



Universidad de Jaén

Facultad de Ciencias Sociales
y Jurídicas

Trabajo Fin de Grado

**THE USE OF ENGLISH AS A
VEHICLE OF COMMUNICATION
IN THE WORLD OF TOURISM.
AN APPROACH TO THE
SPANISH SITUATION**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this Final Degree Project is to carry out an analysis of the English language in Spain and its companies, comparing data with other member countries of the European Union. Focusing mainly on the business environment, with data obtained from the CIS or world rankings such as English Proficiency, reflecting the needs, quality and characteristics of English in our country and its companies. After highlighting these data, the strengths and weaknesses of Spanish development in this language will be highlighted in order to develop a proposal that seeks to improve the weakest aspects highlighted.

Key words: *English, Spain, Globalisation, Companies, Training.*

RESUMEN

Este Trabajo de Fin de Grado está realizado con el objetivo de realizar un análisis del idioma inglés en España y en sus empresas, comparando datos con otros países miembros de la Unión Europea. Centrándose sobre todo en el ámbito empresarial, con datos obtenidos del CIS o de rankings mundiales como English Proficiency, que reflejen las necesidades, la calidad y las características del inglés en nuestro país y sus empresas. Tras poner dichos datos en evidencia, se resaltarán las fortalezas y debilidades del desarrollo español en este idioma a fin de desarrollar una propuesta que persiga mejorar los aspectos más débiles resaltados.

Palabras clave: Inglés, España, Globalización, Empresas, Formación.

INTRODUCTION

To question the tremendous relevance of having a high level of English language skills in today's world - more specifically in the business and corporate world - seems difficult, to say the least. The change of mentality and the adaptation to an increasingly globalized world make this characteristic a fundamental piece for any entity that wants to join this globalized commerce. Negotiation with all its nuances and the expression of the company's values are key elements when carrying out any type of global exchange. There are three main reasons for this need: competitive pressure - to communicate with a wide range of players to make the business work; the globalization of tasks and resources - with geographically dispersed workforces working towards the same goals; and finally, the management of international mergers and acquisitions - where nuances are critical to whether or not a deal is done (Neeley, 2016).

From a purely historical point of view, the ability to speak a second language was relegated to members of the social and economic elite. However, as we shall see in the following pages, the spread of the British Empire and, later, of the United States of America transformed its influence into a global fact. The role of globalization and industrialization, driven by the momentum and access of globalization technologies, have only accentuated the process.

English became the international English, what is known as the *lingua franca*, that is to say, it fulfills the function of being a language of all and for all, without the need to belong to a particular State: it becomes the English of business.

Indeed, some of the countries that have benefitted the most and quicker from joining this trend are some of the nations with the highest English level as a second language proficiency - such as the Netherlands or Sweden (EF EPI, 2021), which have profitted tremendously in the global market.

There is no doubt that global economies are those that are more dynamic, resilient to economic ups and downs and more likely to succeed in the future. To deny that a company's inclusion in this global market has more benefits than drawbacks is to be out of touch with the

socio-economic and macroeconomic data that affect our companies and the nations with which we interact.

Despite being at possibly its lowest since its conception, the European Union is considered a success on many levels, but certainly on the commercial level. The links between companies from different nations, markets and cultures born out of this union have proved to be tremendously beneficial, leading to solid and sustained growth of the companies involved.

But it is not only the existence of supra-national or supra-continental agreements that is enough to join the global market: it is absolutely necessary to have a common language with which to communicate between all of them, a common nexus of union, one might say. In this way, the ease, speed and consistency of trade relations will reach their greatest heights of success and longevity. The English language is this language and not reaching satisfactory levels in Spanish companies will condition - in the same way that it has already been doing - their possibilities of achieving their objectives and even their long-term survival.

CHAPTER 1: PRELIMINARY IDEAS ON ENGLISH AND GLOBALIZATION

1. CURRENT STATUS OF ENGLISH AS A LANGUAGE AND ITS HISTORY

A new word is added to the Oxford English Dictionary every two hours. English is the third most widely spoken mother tongue in the world, with more than a thousand years of history. It is spoken as a native language by more than 375 million people in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia and Canada, among others, and serves as a second language to approximately 1.5 billion people, making it the "global language" or "lingua franca".

How has this situation of global and cultural dominance come about? The oldest forms of English are those of so-called Old English or Anglo-Saxon. English is a West Germanic language with origins in the Anglo-Frisian dialects brought to Britain in the 5th century by Germanic invaders from various parts of what is now north-west Germany, southern Denmark and the northern Netherlands. This is what is known as the first stage of its formation as a language. Middle English comes from the second phase and corresponds to the Viking

invasions of the British Isles, the Norman Conquest and Latin as the language of the Church. Finally, what we call Modern English appears in the third and last phase, which extends from the 16th century to the present day. It is characterised by the famous "Great Vowel Shift", which is a lengthening and adjustment of vowel sounds, brought about by the invention of the printing press and the subsequent generalisation of communication derived from it and other mass media such as radio.

The geostrategic importance that England acquired from the 16th century onwards at a global level helped to consolidate this language as the basis for economic transactions worldwide. In the 19th century, under the reign of Queen Victoria, its extension and use reached unprecedented heights, as the country had become a world power with a presence on all continents thanks to its colonies.

The process of further expansion was already underway in the post-World War II period with the involvement of the United States in the continent and continued during the so-called Cold War. Thanks to the omnipresence of the United States in Europe and its global economic and cultural hegemony, English became the predominant language in international politics, commercial exchanges, all kinds of sciences, the world of cinema and television, pop culture...

We have arrived at a world that speaks English for any aspect of daily life, any business meeting, anywhere in the world. As linguist David Crystal (Lisburn, 1941) rightly points out, this language has not become the most widely used language in the world because of its simplicity or its ease of learning, but because of the sheer power of the people who spoke it and continue to speak it. (Crystal, 2003).

Naming the word power in this context, Crystal comes to refer to military power (the world's leading military power), economic power (again, the greatest power in this sense), or political power. In today's globalized world, it is easier to adapt and adopt this language, rather than trying to impose its own as the new norm; a clear example is the case of China, almost certainly the world's next number one power. The Chinese are adapting to this norm and devoting enormous resources to training their population in English as a second language.

We are going to introduce the concept of international language by way of conclusion and synthesis of this first section. The Royal Spanish Academy defines language as a system

of verbal and almost always written communication, specific to a human community. The international concept refers to that which belongs to or relates to two or more nations. In accordance with these two definitions, we classify English as an international language. Robert Phillipson (Scotland, 1942) - professor in the English department of Copenhagen Business School - explains the concept as "a language used by people of different origins or nations. According to him, "there are many international languages used on all continents, in addition to the so-called lingua francas" (Phillipson, 2002).

Once again, the Royal Spanish Academy defines a lingua franca as a language which is a mixture of two or more languages and by which the natives of different peoples understand each other. Webster's Dictionary, on the other hand, considers lingua franca "as any of various languages used as common or commercial tongues among peoples of diverse speech". Speakers who use a common language in a context where there is no shared language use a third language in order to establish a communicative process. This third language is known as a lingua franca.

Looking closely at this map, there is evidence in which non-English speaking countries have a higher or lower level of English, studied as a second language in most cases. Continental Europe is where this level is significantly higher, thanks to a better education system, probably due to the influence of the UK's proximity to and/or membership of the European Union (until 2017/18) and an earlier introduction to the education system than other nations. Other areas such as South East Asia also have relatively high levels, confirming the global trend in the increase and importance of training in this international language.

Going back to the initial data and referencing data from the British Council, 375 million people speak English as a first language in a group of countries represented by the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland. There is, however, a large group of nations where this language is used as a vehicle for communication between groups of people who do not have a common language, such as Hong Kong, Malaysia, India or Singapore, among others. The following map shows the countries belonging to these two groups at a glance, in order to appreciate the extent not so much in terms of population, but geographically, and to understand the scale of the situation:

-Areas or means of application

We are interested in highlighting in which media this language is present and in what way, without leaving aside, succinctly, the motivations behind it:

- **Scientific and technological:** as Carlos Duarte, an oceanographer at King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia, explains: English is the language of science, as Latin was and, for a time, French (never Spanish). Fluency in English is essential to access research results, which are mostly published in English, and to share the results of our own research. For Rafael Matesanz, director of the National Transplant Organisation, knowledge of English is also of vital importance: English has been, is and will be the common language of scientists and, of course, of those of us involved in transplantation, all over the world. Without it, both the exchange of knowledge and scientific learning would be much more difficult; those who do not know it are severely limited in terms of their work possibilities. (El Mundo, 2015)

- **Economic:** undoubtedly one of the most relevant and extensive areas, key to the subject of this project. Knowledge of this language can almost certainly be a determining factor when it comes to closing a business deal, or even starting one, better salary and/or employment opportunities, and even be the key to successfully placing a product or service on the global market. The organisations and companies that are a fundamental part of the origin and extension of the globalization process are mostly based in countries belonging to the first group mentioned earlier in this section, and therefore have English as their mother tongue or working language. It could be said that they have invented the rules of the game and, therefore, it is necessary to join them in order to participate.

- **History:** as seen earlier in this section, we cannot fail to address its historical origins and its expansion thanks to the United Kingdom and the United States. Its extension, therefore, and as we have said, is global.

- **Educational:** related to the training context, aiming at learning tasks and skills.

- **Personal:** the medium of personal, family and related relationships.

These and others are the media where language is of central importance. However, we cannot consider them as independent fields, as they are interrelated with each other. It is not

surprising that business opportunities arise from working relationships, or that an academic (educational) relationship leads to a personal relationship.

By way of summary, we can conclude that the inevitable social, cultural and economic extension of the English-speaking nations has decisively conditioned the use of their own language, English, as the only vehicle of communication at a global level for all types of groups and individuals. Trends in population formation and growth support the future supremacy of this current scenario. This introduces the next point to be made about globalization and the promotion of English language learning.

2. HOW GLOBALIZATION PROMOTES ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING.

To begin this section, let us first define the concept of globalization, which, as befits a work of this nature, will appear frequently. According to the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language, globalization is understood as the "worldwide diffusion of modes, values or trends that promotes uniformity".of tastes and customs".

Likewise, voice corresponds to the definition of a "process by which economies and markets, with the development of the The "global dimension of communication technologies is becoming more and more dependent on external markets and less and less on government regulation".

It is very important to identify that we are within this framework of globalization, as it has brought about a radical change in the way the world is organised and communicated in our century, especially in the field of business, which is what we are trying to focus on.

The significant change that has taken place in the world of business and economics has made it absolutely essential to master the English language. All of this, without forgetting that the massive irruption of information technologies has led to the entry of a new and enormous vocabulary exclusively in English, of unavoidable use.

For the labour market, knowledge of this language as a second language and, even more so, its mastery can be the key to finding a job or accessing higher positions of greater relevance and weight in certain companies, especially those with a presence in foreign markets.

Adecco - the world's leading multinational company specialising in recruitment, employing 700,000 people worldwide every day, 30,000 of whom work in Spain - says that around 86% of the jobs it handles require candidates with English. In the words of Adecco Professional's operations director, César Castel, "even if a company doesn't need it in the short or medium term, they require English to be prepared. English opens many job doors and is strategic in the internationalisation of Spanish companies" (González, 2012).

In the context of globalization, more and more companies need to open up to foreign markets in order to offer their products and services. For the successful implementation of this process, English as a vehicle for communication is considered an essential element. As we have highlighted above, the increasing weight of emerging countries such as China, India or Brazil -English as an international business language has not diminished the importance of English as an international business language.

At this point, one might ask: what has been the impact of globalization and the English language on both culture and language itself in the case of Spain? We can point to some of the milestones that would mark or reflect the impact of globalization and its onset in Spain. The opening of the 1959 Stabilisation Plan "was a set of economic measures approved by the Spanish government in 1959. The aim of the plan was the stabilisation and liberalisation of the Spanish economy. It meant a break with Franco's policy of autarky and made possible the beginning of an era of economic growth in the country during the decade of 1960" (Sánchez Lissen & Sanz Díaz, 2015). Another major milestone in this process was the signing of the Europe Agreement by which Spain became a member of the European Union in 1986. As a member country, it therefore gains access to the free movement of goods, services and people between member countries, and benefits from all the trade agreements that the EU has with other nations such as the USA and China (first and second trading partners, see the corresponding annex for a list of all the trade agreements that exist between the EU and its trading partners).

Despite the fact that there is no great geographical proximity between Spain and the United Kingdom - with the exception, of course, of Gibraltar - we have experienced the impact of its culture partly through the teaching of the English language in public and private educational centres, or in the media, entertainment (music, cinema, video games, etc.), in an unstoppable manner. It is not surprising to see the use of English words that, despite having a direct translation, have penetrated our culture through the aforementioned channels, in English itself. Words such as app, like, marketing, coach, post, blog...: this list is constantly growing.

We can thus conclude that globalization, not only as a commercial process, but also as a cultural one, has played a decisive role in the expansion of the English language.

CHAPTER TWO: ENGLISH IN SPAIN, IN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND IN THEIR COMPANIES

1. ENGLISH IN SPAIN.

First of all, we must put Spain in context with respect to its closest neighbours, that is, of course, in comparison with our partners in the European Union. We are going to study and make this comparison thanks to the data provided by the British Council in a research named “The future demand for English in Europe, 2025 and beyond”. In addition, we will study the data provided by the latest EPI report produced by EF (Education First) in 2021, as a support measure and complement to the one given by the British Council. Then, we will proceed to study the Spanish case in depth, supported by data from the latest CIS survey (2021 barometer), with the intention of extracting the relevant conclusions with which to extrapolate to the business sphere, which will be dealt with in later sections.

1. 1. SPAIN AND THE EUROPEAN UNION.

Spanish is the official and most widely spoken language in Spain. It is the mother tongue of 89% of Spaniards (as there are other co-official languages in several regions).

Originally, the language studied as the first foreign language in Spanish schools was French. This was mainly because France was our closest and most important neighbour and because English had not yet fully developed into the global language it is today, although it is also true that trade was not on the global scale it is today.

Of course, we cannot forget the political situation in Spain until the end of the Dictatorship, its consequences on trade and, therefore, on the need or not for the study of a language such as English. It was precisely with the opening up of Spain in the 1960s that Franco's regime implemented measures to open up the country in favour of a protectionist tax. It was through this gradual advance, its impact on international trade and, especially, on tourism and the massive arrival of tourism from Anglo-Saxon countries, that change would gradually come. It was in the following decade, the 1970s, when English was established as the first language to be studied in Spanish public education, leaving French aside. This late incorporation and evident disadvantage should be highlighted as an explanatory factor for the data we are about to see. There is a clear difference with, for example, Sweden, where, despite not being a mother tongue, English as a lingua franca is used daily by 39% of Swedes and is spoken by almost 90% of them.

Thanks to “The future demand for English in Europe, 2025 and beyond” and the tables extracted from this document, we can state categorically that English is the most studied language as a second language in the European Union as a whole.

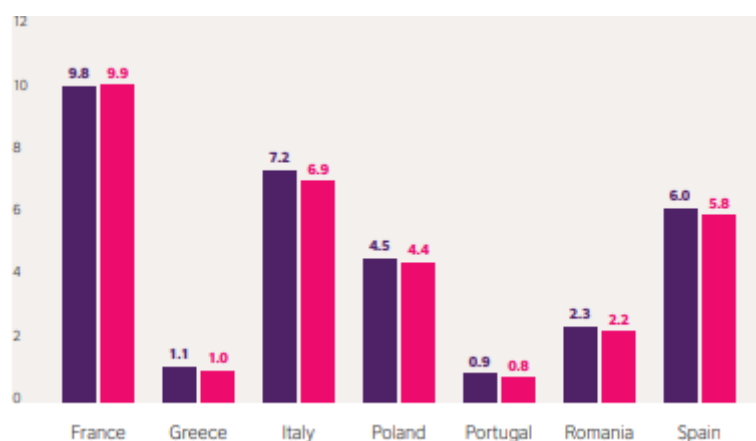


Figure 1: Number of students learning English in state education by country, 2015 to 2025 (millions)

These data reflect that most English learners first receive instruction in school, and the demand for English in school is very much affected by the birth rate. As shown in Figure 1, the analysis of population change in the seven countries indicates that the fall in demand from the school population (generally aged six to 18) is one million (31.8 million in 2015 to 30.8 million in 2025). This represents a 3.2 per cent fall in total, but 0.2 per cent in the Spanish case.

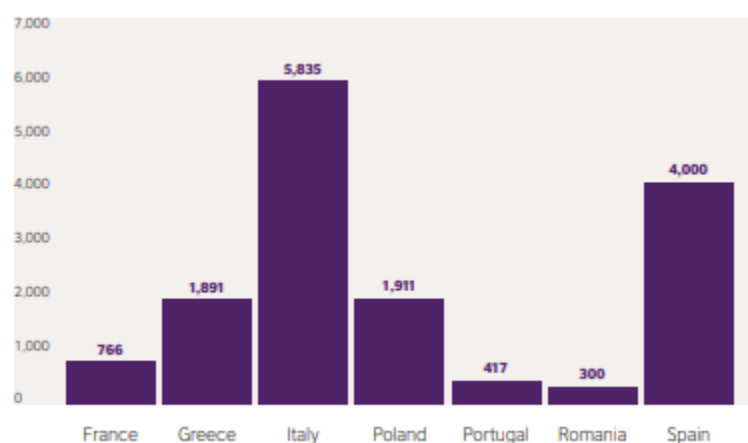


Figure 2: : Estimated number of private English language schools by country

“The private English language teaching (ELT) market in many countries is made up of hundreds of small independent schools or chains, often located within a town, region or country – for example, Speak Up has over 25 centres in Poland. Internationalisation and franchising in the private English language teaching market is a growing trend, where global franchises are operating across countries and borders. Wall Street English has 70 centres in Italy, 49 in France, 34 in Portugal and two in Spain. Berlitz operates in France, Greece, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain. Many franchise operators are actively recruiting for investors in growing markets (Speak Up, Wall Street English, Direct English, Berlitz). There is no reliable source of data for this sector. Figure 8 brings together results from a variety of sources (sector associations, directories, English language school search websites, etc) in an attempt to estimate the number of individual language schools for each country (for chains with multiple outlets, each school has been counted).

Interviewees suggested that the private language school sector thrived because many school systems still take an old-fashioned approach, emphasising grammar and formal English, rather than teaching students to speak the language confidently, with good listening skills and the ability to use appropriate language styles for different contexts. In the private language teaching sector, class sizes tend to be smaller and streamed by ability and age. Private sector

teachers tend to make more use of English in the classroom and encourage spoken communication set in 'real-life' situations” (British Council, 2018).

But while the number of English language learners is very high, the figure needs to be put in context in relation to the level of the language in general in Spain, compared to the European Union. We will use EF's EPI 2021 report (English Proficiency Index, Education First) as a source. Without going into too much detail, Spain is ranked 33rd in the world and 25th of 35 in Europe, in what is considered a moderate level of proficiency (very high, high, moderate, low or very low). We are behind our French neighbours (31st place) or ahead of Italy (35th), with a similar level of resources, geographical position, historical context, etc., or behind role models such as the Netherlands (rank 1) or Denmark (rank 3).

The data for this sixth edition are calculated from two millions test takers who completed three different EF English tests in 2021. To use the EF EPI effectively, readers must understand its methodology. The EF EPI is created each year from a set of English language tests taken the previous year by hundreds of thousands of adults around the world.

1. 1. 2. THE SPANISH SITUATION.

Finally, and thanks to the 2016 CIS Barometer, we will carry out a more detailed analysis of the Spanish case in order to introduce the business framework that concerns us.

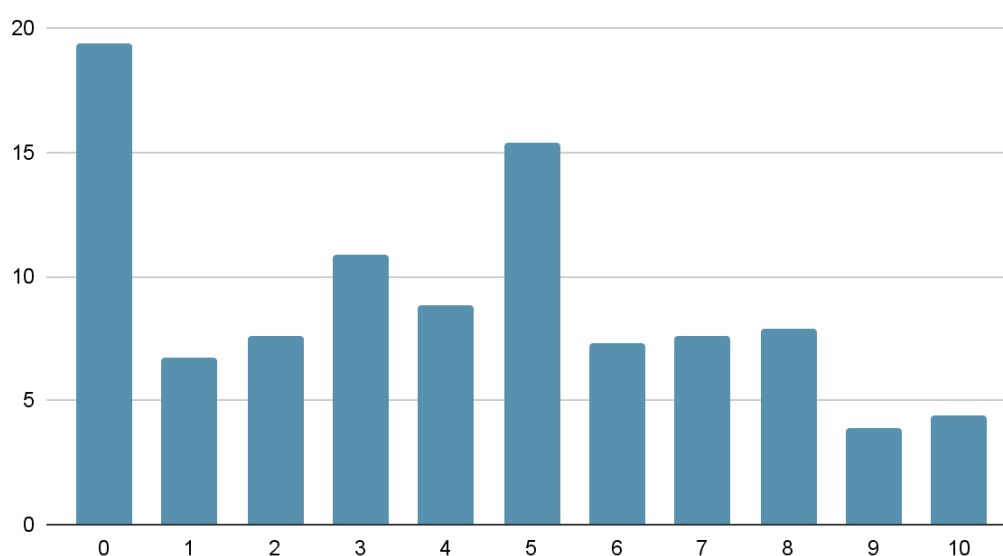
The 2016 CIS barometer contains some questions aimed at finding out various sociological data: some of them are of great use to us here. The set of questions studied for this work and their data appear in the corresponding appendix. Let us look at some interesting ideas:

- With regard to the following languages, could you tell me if...?

Respondents answer that 25.5 of them speak and write English, but the level of fluency or grammar is not specified. It also emerges that 61.4 percent of the 2474 respondents neither speak nor write English.

- Participate in a conversation in which you have to present your opinion in a nuanced way, arguing and refuting opinions.

From this question - which is closer to the business environment, i.e. the ability and capacity to hold more formal conversations on specific and/complex topics - we obtain the following relevant results: 18.8 of respondents say they can hold this type of conversation with little difficulty, compared to 4.2 who say they are not able to do so. As it is logical, these are very extreme data: let us see all the answers obtained reflected in a scale of values from one to ten, with 0 being no difficulty at all and 10 being very difficult.



Source: Barómetro CIS (2016)

Figure 3: Percentage of respondents with the ability to hold a complex conversation

Although at first glance there may not seem to be a huge difference, it is worth noting that the percentage of people who say they have less difficulty in maintaining this type of conversation (0 to 4) is 44.6 percentage points, compared to 55.3 percentage points for the group with the greatest difficulty in achieving this goal (5 to 10). This indicates that just over a third - even less if we lower the level of difficulty required - consider themselves capable of holding a conversation in English of a certain complexity, more or less the type of conversation that may be required in a business environment, which does not seem to be a necessarily high or acceptable number.

There are also some noteworthy findings from the publication. For example, 34.3 say that learning English is quite difficult and 44.8 say that it is not very difficult (question 14c).

- Are you currently learning a foreign language?

In contrast to the only two options of yes or no, the large number of respondents who answer NO to studying a new foreign language stands out. It turns out to be curious in the globalised context we are studying and perhaps a reflection of the data we will see for the company. We should not forget that the CIS barometer presents a representative and proportional sample of the Spanish population as a whole: we will close the spectrum for companies later on.

This question is followed by the fact that 77.9 percent of them have chosen English as their language of study, in line with the previous data (question 16a). Finally, and to conclude with the CIS data,

- Could you tell me the main reason why you are learning English?

Overwhelming is the main reason: work is the main motivation or primary circumstance for learning a foreign language, English in our case. So much so that it is the reason for 61.2 percent of all respondents, with enjoying learning a new language being a distant second with 26.3 points of the total.

However, one might ask whether the category of education would be part of the category of work. That is, are students in the Spanish education system, where English is compulsory up to Baccalaureate, included in this sample used? It would not be out of place to question this, as the number of students who are taking compulsory English is high and should be included in the survey. The CIS response is as follows:

“The universe of the survey is the population from which information is to be obtained. CIS surveys generally have as their universe, or target population, the population with Spanish nationality over 18 years of age, (-). Although the size and characteristics of the sample vary depending on the objectives of a survey, CIS surveys usually have a minimum sample of 2,500 individuals.”

Therefore, this circumstance, which could significantly bias our data, is not reflected in the barometer we have used.

1. 2. ENGLISH IN SPANISH COMPANIES.

Having carried out the analysis at the general level of the Spanish case, we now proceed to focus on the framework of the company. We will basically use three sources of data to justify this section: firstly, the Dexway report on the level of English in companies in Spain. Very similar to this, the EF EPI report, but also focused on the business environment. As a complement to this analytical data, we will provide a more human aspect with the information provided by Graham Standing, an English teacher in companies for more than two decades.

1. 2. 1. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA AT GLOBAL LEVEL.

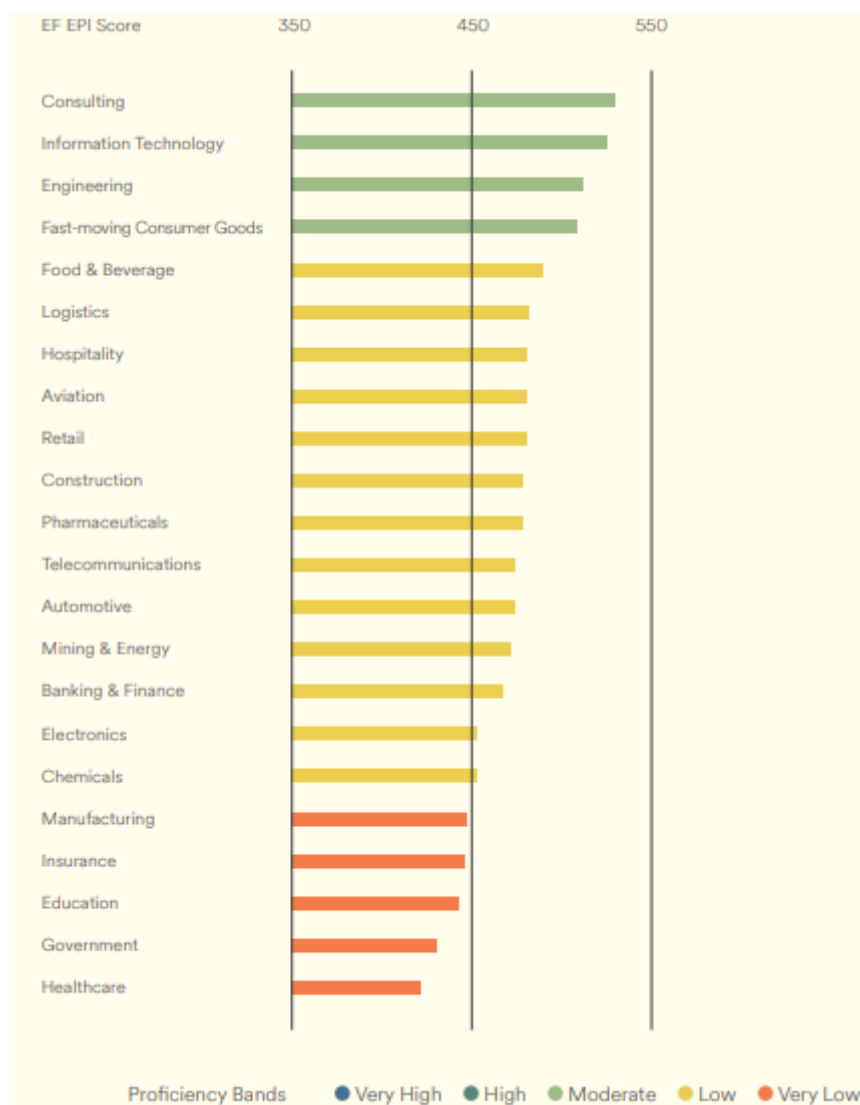
Quickly, and for reference, we will introduce the organisations behind the two reports used.

- Dexway is the specialised online language training division of Computer Aided e-Learning / CAE Computer Aided USA, a pioneering international company in the development of technological solutions for training. Since 1981, the company has been characterised by its continuous advancement in the application of technology and the most innovative pedagogical methods to improve learning processes.
- The EF English Proficiency Index for Enterprises (EF EPI-c) is an assessment of the English language proficiency of workers internationally. This third edition of the study captures English proficiency levels in 40 countries and 16 industries and highlights best practices in a variety of contexts. The EF EPI-c is a complement to the EF EPI report, which assesses the average English language proficiency of adults worldwide according to a separate set of test results. Together, these reports provide a comprehensive picture of the English language proficiency of adults around the world.
- Graham Standing, a graduate in Arts and Iberian and Latin Studies from the University of Southampton, is a professional from London (UK), dedicated to translation and English language training in companies in Spain. He has worked in this field for more than twenty years with companies such as the paper company ENCE and the shipping company *Factoría Naval de Marín*.

To quote Tsedal Neely again, "unrestricted multilingualism generates inefficiency even among the most dedicated and skilled workers. It can lead to disagreements in crossborder

interactions, lost sales and a host of other serious problems that can jeopardise competitiveness" (Neeley, 2016).

According to the EPI EF 2021 Enterprise data, Spain would rank 33rd and at a moderate level. It is relatively easy to explain by finding a higher density of professionals with advanced English studies, in addition to other fields, in the business world. The report also provides us with interesting data on the level of English, but this time segregated into the different industries that we will find.



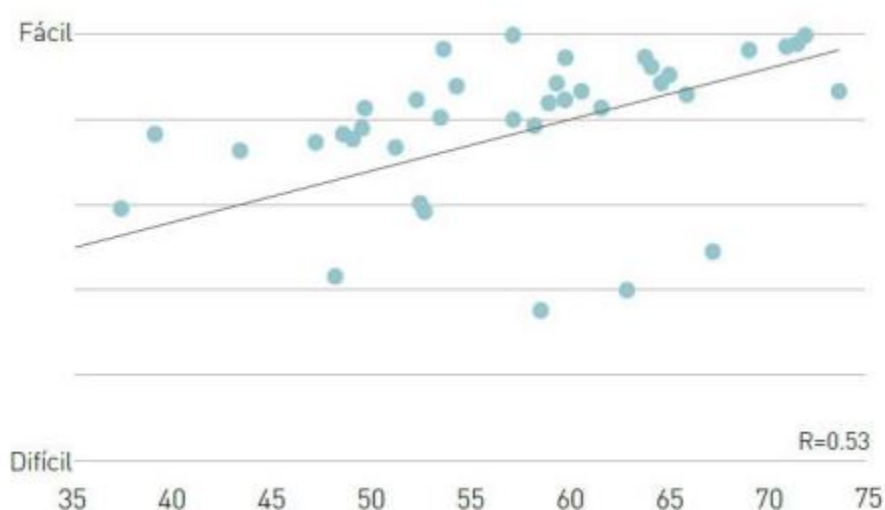
Source: EF 2021

Figure 4: EF English Proficiency Index by Industry

We see some conclusions that might seem illogical, such as that an industry like aviation - tremendously exposed internationally - has a significantly lower level than the rest or the global average.

Even more interesting is the case of banking and finance - international by definition - which appears at the bottom of our list. In line with Neely's point, companies with employees (and managers) with high English language skills will have greater access to buyers, customers and suppliers, broadening their possible scope of action. Not to mention better communication between geographically dispersed employees, which is especially important for multinationals.

This statement is in line with the following data taken from the EPI Companies report. The following table shows the correlation between the ease of doing business and the level of English in the company:



Source: World Bank

Figure 5: Reliability index for doing business

Looking superficially at the econometric data provided by the table, there is a readily apparent trend. Even at low levels - but with greater efficiency at levels above 60 (i.e. above the overall average for companies and most sectors) - these companies will have a significantly higher ease of doing business than the rest of their competitors. These are interestingly robust data from the World Bank, as the r-squared coefficient of determination is 0.53, which is a very high value for the volume and diversity of data processed. This graph only highlights what is

an open secret. The more English an organisation or company can handle, the better potential results it can obtain when accessing the global market. Without going any further and, within the European Union, the list of intra- and extra-EU trade agreements is overwhelming (full list in the corresponding annex), for which it is necessary to have the required communication skills.

Continuing with the relevant data from the report, it should be noted that the level of English language skills of managers and/or senior managers is lower than that of middle management or even employees (associates). This aspect may be explained by the fact that, in order to reach high positions of governance in the company, more time is required (older people), or because workers can dedicate less time to training in English due to the volume of tasks and responsibilities assigned to them.

To close the global business section, two interesting facts: 41% of business executives consider that knowledge of English benefits their company in the global market. 28% of them also point to access to new target groups of customers, partly because of the positive impact on the company's image. It is also interesting to note that 60% of companies consider that they have lost business opportunities because they were unable to develop agreements due to a lack of an adequate (high) level of English.

1. 2. 2. THE SPANISH SITUATION.

In this section, we will analyse the outlook for Spanish companies from various sources. The Dexway report highlights how difficult it is for employees of companies in Spain to learn English. Seventy-five percent of them consider that they should improve this skill. As we saw with CIS data, 40 per cent of Spaniards claim to speak a second language, but this figure should be taken with caution, given the existence of four co-official languages (Catalan, Basque, Galician and Aranese). Twenty-two percent of employees say they are able to hold a fluent conversation in English. Statistics from the ASTEX study - an international company specialising in language training - show more worrying figures. The study works with a sample of 14,423 executives from 125 Spanish companies and groups them according to the CEFR categories.

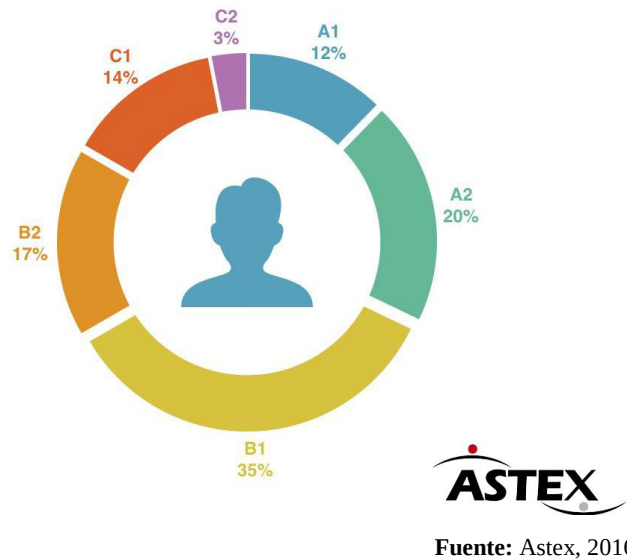


Figure 6: Astex International Index.

This is, in detail, what the study has shown:

- **LEVELS A1 AND A2 (BEGINNERS).** Between them, they account for 32 per cent, i.e. almost a third: a third of Spanish executives have a beginner's level of communication in English. Of the 14,423 people surveyed, 4,634 executives fall into these low levels of proficiency. These are professionals in whom a lot of time and resources will have to be invested in order for them to reach an optimal or desirable level. The company will have to ask itself whether it is profitable to carry out such an operation, as if it were another company investment. Even consider the investment in terms of rate of return: if the investment is more costly than the possible rates of return, it should not be undertaken. Even more questionable will be the viability of such training in terms of the potential time required, whether it will continue with the person within the company, etc.: given the changing business climate - where mobility is becoming and will become the norm in the short term - it will not be considered cost-effective to provide training to a person who may be leaving the organisation in the near future.
- **LEVEL B1.** Also known as intermediate level. A total of 4,976 executives fit into this category, no less than another third of the total number of participants. Adding the previous categories together, we already have two thirds of executives who do not even reach the famous B2 level, considered the optimum level to function properly. At this

point, we can already see that the level of the executives is worryingly low, due to the number of them who have a level that is insufficient for the reality of business.

- LEVEL B2. Only 2,407 participants reach this level, which companies consider to be the desired level. This represents a meagre 16.7% of the total. We detect a major problem here, starting with the fact that it is risky, to say the least, to assume that the B2 level is sufficient to be able to function fluently in the international market. As the report shows, many companies claim to solve this problem with a rigorous selection process, where English is key. However, it is well known that, although this should be the case, many of the diplomas or accreditations presented by poor candidates - and accepted by companies - are not what they seem, nor are they really a guarantee of language level and quality. Continuing with the study, if companies - and, in particular, human resources departments or managers - were really rigorous in the selection process, it is possible that candidates would be discarded from the process. It is something of a myth that companies in Spain consider a competent level of English to be discriminatory when it comes to successfully passing selection processes. This is one of the ways of explaining some of the data reflected here and in other documents in this paper. Numerous companies justify the reduction or elimination of their English language training programmes in this way, once again hiding behind the cut-off they claim to impose in their selection processes with respect to this aptitude.
- LEVELS C1 AND C2. These are the ones that should really be considered as optimal levels by companies, as they are definitely much more convenient to be able to initiate and maintain real and solid relationships with companies in other locations or markets.

Here we have 1,965 executives at C1 level and 411 at C2 level, considered by far the unattainable bilingualism - expert level. Both account for 17 per cent of the total.

It is at this level that executives are really able to negotiate in this language, to move abroad - whether to English-speaking or non-English-speaking countries - or to work in a foreign country and, as has been said, to build long-term, stable, marketable relationships. Perhaps the point has not yet been reached where this level is a necessary requirement, but the incoming commercial and business world will regard it as a basic skill, and those who do not reach the standards that will be required may be excluded. Clearly we cannot and do not need

this level of English at all levels of our business, but it would be very important at the executive level. B2 is likely to be sufficient for most employees to be competent in tasks requiring occasional use of English. Nor should we apply this scale to all business classifications, as not all have sufficient turnover for international expansion, or have contacts (testers) abroad. However, given the globalising climate and the trend of larger multinationals buying up companies, it seems clear that this will become a crucial issue in the business world of the future.

1. 2. 3. TRAINING IN SPANISH COMPANIES.

It is not necessary to look far to realise that Spanish companies are currently at a disadvantage. Let's look at some ideas provided by professionals in the sector.

For María Luisa Blázquez, associate researcher at IESE Business School, "the level of Spanish entrepreneurs is not at all adequate to compete in the global market". The complications in accessing valuable market information or the slowdown in the internationalisation of the company are direct consequences of this problem. Employees are the image of the company, and limited language training can be a major burden on the company's image. According to the Barometer of the Business Climate in Spain 2021, the assessment of Spanish human capital is held back by their poor command of the language, as well as their oral and public speaking skills, skills that go hand in hand at many times.

It is also the most internationalised companies that have fared best in the context of the financial and economic crisis.⁸ Openness and the possibility of turning to less affected markets, or in a different way, has helped diversification, which is the key to business success. In the light of these data, we come to two conclusions: firstly, the level of English is not sufficient to be fluent in the world of international trade; and secondly, it is considered to be of vital importance for Spanish companies now and in the near future. This is where one of the solutions that companies have been employing for years comes into play, namely training courses in English in companies. In Graham Standing's experience, the business world began to detect this problem and to propose or initiate in-house training courses about thirty years ago. In Standing's view, the quality of the training provided is generally not good. The results obtained are not positive as a rule, since, according to the data that we have seen throughout

this work, they are not improved by in-company training. If the level of English has reached today's levels, says Standing, it is mainly because of the knowledge of English that the employee brings with him/her when he/she enters the company, but, in general, not because of what he/she learns in the company.

Janice Haywood - owner of the Business Learning Solutions English language school in Madrid - describes the current situation of English language teaching in companies as "scandalous". "Teachers arrive late, they are not prepared, they do not prepare the classes and they mix students of different levels". For Haywood, there are too many companies that have wanted to join the trend of in-company training, entering a business that they do not understand, nor do they have the experience or resources to offer a quality product and/or service (20 minutos, 2009).

These problems are corroborated by Standing, who, in his more than fifty years of accumulated experience, has a similar view. Companies are a bit lost in this area, but the main problem, Standing continues, is that as a general rule they are looking for cheap, short-term solutions. This tendency has also been accentuated during the past years of economic recession and is a good reflection of the mentality of short-termism of the Spanish businessman. It is at this moment that they have seen a solution to their problems, with reduced costs and supposed quality.

Spain is a booming destination for Erasmus and other programmes, with students coming from English-speaking countries. It is the first European country to receive students on the Erasmus programme.

This is where companies have seen a quick and cheap option, foreign students who can earn additional income for their stay in Spain by teaching these classes. Haywood says that this sector lacks the didactic knowledge necessary to teach a class. They come to them unprepared and do not adjust to the company's own context. Being a native speaker does not imply having the ability to teach the language better, even less so if you have not been trained to do so.

Peter Medgyes, author of the book *The Non-Native Teacher*, comments that "a teacher who is not a native speaker can be considered a better role model for his or her students, beyond the mere use of the language. If my students see that I can speak English fluently, and that I

have been able to learn English to such a level, they will think that they are capable too." (Medgyes, P, 2014).

For her part, Natasha Kennedy, director of TTMadrid, a company specialising in training English teachers, tells us that, in order to teach English, it is not only necessary to speak it. According to her, in many cases it is not taught to see the usefulness of the language in a practical way: Spanish people study English all their lives, but never leave the monotony of the grammatical aspect (20 minutos, 2009).

As mentioned above, Graham Standing worked for two large companies: the paper company ENCE and the shipping company Factoría Naval de Marín. From the interview with Standing we can corroborate the above statements. However, let us put a counterpoint to what has been said so far, as it seems that the case of ENCE has been successful. The company's annual export of pulp to the European market is 95 per cent. It is bold and wrong to attribute this export volume solely to the level of English of its employees and the success of its English language training programme, but it has undoubtedly been a driving factor. Standing claims that this percentage was significantly lower just before he joined the company. We do not have specific data, but what we are told is that the feedback he received during his twenty-three years at ENCE was very positive, and the average language level of the programme's participants increased significantly. But problems were also present in these two organisations, and this seems to be a trend in the Spanish sector.

Based on the experiences of the sourced used, the most recurrent problems are:

- Economic factor: there is a lack of resources or lack of intentionality on the part of the company, which means few hours, few teachers and few qualifications.
- Organisational factor (1): with the grouping of all participants in the same class, without differentiation by level
- Organisational factor (2): due to the lack of orientation on the part of companies. Thus, there is no definition of the objectives to be achieved, both in terms of level and type of knowledge. The English required by a pharmacist is not the

same as that required by an employee of an environmental engineering company.

- Location factor: courses are held at the workplace. Learners are not exempted from work-related distractions
- Circumstantial factor: it is not a priority, for most of them it is a training imposed by management. They are employees at a critical professional moment, with a very high volume of both professional and personal activity and they do not have the time required to learn a language. They receive maintenance English.

The sociological component, Standing argues, is very relevant and an important part of the problem. Training is imposed in most cases and is not accompanied by short-term benefits for the employee. The company will require the employee to continue his or her working life in the same way, but with the addition of English, the usefulness of which the employee may not be aware of. Moreover, the purpose of the training is questioned when the new generations starting out in the company are likely to be better trained.

The company does not usually define what kind of English it wants its employees to receive. General English does not always suit every company, employee or position. Nor does it seem to be specified how the language is to be taught and/or acquired, which, when added to the other factors we have presented, makes for a generally unusable cocktail.

CHAPTER THREE: PROPOSED TRAINING MODEL

Having studied the level of English that Spanish executives and companies have and the deficiencies that, as a general rule, are shown by the training decisions made in the

companies themselves, in this chapter we are going to propose some lines to follow in order to design a model that is better adapted to the needs of each company. In this way, we humbly aim to provide better results than those achieved today. In order to simplify the issue, we will follow a point-by-point outline and build on the mistakes that we have found to be most commonly repeated. Finally, we will try to propose solutions based on the recommendations of the sources consulted.

1. ANALYSIS OF THE COMPANIES'SITUATION.

The first question to be answered is: Do I need to know English? That is, do I have clients abroad, suppliers in non-Spanish-speaking countries or options or a need to enter foreign markets? This is crucial, because there is no point in investing in it if we are not really the kind of company that needs it. Another interesting question, seen from the point of view of demand, would be: Have I lost business opportunities because I do not have adequate communication skills? This will be the backbone of the process. If the answers are mostly affirmative, we would move on to the next step.

2. ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYEES'LEVEL OF ENGLISH.

It has to be determined whether the answers to the questions answered above are a consequence of a low level of communication of the organisation's components. It could be the case that affirmative answers are not linked to an improvement in the level of English as an appropriate solution. We will turn to an external agent, a professional. We must determine as accurately, as well as quickly and as accurately as possible the level of English of the company's participants in order to make the corresponding assessment. If, as a result of this assessment, we find that our level is indeed below market requirements, we will continue with the process.

3. DEFINITION OF THE OBJECTIVES TO BE ACHIEVED.

This is a crucial point. As Standing said, a major problem is not knowing where we want to go with this measure as a company. It will have to be determined:

- Level we realistically need and want to achieve
- Type of English required by each element of our organisation: it will be different in duration, intensity and content for each of the parties and people to whom it is addressed. No more "fish for all".
- Scope: how many organisational levels in the company do we need and want to include in the process? Do I need the forklift drivers in the warehouse to know the same English as the sales manager? It is crucial to put rationality first.
- Time horizon: determine objectively and cost-effectively -this applies to the questions above- when we want to reach the defined objective. This would be to avoid short-term thinking, as we would be plotting long-term investments in human capital in order to secure its effectiveness.

4. ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES.

Again, an important moment. Once we have defined what we want and in what way, we have to provide the resources for it. Intentions are of no use if we do not have the professionals and the means that are best suited to our case. We will evaluate the investment in financial terms and decide whether to carry it out. We will have to make a corresponding provision in the company's accounting budgets and we will have to inform the employees before making the decision. The factor of imposed training has had negative repercussions. Ç

5. PROGRESSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS.

While not so much in terms of language improvement - which will be relevant in 6 months or a year's time (to be determined by training professionals) - a focused analysis of employee satisfaction will be essential. It is of paramount importance to know whether they

agree with the location of the classes - whether at the workplace out of necessity or outside for greater impact - the flexibility and compatibility of the timetable, their perspective of the process, etc. We must have this information on who really receives and needs this training. If the target group is not satisfied with the process, we will have to change the direction of the process.

The question becomes relatively simple. It is only necessary to determine whether English language training is required for both the commercial and structural needs of our company; if so, we will have to define a plan of prudent objectives appropriate to the characteristics of the company and provide the necessary allocation of resources to achieve these goals with the help of professionals in the field.

CONCLUSIONS

As we have tried to detail throughout this Final Degree Project, the business world has to face a series of undeniable circumstances. Thus, it is evident that the economy is absolutely globalised: technology companies designing smartphones in California or Spain establish their production processes in China; Spain's exports are mainly to the United States, outside the European Union; the most widely used currencies in the world are the US dollar, the euro and the Japanese yen. Similarly, logistics companies are a key part of the global product market; autarkic economies have been reduced to a minimum, despite the rise of movements that, to a certain extent, go back to this line, such as Brexit or part of the discourse of the US former president, Donald Trump.

Spain and its companies are in a privileged geographical and institutional position (European Union). However, despite not standing out either positively or negatively in their command of English, they are not positioned in the way they need to be. And they will inexorably need it in the not-too-distant future. Although the new generations of Spaniards are completing their secondary and higher education with a better knowledge of the language, their command of the language is still not satisfactory. As a result, companies seem to have opted to lower their standards in this respect in their recruitment processes and the solutions they provide with their internal training courses can be considered a mere drop in the ocean, at best.

Fortunately, the business environment has the tools and the basis to turn the current situation around and put itself at a competitive advantage over its global counterparts in a relatively short period of time. If companies can one day become sufficiently aware of the vital importance of high English language skills and make it a priority for their business, a Final Degree Project like this will be a no-brainer. It is imperative, therefore, to eliminate the short-sighted mentality of many Spanish businessmen - not only in this aspect - and use a considerable part of the monetary, temporal and structural resources of their companies to get out of the current situation.

The solution to a better level of English for Spanish people and, consequently, for their companies, executives and employees does not lie solely with the firms as such. But they are an important part of a path to an improved future scenario. Working together with public institutions, the education system and other important bodies in the process, they can become a key part of a change that is as necessary as it is possible.

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