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Doctoral Theses on Foreign Languages in Andalusia (2010-2021): A Gender Analysis

Valeria Hernández García[1], Alexander Maz-Machado[1], María Josefa Rodríguez[1]

[1]Universidad de Córdoba, Avenida San Alberto Magno s/n, 14004 Córdoba, Spain

l32hegav@uco.es, ma1mamaa@uco.es, m62robam@uco.es

Abstract. The aim of this article is to study the production of doctoral theses on foreign languages, from our point of view as Spanish speakers, conducted in Andalusia from 2010 to 2021 in order to collect the total number of dissertations and the diachronic distribution; to describe the production per universities, authors and directors according to the gender; and to gather the descriptors most used. Results show that, during the period 2010 to 2021, Andalusian public universities recorded 266 dissertations on FL. The annual average is of 22.16 doctoral theses per year. The representation of women in the authorship of dissertations is 175 (65.78 %), as opposed to 91 men (34.22 %). The participation in the direction of such PhD theses is 51.45 % for women and 48.55 % for men. In accordance with the composition of the direction, doctoral theses were supervised in equal percentage by both only women and (41.35 %) and only men (41.35 %). Mixed direction reached 17.29 %. The amount of 117 different descriptors was gathered. The most used keyword is *translation and interpreting* (22.7 %). In conclusion, a decrease in the doctoral production on FL was found at Andalusian universities as of 2016. The authorship reveals that FL is a feminised field. In addition, it has been confirmed that mixed co-directions are unusual in this area.

Keywords. Doctoral theses, foreign languages, university, gender, Andalusia.

1.   Introduction

Command of languages is crucial in contemporary society because it facilitates access to information, other cultures, new training and leisure opportunities, and a multitude of job positions. In other words, knowledge of foreign languages promotes the free movement of people, and economic, scientific, technical and cultural cooperation globally (Official Gazette of the Regional Government of Andalusia, 2002). That is, languages act as bridges between nations.

Bibliometrics consists of a method that allows to observe aspects of the research activity such as the relationships between scholars and the influence of scientific works (Afia et al., 2021). This method, together with scientometric, has been established as the main tool for examining scientific production and its impact on the research community (De Filippo and Sanz-Casado, 2018).

Many areas of natural sciences, humanities and social sciences have been analysed bibliometrically (Sivertsen, 2016; Kulczycki, 2018). With regards to that relating to foreign languages, it has been deeply explored from the perspective of scientific production (Zanettin

et al., 2015; Yilmaz et al., 2019). Afia et al. (2021) have reviewed articles collected from SCOPUS concerning the teaching of English to speakers of other languages.

Doctoral theses constitute a frequently used source of data in bibliometric studies. On the one hand, at the international level, it is worth mentioning the work of Barrot et al. (2022) about dissertations on the teaching of English in Philippines. Wang et al. (2020) inspected 253 Chinese PhD theses on library and information science through the co-occurrence of words and content to identify the groups and networks. Alikina et al. (2016) compiled 124 Russian dissertations on translation, which showed the prevalence of references to classic works and especially to Russian linguistic theories of translation.

On the other hand, in the national framework, it should be noted the studies conducted by Ortega Arjonilla et al. (2008a; 2008b), Crespo Hidalgo (2011), and Maz-Machado et al. (2020). Fernández-Guerrero et al. (2020) considered 347 doctoral theses touching scientific medical information. Machan & Sendra Portero (2018) analysed 1036 dissertations on diagnostic imaging carried out between 1976 and 2011. Franco Aixelá (2020) examined 313 Spanish PhD theses on translation and interpreting studies gathered from BITRA (Bibliography of Interpreting and Translation), which disclosed the great interest of researchers in local issues and placed the majority of Spanish doctoral productivity in public universities. Rodríguez-Faneca et al. (2021) explored the collaboration networks that are generated in dissertations of translation in Spain according to the members of the evaluation committees. Selma (2022) reviewed 12 doctoral theses on adolescent motivation in foreign language learning by means of a qualitative meta-analysis.

In the regional context of Andalusia, bibliometric studies on dissertations have gone unnoticed, given that it is only possible to find the article published by Maz-Machado et al. (2022).

In the academic year 2020/2021, the amount of 44895 students enrolled in public universities to take any kind of master's degree connected with foreign languages was recorded in Spain, and a total of 1286 students in Andalusia. As for doctorate, 426 y 86 people finished their studies in Spain and Andalusia respectively (EDUCAbase).

In the autonomous community of Andalusia, nine public universities offer programmes associated with foreign languages (hereinafter, FL). These universities have 30 departments linked to the teaching of such area. Nevertheless, the number of departments is dissimilar from one university to another. At the top is the Universidad de Granada, with 7 departments dedicated to foreign languages. This is followed by the Universidad de Sevilla, with 6 departments; the Universidad de Málaga, with 5 departments; the Universidad de Córdoba and Universidad de Cádiz, with 3 departments; the Universidad de Huelva and Universidad de Jaén, with 2 departments; and the Universidad de Almería and Universidad Pablo de Olavide, with 1 department.

Considering the investigations mentioned and their limitations, we intend to analyse the doctoral theses production on FL from a gender approach, focusing on those published in Andalusian public universities (Spain).

The aim of this article is to describe the production of dissertations on FL from a bibliometric perspective, specifically looking at the role of women in the production and direction of such dissertations.

2. Materials and method

Firstly, all the websites of Andalusian universities were consulted so as to identify the departments related to the teaching of foreign languages. Consequently, the TESEO database was visited. Such database belongs to the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport. This contains data regarding all the PhD theses defended since 1976.
(https://www.educacion.gob.es/teseo/irGestionarConsulta.do)

All the dissertations written in the departments identified were downloaded from TESEO. With a view to verifying that all the doctoral theses deal with FL, a manual filtering of these documents was carried out by reading titles, descriptors and, in case of doubt, abstracts. Readings were performed by the authors of the present study and were supervised by two experts in the area of translation and interpreting from the Universidad de Córdoba. Variables under study are university, authorship, direction, gender of authors and directors, year of defence, and descriptors. The data searching process is displayed in figure 1.
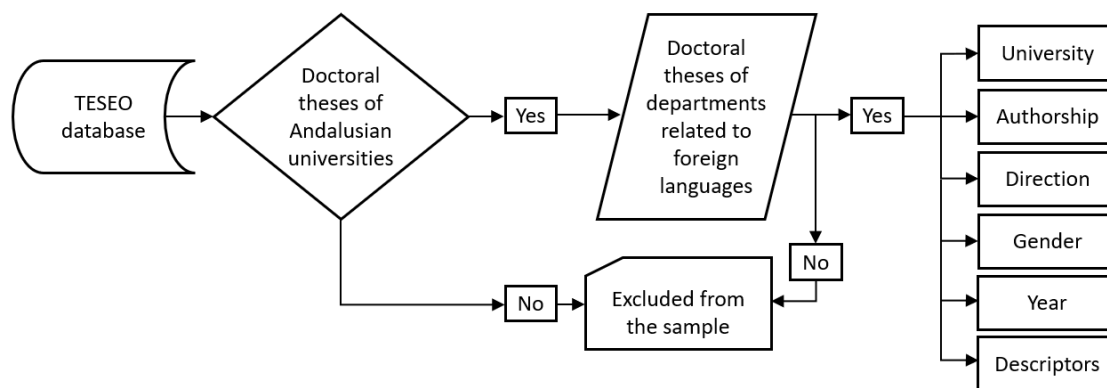

Figure 1. Process diagram

3. Results

During the period from 2010 to 2021, Andalusian public universities recorded 266 dissertations on FL. The average is of 22.16 doctoral theses per year. The highest number of defences took place in 2016 and 2017, with a production of 33.8 % with respect to the total (Table 2).

A continuous growth pattern has not been experienced in production. There are three cycles of increase between the years 2010-2012, 2005-2006 y 2008-2020; and three cycles of decrease between the years 2012-2014, 2016-2018 y 2020-2021.

Table 1. Diachronic production of doctoral theses on FL in Andalusia

Year	Frequency	Percentage
2010	6	2.3 %
2011	11	4.1 %
2012	29	10.9 %
2013	24	9 %
2014	14	5.3 %
2015	25	9.4 %
2016	46	17.3 %
2017	44	16.5 %

2018	9	3.4 %
2019	19	7.1 %
2020	26	9.8 %
2021	13	4.9 %
Total	266	100 %

The Universidad de Málaga consists of the leading Andalusian institution as to doctoral production in FL (Table 2). Such university generates 25.5 % of the total, followed by the Universidad de Granada with 22.5 %. PhD theses on this area have been conducted in 8 of the 9 Andalusian public universities.

Table 2. Production of dissertations on FL in Andalusian universities (2010-2021)

Universities	No. theses	Percentage
Universidad de Málaga	68	25.56 %
Universidad de Granada	60	22.56 %
Universidad de Córdoba	42	15.79 %
Universidad de Sevilla	41	15.41 %
Universidad de Cádiz	22	8.27 %
Universidad Pablo de Olavide	20	7.52 %
Universidad de Almería	5	1.88 %
Universidad de Huelva	5	1.88 %
Universidad de Jaén	3	1.13 %
Total	266	100 %

The sum of 224 researchers from different universities has participated in the direction of dissertations. In the period analysed, Dr. Nicolás Roser Nebot, attached to Department of Translation and Interpreting at the Universidad de Málaga, is the most productive director with 8 doctoral theses. These were overseen individually and at the Universidad de Málaga. The 16 directors with higher production (Table 3) have supervised 25.7 % of all the PhD theses.

In terms of the law of Bradford (1948), it is possible to confirm the absence of major producers in the task of overseeing dissertations on FL in Andalusian universities (Log n≥1). 74 medium producers (0<Log n <1) and 150 transient producers (Log n = 0) were quantified.

Table 3. Dissertation directors with higher production (n≥4).

Directors	Frequency	Percentage
Roser Nebot, Nicolás	8	2.1 %
Balbuena Torezano, María del Carmen	7	1.9 %
García Calderón, Ángeles	7	1.9 %
Ortega Arjonilla, Emilio	7	1.9 %
Rivas Carmona, María Del Mar	7	1.9 %
Taillefer de Haya, Lidia	7	1.9 %
Zaro Vera, Juan Jesús	7	1.9 %
Álvarez Jurado, Manuela	6	1.6 %
Corpas Pastor, Gloria	6	1.6 %
Maestre Maestre, José María	6	1.6 %
Monferrer Sala, Juan Pedro	6	1.6 %

Pavón Vázquez, Víctor	6	1.6 %
Faber Benítez, Pamela	5	1.3 %
Fuentes Luque, Adrián	4	1.1 %
Guzmán Tirado, Rafael	4	1.1 %
Quero Gervilla, Enrique Federico	4	1.1 %

Women have performed more PhD theses than men. The representation of women in the authorship of dissertations is 175 (65.78 %), as opposed to 91 men (34.22 %). Figure 2 illustrates the diachronic production of dissertations in the period analysed according to the gender of authors. In connection with women, only one PhD thesis on FL was defended in 2001. The maximum production occurred in 2016 with 34 dissertations. In the case of men, the lowest number of doctoral theses was recorded in 2018 with only one, and the highest in 2017 with 18. The annual average of dissertations defended was 7.5 for men *versus* 14.5 for women.
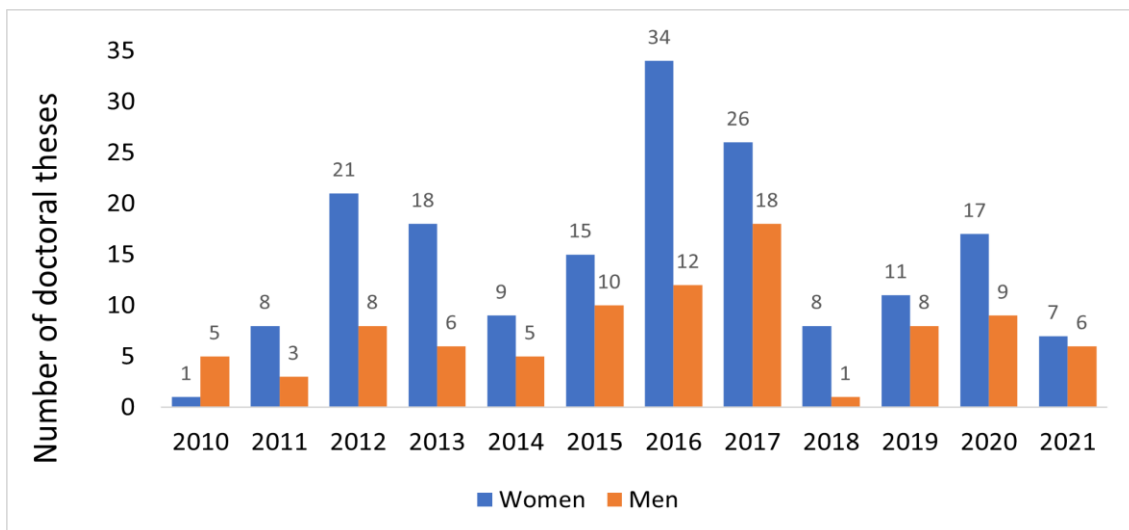

Figure 2. Diachronic production of doctoral theses in accordance with the gender of authors

A total of 379 researchers was involved in the direction of dissertations. The participation is 51.45 % for women and 48.55 % for men. It is observed that there is parity of direction both at the Universidad de Jaén and the Universidad de Almería. While, at the Universidad de Huelva, women supervised 83.3 % of the PhD theses; at the Universidad de Cádiz, men directed 80 % of the doctoral theses (Figure 3).
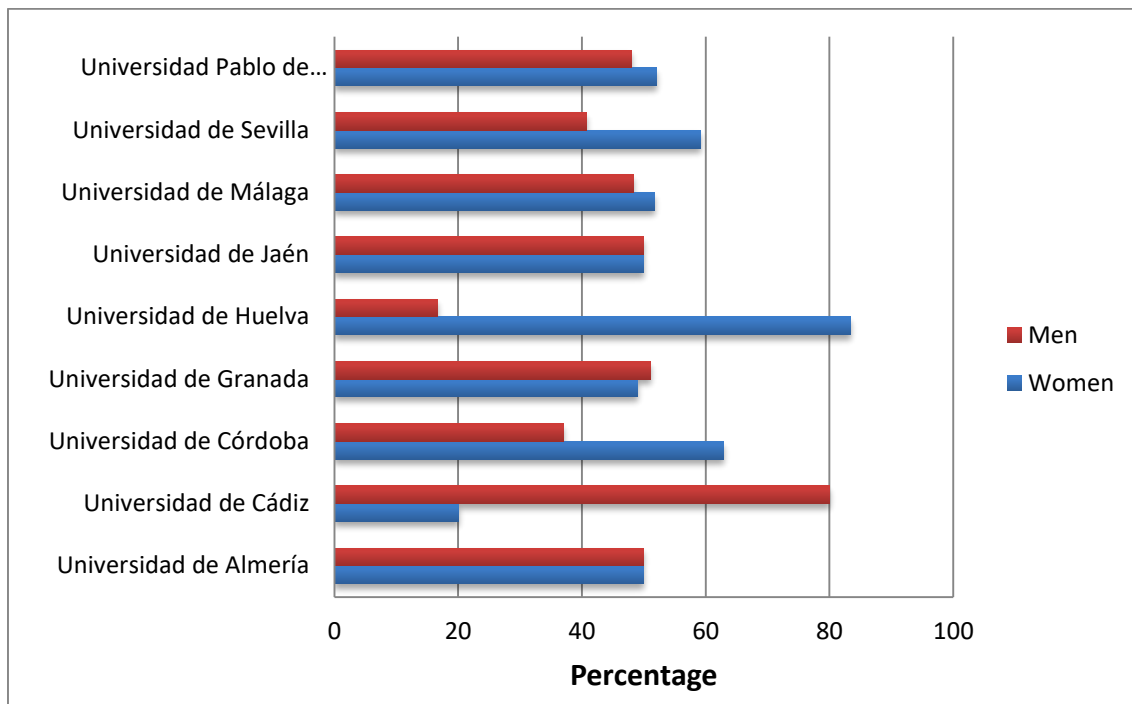
Figure 3. Gender of directors per universities

If we discriminate the composition of the direction of dissertations according to whether members are only men, only women, or men and women, we see that doctoral theses were overseen in equal percentage by both only women and (41.35 %) and only men (41.35 %). Mixed direction reached 17.29 %. The average of directors was 1.4 per theses. 157 had a sole director, 105 had two directors, and 4 had three directors.

When analysing the gender in terms of both authors and directors, it is observed that women were supervised by other women in 44 %, by men in 40 % and by mixed groups in 16 %. While men were directed by other men in 43.96 %, by women in 36.26 % and by mixed groups in 19.78 % (Table 4).

There are no strictly significant evidences that show connections between the variables of gender, author and director ($x2= 15\ 878$, $\rho= 0.45$).

Table 4. Correlation between the gender of authors and directors

		Gender of directors		
		Only women	**Only men**	**Mixed**
Gender of authors	**Women**	77	70	28
	Men	33	40	18
	Total	110	110	46

In the dissertations compiled, 117 different descriptors were found. The *translation and interpreting* descriptor was introduced in 22.7 % of the PhD theses, becoming in the most used keyword. This is followed by *teaching of languages* (7.7 %) and *applied linguistics* (5 %) (Table 5).

Table 5. Most frequently used descriptors (n ≥ 5).

Descriptors	Frequency	Percentage
Translation and interpreting	132	22.7 %
Teaching of languages	45	7.7 %
Applied linguistics	29	5.0 %
Philology	28	4.8 %
Language and literature	27	4.6 %
Language and culture	21	3.6 %
Linguistics	21	3.6 %
Arabic philology	20	3.4 %
Bilingualism	13	2.2 %
Languages	11	1.9 %
Lexicography	11	1.9 %
Literary analysis	8	1.4 %
History of literature	8	1.4 %
Semantics	8	1.4 %
Sociolinguistics	8	1.4 %
Phonetics	7	1.2 %
Lexicology	7	1.2 %
Syntax and syntactic analysis	7	1.2 %
Bibliometrics	6	1.0 %
Textual criticism	6	1.0 %
Comparative law	6	1.0 %
Phonology	5	.9 %
Synchronic linguistics	5	.9 %

Figure 4 allows us to identify how descriptors are connected in accordance with the co-appearances in the doctoral dissertations. For example, the *Arabic linguistics* descriptor is associated with keywords on history and lexicon. Those PhD theses with *higher education* descriptor are exclusively linked to curricula related to applied linguistics and translation and interpreting.
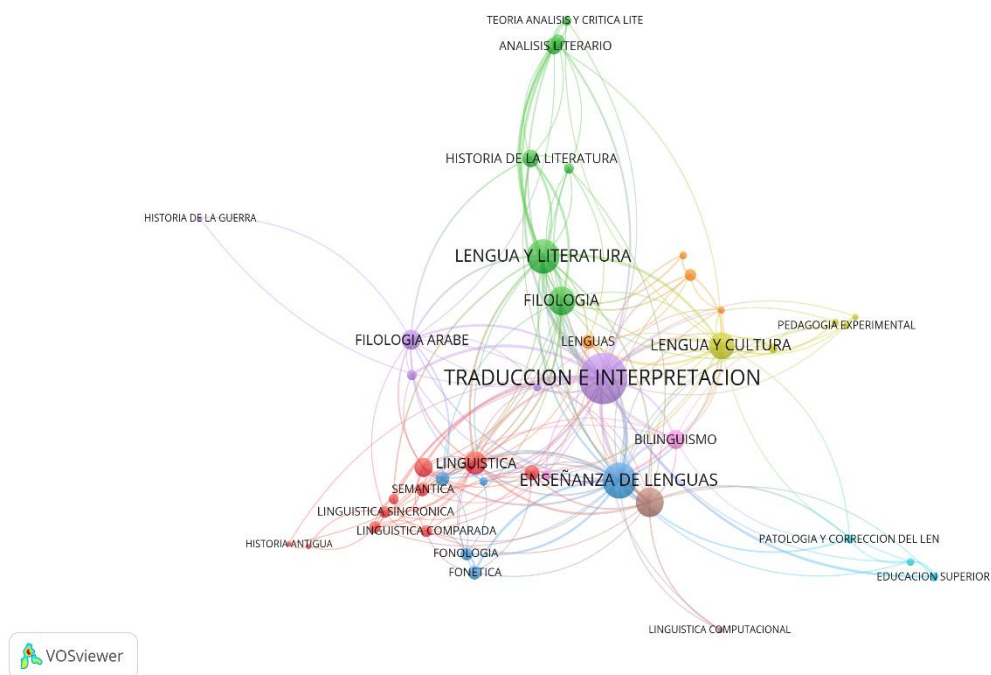
Figure 4. Descriptors network

4. Conclusions

This study presents a comparative analysis concerning the production of doctoral dissertations on FL conducted at the Andalusian public universities from 2010 to 2021.

Among the most remarkable results, a decrease in the doctoral production on FL was found at Andalusian universities as of 2016. This data should lead to study the reasons behind such phenomenon.

The Universidad de Málaga and Universidad de Granada are the leading institutions as to doctoral production in FL. Together they generate 48.1 % of all the PhD theses on FL.

40 % of directors are transient, that is, they have solely supervised one doctoral dissertation. Furthermore, there is no evidence of any kind of bias regarding the gender of authors. Nevertheless, the authorship reveals that FL is a feminised field (at least in the production of doctoral theses), because women are nearly twice as numerous as men. In addition, it has been confirmed that mixed co-directions are unusual in this area, given that the largest percentage of dissertations has been carried out under sole supervision.

Acknowledgements

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