Spanish as a Heritage Language.

**Heterogeneity and motivation in the Language and culture of Origin courses.**

The Language and Culture of Origin Courses (LCO) exist in Switzerland for different languages, and they are recommended – and at certain point supported- by education policies in the country (CDIP, 1991). The LCO courses of Spanish in Switzerland are organized by the Spanish embassy or by non-governmental organizations (Calderón, Fibbi and Truong, 2013). Originally conceived for migrant children supposed to come back to their origin countries, the population attending these courses has strongly changed in the last 20 years. Initially, the courses enabled migrant children to resume the school system in their countries. However, due to changes in migration policies, this reason is no longer current. Besides, the heritage language (HL) is mostly the parents’ first language, but for children who attend the courses, Spanish is not necessary neither their L1, nor their stronger language. In this sense, the motivation to study the language is a capital factor at stake, since the heritage language is not compulsory required by the Swiss school. All these changes involve challenges for teaching and education policies.

The present contribution aims to study the characteristics of current population attending Spanish heritage language and culture (LCO) courses in different institutions in Switzerland, as well as children’s motivations to study Spanish, a migration language.

In the first part of our contribution, we will describe the characteristics and background of children’s families attending Spanish LCO courses in Switzerland. 118 children and their families participated in this study, 83 from German speaking part and 35 from French speaking part of the country, distributed in 8 institutions The families completed a questionnaire about the children origin (bi-national families and immigrants), linguistic biography, literacy family practices, presence of Spanish at home, time of attendance to heritage language courses and parents’ level of education.

In a second part of this study, we will analyze children answers about their motivation to study the language. We will interpret and recode their answers in the frame of the self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1995; Noels & al. 2000). According to self-determination approach to motivation, it is possible to identify an intrinsic interest to learn the language –the activity is enjoyable- and an extrinsic motivation (personal reasons, external pressure, instrumental goals, etc.). Finally, we will relate children answers with the family background information, in order to better know the characteristics and needs of the population. The possible influence of all these factors on the learning process of the Spanish as a heritage language will be discussed.

**References**


