary Education, 99.2%. Although the other languages are less widely used, it is noteworthy that 11.8% of Primary students use Arabic at home, while only 3.7% do so in Pre-school.

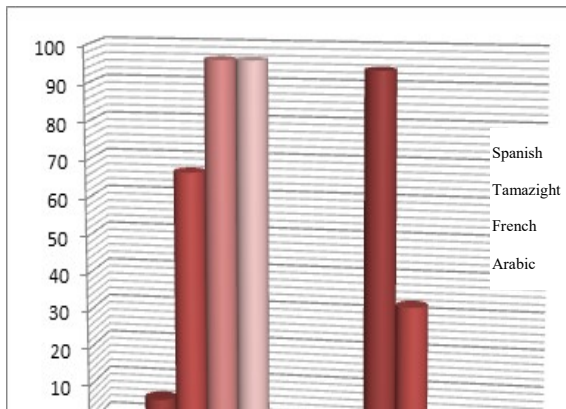


Figure 3. Distribution by home languages of students in Early Childhood Education

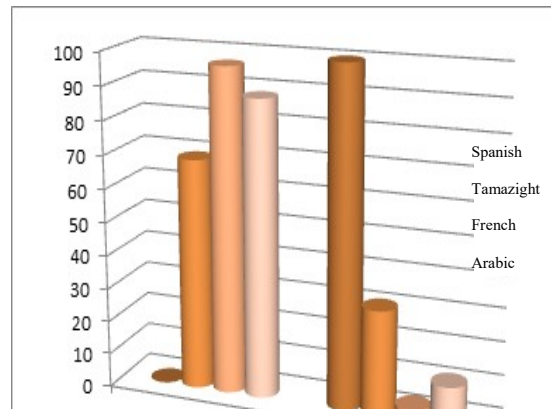


Figure 4. Distribution by home languages of students in Primary Education

As university students, they are required to have obtained a minimum language level of B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2002) before finishing their degree. Otherwise, they cannot graduate. This is the reason why some of them claim to have the certificate of initial and intermediate levels in different European languages. As it can be seen in figures 5 and 6, English is the most studied language in both grades (27.8% of Infant students reach or exceed B1 level; meanwhile, better levels are obtained in the Primary level (52%). French is the second most studied language, where 7.6% of the students have obtained a B1 or higher.

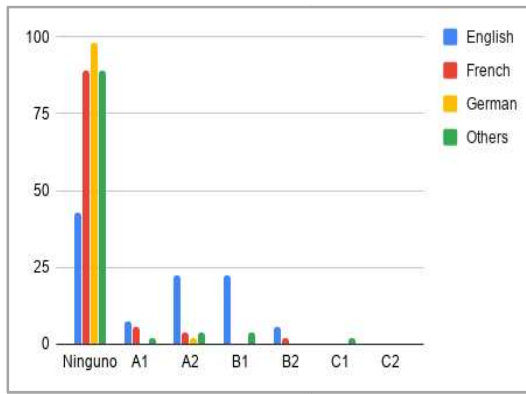


Figure 5. Language levels of students in Early Childhood Education

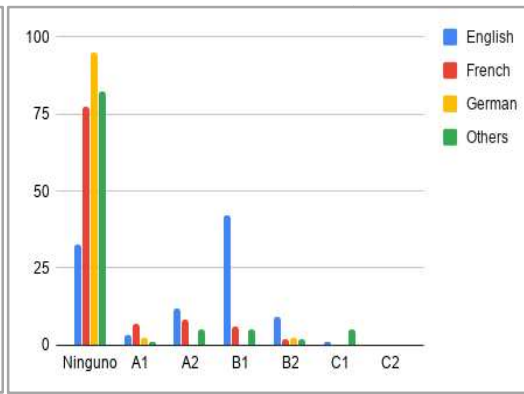


Figure 6. Language levels of students in Primary Education

To achieve the objectives of this project, it is interesting to know about the training of the future teachers of the two educational stages under study. In addition to the curricular content that is integrated into their university training, the Faculty of Education and Sport Sciences organises different training courses every year. However, they attempt to improve their training orientated to their professional profile. The students are offered a wide and interesting range of courses in both degrees, in most of the cases they are differentiated according to the degree or even grade. Figures 7 and 8 show those with the highest and lowest acceptance according to the degree.

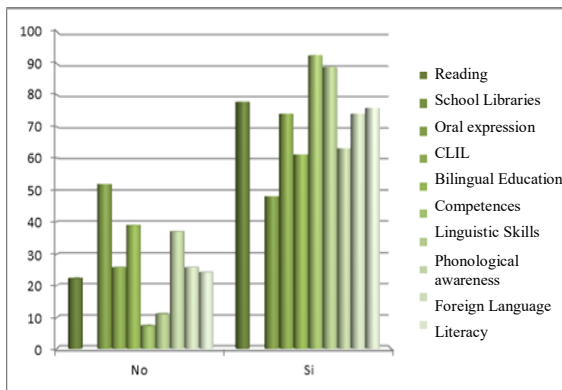


Figure 7. Training courses held at the Faculty by the students in Early Childhood Education

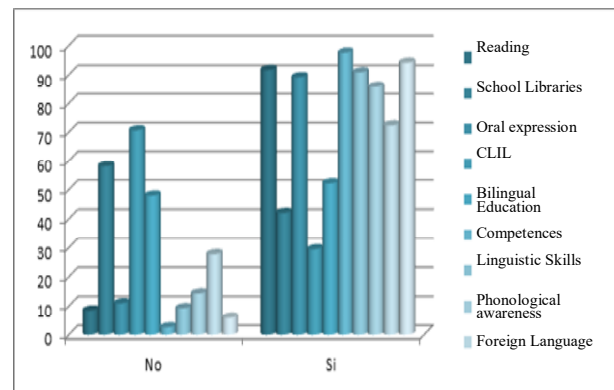


Figure 8. Training courses held at the Faculty by the students in Primary Education

In the table 1, it can be seen the percentage of the students from the two degrees who took these courses. It is interesting to note how those of teaching competencies and language skills in Early Childhood Education stand out, meanwhile, in Primary Education those of teaching competencies, literacy, reading training and language skills can be highlighted, with very high percentages. On the other hand, the

course in which there was less participation were those related with CLIL in both degrees.

Table 1

*Participation in the training courses offered by the Faculty of Education and Sport Sciences (Melilla Campus), University of Granada (%)*

Training courses	Students in Early Childhood Education	Students in Primary Education
Reading Training	77.8	91.6
School libraries	48.1	42.0
Oral skill	74.1	89.1
CLIL	20.4	29.4
Bilingual Education	61.1	52.1
Teacher competencies	92.6	97.5
Linguistic Skills	88.9	90.8
Phonological awareness	63.0	85.7
Foreign language	74.1	72.3
Literacy	75.9	94.1

### 3. INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING

The regulation of the higher education system has a clear objective, which is to promote the achievement of a university training that combines basic general knowledge and transversal knowledge, together with the acquisition of the competencies and specific knowledge of the area.

It is the responsibility of the university to design, together with society, study plans that foster the acquisition of core competencies for effective professional development. The Curriculum of the Degree in Early Childhood Education and Primary Education is structured in 4 blocks of contents:

1. Basic training.
2. Mandatory disciplinary didactic modules.
3. Practicum (includes the Final Degree Project).
4. Optional training.

Each block is organized into different modules, subjects and disciplines whose regulatory framework is shown in Table 2.

Table 2

*Regulations governing the study plans of the Degree in Early Childhood and Primary Education*

Spanish Qualifications Framework for Higher Education ( <i>Real Decreto 1027/2011</i> )	
Official university teaching arrangement ( <i>Real Decreto 1393/2007</i> )	
<b>DEGREE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION</b>	<b>DEGREE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION</b>
Orden ECI/3960/2007, de 19 de diciembre, por la que se establece el currículo y se regula la ordenación de la Educación Infantil”	Orden ECD/686/2014, de 23 de abril, por la que se establece el currículo de la Educación Primaria para el ámbito de gestión del Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y deporte y se regula su implantación, así como la evaluación y determinados aspectos organizativos de la etapa
<b>Preparation of the Study Plan by the Universities</b>	
1 <sup>st</sup> favorable report of the National Agency for Quality Assessment Accreditation 2 <sup>nd</sup> authorization of the Autonomous Community of Andalusia 3 <sup>rd</sup> positive verification of the Council of Universities	
<i>Resolución de 19 de diciembre de 2014, de la Universidad de Granada, por la que se publica el plan de estudios de Graduado en Educación infantil.</i>	<i>Resolución de 18 de julio de 2014, de la Universidad de Granada, por la que se publica el plan de estudios de Graduado en Educación Primaria.</i>

Based on the competences established in the previous laws, a questionnaire has been designed to find out the reading competencies developed in university students from Early and Primary Education.

### 3.1 Early Childhood Education degree competencies

In the following table, a list of competencies acquired in the Early Childhood Education Degree is presented. According to the data, the competence number 4 related to the *adaptation to each student and situation in regard with the daily dynamics* is the competence with the highest percentage (96.3%), which means, that most of the students claim to have acquired it. The competence number 3 *on being capable of exercising the functions of tutor and counsellor in relation to family education* appears to have the highest percentage (27,8%) regarding the competences in which the students have started developing, but they feel they have not acquired it yet.

However, the most remarkable fact it is that the competence number 8 *on being able to apply ICT didactically to develop the reading competence*, the students claim

that is their least developed competence. It is a very revealing fact as it indicates that there is still a general lack regarding the digital training for early childhood teachers, having in mind that these new generations have numerous digital resources at their disposal.

Table 3

*List of competencies acquired in the Early Childhood Education Degree (%)*

Competencies	No	Initiated	Yes
01. I know the objectives, curricular contents and evaluation criteria of Early Childhood Education.	1.9	14.8	83.3
02. I am able to design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with other teachers and professionals of the centre.	7.4	11.1	81.5
03. I know and am capable of exercising the functions of tutor and counsellor in relation to family education in the period 0-6 years.	9.3	27.8	63.0
04. I understand that the daily dynamics in Early Childhood Education is changing according to each student, group and situation, as well as knowing how to be flexible in the exercise of the teaching function.	1.9	1.9	96.3
05. I know the evolutionary phases of language learning in early childhood, I know how to identify possible dysfunctions and intervene for their correct evolution.	3.7	18.5	77.8
06. I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.	22.2	26.8	50.0
07. I would know how to use techniques and resources so that students express themselves orally and in writing.	3.7	22.2	74.1
08. I know and am able to apply didactically in the classroom information and communication technologies (ICTs) to develop reading competence.	33.7	24.1	72.2
09. I master the language and literacy curriculum of this stage, as well as the theories about the acquisition and development of the corresponding learning.	24.1	20.4	55.6
10. I understand the transition from oral to writing, and I know the different registers and uses of the language.	9.3	20.4	70.4
11. I know and master oral and written expression techniques.	9.3	18.5	72.2
12. I know the learning process of reading and writing, as well as its teaching.	7.4	16.7	75.9
13. I know and would know how to use resources for reading animation.	11.1	18.5	70.4
14. I am able to acquire literary training to learn about children's literature and its teaching.	3.7	18.5	77.8
15. I would like to encourage reading in students and encourage them to express themselves through written language.	3.7	7.4	88.9
16. I am able to collaborate with the different sectors of the educational community and the social environment.	11.1	14.8	74.1
17. I have a critical and autonomous attitude about knowledge, values and public and private social institutions.	14.8	16.7	68.5

Competencies	No	Initiated	Yes
18. I understand the role, possibilities and limits of education in today's society and the fundamental competences that affect the Infant and Primary Education centres, as well as their professionals.	3.7	16.7	79.6
19. I know the difficulties that students who do not have as their mother tongue or do not know can have to learn our official language.	5.6	3.7	90.7
20. I am able to critically analyse and incorporate social issues that affect family and school education (social impact of audio-visual and technological language, discrimination and social inclusion, sustainable development...).	13.0	24.1	63.0

### 3.2 Primary education degree competencies

Regarding the competencies that are to be developed in the degree of Primary Education, in the following table it can be appreciated that the most developed competence (91.6%) is the one related to *being able to encourage reading and encourage students to express themselves through written language*. On the other hand, the competence more identified as the one that has been initiated but it is not fully acquired is number 12 with a percentage of 63%. This is related to *being able to identify and plan the resolution of educational situations that affect students with different abilities and different learning rhythms*. Nowadays, this is a key competence as it is becoming more and more common to find a wide spectrum of learning styles. This is even more present in border towns as Melilla, where the cultural origin can certainly affect the way of learning.

In respect of the least acquired competence with the highest percentage (26.9%) is the competence concerning coping with *being able to prepare their students to express themselves orally and in writing in a foreign language*. This fact can be compared with the results obtained in the education centres of Málaga, as it turns out to be the same competence in this case.



Table 4

*List of competencies acquired in the Primary Education Degree (%)*

<i>Competencies</i>	No	Initiated	Yes
01. I know the curricular areas of primary education, the interdisciplinary relationship between them, the evaluation criteria and the body of didactic knowledge around the respective teaching and learning procedures.	0.8	10.9	88.2
02. I am able to design, plan and evaluate teaching and learning processes, both individually and in collaboration with other teachers and professionals of the centre.	1.7	21.0	77.3
03. I understand the basic principles of language and communication sciences.	3.4	11.8	84.9
04. I am able to acquire literary training and know children's literature.	6.7	10.9	82.4
05. I am aware of the importance of the school library as a resource centre for reading, information and lifelong learning.	5.0	10.1	84.9
06. I know and I am able to apply information and communication technologies in the classroom.	0.8	10.1	89.1
07. I am able to deal effectively with language learning situations in multicultural and multilingual contexts.	17.6	19.3	63.0
08. I am able to encourage reading and critical commentary of texts from the various scientific and cultural domains contained in the school curriculum.	8.4	19.3	72.3
09. I know the organization of primary and primary schools and the diversity of actions that comprise their operation.	10.9	20.2	68.9
10. I know the school curriculum of languages and literature.	12.6	17.6	69.7
11. I know the process of learning written language and its teaching.	5.0	9.2	85.7
12. I am able to encourage reading and encourage students to express themselves through written language.	1.7	6.7	91.6
13. I know the difficulties in learning the official languages of students of other languages.	10.9	15.1	73.9
14. I am able to have my students express themselves orally and in writing in a foreign language.	26.9	18.5	54.6
15. I know the current proposals and developments based on learning skills.	11.8	20.2	68.1
16. I am able to identify and plan the resolution of educational situations that affect students with different abilities and different learning rhythms.	7.6	29.4	63.0
17. I know the processes of interaction and communication in the classroom, which help to address and solve discipline problems.	6.7	17.6	75.6
18. I know and am able to exercise the functions of tutor and counsellor in relation to family education in the period 6-12.	12.6	21.8	65.5
19. I understand the role, possibilities and limits of education in today's society and the fundamental competences that affect nursery and primary schools and their professionals	9.2	19.3	71.4

<i>Competencies</i>	No	Initiated	Yes
20. I am able to relate education to the environment, as well as cooperate with families and the community.	2.5	10.1	87.4
21. I am able to critically analyse and incorporate social issues that affect family and school education (social impact of audio-visual and technological language, discrimination and social inclusion, sustainable development ...).	5.9	16.0	78.2

### 3.3 Activities carried out during the internship period with the child education students

In the following table, the results regarding the actions carried out by the students of Early Childhood Education Degree during their internship period can be observed. On one hand, it can be seen that most of the actions are carried out by the tutor (34.1%), meanwhile the students by their own perform just an average of the 11.2% of the actions.

A representative example is the action number 9 concerning *the classroom programming is modified according to the needs of the students throughout the course*, where, according to the results, they have seen their tutors performing this action in the 51.9% of the cases, meanwhile just the 3.7% claim to have carried out this action.

The actions number 15 and 17, which obtained the highest percentage (35.2%), are claimed to be performed by neither the tutor nor the student. Meanwhile, the action number 1 with a percentage of 51.9%, it is claimed to be carried out by tutors and students.

Table 5

*Activities carried out during the internship period with the child education students*

<i>Activities</i>	None	Tutor	Student	Both
01. Relationships between written language and oral language are established.	7.4	31.5	9.3	51.9
02. Animation dynamics are established to the reading (change of characters, changes of endings, creation of stories with images...).	14.8	22.2	16.7	46.3
03. The classroom is organized according to the needs of students with different learning corners and workshops.	14.8	35.2	14.8	35.2
04. Reading activities are carried out in large groups.	18.5	20.4	20.4	40.7
05. Reading activities are carried out in small groups.	25.9	20.4	20.4	35.2
06. Reading activities are carried out individually.	29.6	22.2	11.1	37.0
07. My students learn to read by following the textbook of an	33.3	31.5	7.4	27.8

<i>Activities</i>	None	Tutor	Student	Both
editorial.				
08. The reading activities start from a project, teaching unit and / or centre of interest.	20.4	38.9	3.7	37.0
09. The classroom programming is modified according to the needs of the students throughout the course.	13.0	51.9	3.7	31.5
10. Groups are organized taking into account that they have students with different reading levels.	33.3	29.6	7.4	29.6
11. There is a stipulated time in class for learning to read (assembly, corners ...).	11.1	33.3	9.3	46.3
12. There is a quiet place in the classroom dedicated to individual reading (classroom library).	35.2	29.6	3.7	31.5
13. In class, various ICT resources are used to carry out interactive reading activities (internet, digital whiteboard, bookmaterial or created ...).	14.8	31.57	3.7	50.0
14. Information is provided to families to encourage reading learning at home (workshops, quarterly meetings, tutoring, parentschool ...).	20.4	46.3	5.6	27.8
15. At home, families do literacy activities that are suggested in the classroom.	35.2	40.7	1.9	22.2
16. Coordinates with other teachers to schedule and / or carry out activities with our students about reading.	25.9	42.6	3.7	27.8
17. In my classroom, other agents of the educational centre or other professionals participate in actions that favour the readinglearning of my students.	35.2	38.9	1.9	24.1
18. An initial evaluation is carried out at the beginning of the school year.	7.4	24.1	68.5	24.1
19. Different moments in the classroom are analysed during thecourse to evaluate the reading learning of my students.	22.2	40.7	3.7	33.3
20. Concrete moments are used during the course to evaluate my students with a reading test.	18.5	50.0	7.4	24.1
Global	21.8	34.1	11.2	34.2

### 3.4 Activities carried out during the internship period with primary school students

In the following table, the activities carried out by students of Primary Education Degree during the internship period can be observed. The global results show that the majority of the actions have been carried out by both the students and their tutors (35.4%), followed by those carried out only by their tutor (26.9%), by neither of them (19.6%) and by the students by their own (18.8%).

Regarding the actions that are most performed by the tutors, the number 18 can be highlighted with the highest percentage (45.4%). This action concerns the *concrete*

moments that are used during the course to evaluate the students with a reading test. Meanwhile, among the actions that are most performed by the students two actions can be highlighted (number 7 and 14). They are related to *asking before during and / or after reading a text and promoting reading in pairs*. In addition, concerning the actions developed by both students and tutors, the action number 3 can be highlighted as it obtained the highest percentage (47.1).

Table 6

*Activities carried out during the internship period with primary school students*

<i>Activities</i>	None	Student	Tutor	Both
01. My students are asked questions while reading texts to ensure their understanding.	6.7	22.7	24.4	46.2
02. The participation of families in the organization of reading activities (cultural week, representation of works ...) is encouraged.	28.6	8.4	42.9	20.2
03. Activities are proposed for my students to summarize and synthesize knowledge after reading (topics, main ideas, protagonists, events, inferences ...).	8.4	23.5	21.0	47.1
04. Reading activities are carried out in large groups.	8.4	23.5	24.4	43.7
05. Reading activities are carried out in small groups.	25.2	23.5	26.1	39.23
06. Reading activities are carried out individually.	9.2	23.5	23.5	43.7
07. Readings are made in pairs.	45.4	26.1	16.0	12.6
08. My students use a textbook in the language area.	8.4	19.3	28.6	43.7
09. The reading activities start from a joint project with the rest of the curricular areas.	28.6	9.2	33.6	28.6
10. The classroom programming is modified according to the needs of my students throughout the course.	11.8	16.0	40.3	31.9
11. Groups are organized taking into account that they have students with different reading levels.	26.1	14.3	28.6	31.1
12. My students do activities focused on reading speed aloud and in silence.	12.6	19.3	26.9	41.2
13. My students do activities focused on reading speed in silence.	22.7	18.5	25.2	33.6
14. My students are asked before, during and / or after reading a text.	8.4	26.1	15.1	50.4
15. ICTs are used to favour the development of linguistic competence.	8.4	25.2	20.2	46.2
16. Activities are carried out for students to compare texts by format or gender.	30.3	16.8	26.9	26.1
17. It is carried out in the sponsoring centre where my students tell stories or stories to students from lower grades.	42.9	13.4	22.7	21.0
18. Concrete moments are used during the course to evaluate my students with a reading test.	15.1	10.1	45.4	29.4

<i>Activities</i>	None	Student	Tutor	Both
19. It is proposed to my students directed readings to favour the development of social skills that help to face and resolve conflicts in the classroom.	25.2	16.0	22.7	36.1
20. Different analysis techniques of a read text are used (concept maps, dramatizations, murals, portfolios, opinion, debates ...).	19.3	21.0	22.7	37.0
Global	19,6	18,8	26,9	35,4

#### 4. PERMANENT TEACHER TRAINING

Apart from the present study carried out with the future teachers of Pre-school and Primary Education, the teacher training must continue throughout the working life of the professionals, either through their voluntary actions or, above all, on the initiative of the Education Administrations themselves, as well as of the centres. There is a period within the initial training of teachers in which coordination with teaching professionals is indispensable, and this happens during their teaching practices that students carry out in schools. In addition to other meetings that may occur in the interim of university studies. It is for this reason that it is essential to link initial and on-going training, so that the skills developed during professional performance enrich the students' own training.

For the reasons explained above and in relation to the continuous training in linguistic competence of the Infant and Primary School teachers, in the questionnaires they were asked about the number of training actions on linguistic competence in which they had participated in the last 5 years.

Table 7 shows that most of the teacher of both groups carried out between one and three actions in that period (61% this amount is considered insufficient given the difficulties of communicative competences that many students of Infant and Primary Education have in Melilla, either due to the lack of command of Spanish or due to the socioeconomic characteristics of its population. Many families live in disadvantaged areas, with scarce resources for their education, lack of intrinsic motivation towards it and with linguistic deficiencies of the parents themselves.

Table 7

*Training activities carried out in linguistic competence (last 5 years) (%)*

Future Teachers	None	Between 1 and 3	Between 4 and 6	More than 6
<b>Early Childhood Education</b>	16.7	61.1	22.2	0
<b>Primary Education</b>	12.8	46.8	29.8	10.6

On the other hand, it is worrying that some of teachers (around 16.7% and 12.8%), even though is not a high percentage, have not carried out any training action in an instrumental area as significant as the area of linguistics in the last five years.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The competence development represents the adaptation to international trends designed by the Europe 2020 strategy to prepare students for the real world. The objective of this report was to find out about the reading competencies developed in university students from Early and Primary Education of the Faculty of Education and Sport Sciences (Melilla Campus) in the University of Granada.

To do so, the first part describes the profile of the participants who completed the questionnaire designed for this aim. From these results, the most noteworthy characteristic is that most of the students are able to speak at least two different languages, Spanish and Tamazigh or Bereber due to their origins. This is why the population of the Autonomous City of Melilla is characterized by its multiculturalism and multilingualism. In addition, there exist different aspects in terms of language, traditions, culture and religion. This is why the information that these students can provide is truly enriching.

The second part of the report presents information about the competences and actions that the students of the Early Childhood Education and Primary Education have already acquired, those which are initiated and the ones which are still not acquired. From these results, it has been observed some weaknesses related to the use of ICT in the case of the students of Early Childhood Education and the use of foreign languages in the case of Primary Education. Nonetheless, some strengths have been also observed such as being able to adapt to each particular situation and student in the case of Early Childhood Education and being able to encourage to read and write in the case of

Primary Education. These findings are the key to guide us in the development in the following actions and therefore, in the achievement of the objectives of this project.

The third part is related to the teacher training of the future teachers of Early Childhood Education and Primary Education. As it was mentioned above, it is surprising that some of the future teachers are not interesting in doing any of the teacher training related to the linguistic competences given the strains some of them have due to the lack of command of Spanish or due to the socioeconomic characteristics of its population. As it is important not to forget the particular context we are addressing to.

This information will undoubtedly broaden and enrich our understanding of reading habits and practices and it will allow the sharing of a wide variety of experiences, mainly related to school, but also derived from informal and non-formal initiatives with the community concerned.

## REFERENCES

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