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English Teaching in Spain: The Reality of the Communicative Approach

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyze the reality of the communicative approach in English teaching as a foreign language in Spain. This study is made up of a theoretical framework from which several hypotheses have been elaborated and developed throughout the assignment. The methodology used for doing this involve the fulfillment of a survey by a representative part of the population, between 18 and 33 years old, with the purpose of knowing how the English classes are given in the three different kinds of Spanish educative institutions. The results obtained, are shown through graphics, and demonstrate that, in most cases, foreign languages classes in secondary education, were in the past and are nowadays, given in Spanish. They used to be and are unidirectional classes from teacher to student. These classes were focused on grammar and the course book, and they lacked audiovisual resources and new technologies. One of the most significant results exposed is the fact that students believe that they have reached a good level of English. However, they admit that they are not able to either communicate fluently with a native speaker or understand films in original version. Therefore, as a conclusion, it can be drawn out that the communicative approach has to be promoted in the classroom and cultural linguistic immersion must be facilitated. For this reason, it is essential that historical and literary contents are introduced and developed in the English classroom.

KEY WORDS

English language, language acquisition, communicative approach, compulsory secondary education, competences.

1. INTRODUCTION

In spite of the fact that the Spanish people have studied English for years, from school to University, it has been always said by several surveys that English is not well spoken in Spain. How is it possible that most Spanish speakers, according to The Center for Sociological Studies¹, are not capable of communicating on abroad, if English has become a lingua franca and it is studied for years in compulsory education system? Indeed several opinion polls, as The Euro-barometer² survey, on the language skills of European citizens and their attitudes towards language learning, shows that whereas half of the European citizens speak at least one other different language from their mother

¹ Centro de Investigaciones sociológicas.

² *Europeans and their Languages* Euro-barometer (2006)

tongue, only 27 percent of Spanish people can express themselves in it. In most European countries, the situation is very different. For instance, 89 percent of Swedish people, 87 percent of Dutch, 86 percent of Danish, 48 percent of Greek or 32 percent of Portuguese can speak English. According to these statistics presented in the latest Eurobarometer survey, which measures aspects of life in the European Union, the countries with the lowest percentage of English speakers in Europe are Andorra, Spain, Italy, France and Portugal. Only Hungarian, Czech and Bulgarian are worse speaking English than Spanish people. Therefore, we find that this situation has to be solved looking for reasons, maybe not only in teaching English in primary education by means of games or such similar activities, but also in secondary education, when studying English has become an indispensable competence in the way to a superior education.

From these premises, the aim of this study is to analyze actual teaching practice and the acquisition of English as foreign language in the secondary education classrooms in Spain, mainly in the last 15 years. This will be an attempt to clarify the origin of shortages in acquisition of competences in the English language in Spain. For doing so, it is important to investigate the relationship between several parameters and the results obtained in the acquisition of English as a foreign language. Through this study we want to explore the possible reasons why these results are not as good as in the majority of the other countries in Europe. The interest of this study is obvious in my case, because as a future teacher of English, I am really interested in knowing how I can improve teaching for avoiding this situation.

In order to find some causes of shortages in acquisition of abilities in the English language in Spain, the methodology involved the use of several questionnaires filled in by 200 people between 18 and 33 years old. In these questionnaires, according to the own polled people's perceptions, teaching and acquisition processes, not only in public but also private and concerted schools, are reflected. We have tried to establish the possible relationships between some parameters and the competences acquired by students. The results obtained, which will be analyzed in the corresponding part of the paper, show that the communicative method, which is supposed to be the most adequate for teaching languages, is rarely used. However, lessons become a kind of master class in which students listen to the teacher, repeat grammatical constructions and practice activities from the course book. Even more, in most of the cases, the English language is not used in the English lesson but instead Spanish is used. Therefore, one of the conclusions of this study is that there is a huge difficulty for carrying out the advised linguistic and cultural immersion which facilitates the acquisition of a foreign language.

With respect to the theoretical orientation, which constitutes section 2 of the paper, we have tried to offer a general panorama of the methodology used in the acquisition of foreign languages. We have tried to tackle most approaches, from the traditional 'grammar translation method' to the most recommended 'communicative method'. This one is based on the development of communicative competences as indispensable element for the integration in the foreign environment. Consequently, it is different from the traditional and sometimes boring, endless classes of phrasal verbs, vocabulary lists and verbal tenses. This communicative approach consists basically on integrating the essential grammatical knowledge together with other skills likewise indispensable such as verbal competence, reading comprehension and the capacity to write different kinds of texts suitable to specific situations. In order to outline this theoretical frame, I have consulted ideas developed by Jack C. Richards and Theodore S. Rodgers³, just to mention some of the most relevant authors.⁴

Following this, section 3 presents the methodology used for the analysis and section 4 presents the analysis of the results of the survey and commented answers. In section 5 conclusions will be explained. A copy of the given questions is enclosed in the appendix. Through graphics and pie charts, drawn results, grouped by variables like kind of school, language used in class, age of the students, etc, will be demonstrated. The age of the students can be a highly relevant aspect because it can give us a diachronic vision of the process, showing the evolution of the methodology used for teaching languages in the last 15 years. In this section 5, the experience acquired in the High school where I have been doing my practicum, will be mention briefly. This experience provides us with a real example of the methodology used in class nowadays. It is an attempt of approach to real data which, a priori, can be a bit arduous, if they are understood as mere statistics.

The last part of the analysis, except the references section, consists of the new challenges that, from my point of view, the teaching of English in Spanish high schools must face for adapting to new technologies, new pedagogical tendencies and the new multicultural and globalized social reality where students mobility is predominant. To face these new situations, we, teachers of languages, among other professionals, are the ones who must provide the students with the necessary tools for interacting correctly in the different situations related to English language.

³ *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*

⁴ In the development of the theoretical frame more authors will be quoted, all of them mentioned in the bibliography.

2. HYPOTHESIS AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

A fundamental characteristic in teaching languages is the variety of approaches and methods available. The teacher of English can choose methods or materials according to the students' needs or even according to the conditions of the educational situation in a specific school. Before discussing in detail what some of these methods consist in, I will start by explaining what English language teaching methodology is, and the differences existing between approach, method and curriculum or syllabus designs.

According to H.D. Brown, *methodology* is a plan for teaching language. It is based on theories of how language is learned and how it should be taught. It also describes the roles of learners and teachers in the classroom, what is learned in what order, and what materials and classroom activities are involved. It can be said that *methodology* is "the study of pedagogical practices in general [...] whatever considerations are involved in 'how to teach' are methodological" (Brown 2007:15). *Approach* is considered to be the theoretical positions and attitudes about the nature of language and language learning, and the enforceability of both to pedagogical settings. *Method*, in turn, is defined as a generalized set of classroom specifications for achieving linguistic aims. It is thought that methods are very often applicable to a range of audiences in a variety of contexts. In education, the curriculum carries out a particular language program, which includes the specification of objectives, sequencing, and materials needed by a group of learners in a defined context. The variety of exercises and activities that are used in the language classroom for achieving lesson objectives is called technique. It is obvious that depending on the decision we make when choosing the different theories of language and language learning, we will influence, in a way or another, the focus of a method.

It is necessary to develop a design for an instructional system in order to lead an approach to a method. For doing this, we have to take into account the following issues: what the objectives of the method are, how language content is selected and organized within the method, the roles of learners, the roles of teachers, the role of instructional materials and the types of learning tasks and teaching activities the method supports. Once it is clear what the most important items that have to be taken into account are, we are going to draft the second language acquisition methods generally characterized as traditional in the literature.

The first one is called 'Grammar Translation Method' and it is the most traditional one. This method began in Germany (Prussia) at the end of the 18th century and became popular in early years of the 19th century. It was used to teach students who were studying Latin and Greek. In this method, the language (in this case English) is taught in

the learners' L1 (in this case Spanish), the language taught (English) being used very little. Long lists of vocabulary and explanation of grammar rules are provided by the teacher. It is not required that the teacher has special teaching skills because the important thing is the knowledge of grammar. Learners are used to memorizing grammar rules and vocabulary. The class is focused on translation of texts and learners do not learn to speak or use language to communicate.

The 'Audiolingual Method' was developed in the forties to help American military personnel learn a second language. This method is characterized by the limited use of the learners' L1 and because translation is not used, the learning process is supported with cassette tapes, language labs and charts. The teacher organizes drills, presents grammar patterns and corrects errors and students learn language by memorizing patterns. In this method, the class focuses on substitution exercises, pronunciation exercises and pattern drills. It is really important correctness, even more than communication and exercises are often meaningless or out of context.

The 'Community Language Learning' was developed by Charles Curran in the early seventies. It is based on the assumption that a language class should function as a social community. At the beginning stage, the learners' L1 is used for communication, and later translation into the target language is used. The teacher is a kind of counselor who helps learners to achieve their communication goals by translating information for them. A relationship is developed in the classroom between classmates by using their L1. Then this group or community facilitates the environment for learning a language. Learners inductively understand the L2 by analyzing the translation and as students learn the language, the teacher assumes a smaller role.

The 'Silent Way' is an approach designed to allow students to become independent, autonomous and responsible learners. It is part of a more general pedagogical approach to teaching and learning created by Caleb Gattegno. This method guides students to develop their own conceptual models of all the aspects of the language. The best way of accomplishing this is to help students to be experimental learners. The teachers who use this method do not transmit knowledge but create situations in which the students can build linguistic know-hows: pronunciation, syntax, morphology, etc., i.e., all the aspects that allow them to speak a language.

Another method described is called 'Suggestopedia'. This method is one of the teaching methods developed by the Bulgarian psychotherapist Georgi Lozanov. This method is one of the few methodologies that work with relaxation. The intentional purpose of

Suggestopedia was to enhance learning by lowering the affective filter of learners. This method is criticized by psychologists as being based on pseudoscience.

The last method described is called 'the Communicative Method'. This method has been put forth around the world as the "new" or "innovative" way of teaching within the last quarter of the 20th century. According to Richards, it focuses on language teaching on communicative proficiency rather than on mere mastery of structures. Students have to be able to use the language for communicative purposes. Students acquire language faster and better when they are given time to develop their language skills, learning through authentic use of language. They can connect the lessons with their own personal experiences and with what they have learnt before. They are willing to learn because they feel motivated. With this method, language proficiency develops gradually; first students develop listening comprehension, then short phrases, sentences and short dialogues, later longer texts and discourse. This method takes into account that, when we communicate, we use the language to accomplish some functions of speech acts such as persuading, suggesting, arguing, describing, etc. In communicating, we need to know meanings and concepts such as time, duration and location, and we carry out these functions within a social context, importance of what, how, to whom (depending on the situation). The primary goal of this method is to get fluency and an acceptable language. The target language is not the object of study but a vehicle for classroom communication. The teacher is a kind of collaborator; establishing situations likely to promote communication. In the classroom students often work in small groups or pairs. Errors are tolerated because fluency and accuracy are both important goals. With this method authentic language materials are used and evidently language is used in real contexts, so contextualisation is a basic premise.

Once we have seen the different methods, we must be conscious of the fact that a method reflects explicit or implicit responses to questions concerning the learners' contribution to the learning process. Therefore, we have to take into account the types of activities learners carry out, the degree of control learners have over the content of learning, the degree to which learners influence the learning of others and the patterns of learner groupings adopted. Some methods are entirely dependent on the teacher, while in others the teacher is seen as vehicle, counselor, guide and model for learning.

3. METHODOLOGY

Due to tense historical relations between Spain and the United Kingdom, the English language started to be appreciated a bit late in our country. During the 19th Century and the first part of the 20th Century, French was the second language of communication for the Spanish people. During the period between wars, the Spaniards started to feel curiosity for the English culture and language. At the end of the seventies, French was replaced by English in the Spanish educational system. Despite the fact that English teaching has been improved since then, teenagers finish secondary education with a low level of English in general. Given that three hours of English are given weekly in secondary education, we may ask ourselves the question: is it necessary to improve the number of hours? Is there a need in Spain for an educational reform in language teaching?

According to the Euro-Barometer, in 2006 56 % of the citizens in the EU Member States said that they were able to hold a conversation in one language different from their mother tongue and 28 % of the respondents stated that they spoke two foreign languages well enough to have a conversation. English remains the most widely spoken foreign language throughout Europe. About a quarter of the Spanish population declared knowing, to some extent, the English language. However, only a minority of this 25 % is able to communicate fluently in English. It is interesting to note that in Spain, where the majority of respondents do not speak any language apart from their mother tongue and the level of motivation to learn languages remains low, people still strongly maintain the idea that they know at least two languages and rank well above the EU average. In spite of this belief, the features already mentioned place Spain at the end of the European list with regard to knowledge of the English language. According to a study carried out by Oxford University Press⁵, a great amount of people, after having studied English for more than seven years, were never able to hold an ordinary conversation in English. Only a 20% of the Spanish people is able to hold a conversation in English whereas a 44% of the Europeans is it. Is it possible that learning English is more difficult for Spanish people than for others? Could our educational system be the cause of this failure? Is our educational system failing in teaching languages?

According to the latest study by the Centre for Sociological Research (CIS)⁶, investigating 2,500 people, two thirds of the Spaniards (63.1%) admitted that they neither speak nor write English. While 7% say they read in English, 6.4% state they write in this language.

⁵ Published in *Los españoles no hablan inglés, hablan 'spanglish'* in Reuters España.

⁶ February 2010

By contrast, 23% of the respondents claimed to be able to speak and write in English. Nine out of ten respondents consider the knowledge of a foreign language very important; however the majority of them neither speaks nor studies one. People who say they can manage the English language (23%) declare that they learned it at school, high school, academies, private lessons and abroad. It can be considered that the result of this survey and others are the consequences of foreign language educational policies. Foreign languages seem to be a problem for the Spanish Education System. According to a longitudinal survey undertaken by another research company⁷, about 42 % of Spanish population speak bad or very bad English, 34 % say that they speak it not badly and 23 % claim to speak it correctly. This research, carried out on one thousand people between 16 and 64, says that 46 % of Spanish speakers manifest that they can read English texts without any problem. At the same time, 33 % indicate that they understand when they listen to it. The research also shows that 88 % of the people questioned consider really important the fact of speaking English.

According to another survey, carried out by Ipsos Marketing for Home English Academies, English acquisition in Spain has not improved in the last two years. Six out of ten respondents declare that they know the English language but only two of them admit that their level is intermediate or advanced.

According to Enrique Martín in *Tres de cada cuatro españoles no hablan inglés, nuestra asignatura pendiente*⁸, English started to be studied in Spanish schools very late, when children were about 9 or 10 years old. He assures that there are studies that demonstrate that languages and music are acquired the sooner the better. Also Richard Vaughan, in a recent interview for *El Imparcial*, pointed out that acquiring a language is natural at the age of 0-5 years, not natural from teenage years and really difficult from 23.

According to Anath Elkaim, professor of English⁹, one of the most common mistakes is made by teachers. Most of them in Spain give classes in Spanish, so linguistic immersion does not take place. This professor assures that most part of the teachers of Spanish schools do not have enough level of English for giving the whole class in the language of Shakespeare. In accordance with Anath, an organism should be created in order to evaluate teachers, because being native or a civil servant is not the same as being a good teacher. Moreover, English acquisition in our schools is basically focused on grammar,

⁷ A study carried out by Ipsos for Grupo Océana

⁸ Published in *El Imparcial* on Monday, 24th May 2010 (<http://www.elimparcial.es:6680/node/20005>)

⁹ In *Tres de cada cuatro españoles no hablan inglés, nuestra asignatura pendiente*, published in *El Imparcial* on Saturday, 6th September 2008. (<http://www.elimparcial.es:6681/hemeroteca/2008/09/05/contenido/20005.html>)

lexicon and reading comprehension, so oral skills are roughly trained. This leads Spanish speakers to have a very bad pronunciation of English. Besides, a curious fact, which only seems to happen in Spain, is that Spanish people feel embarrassed when they have to pronounce a foreign word when they are using Spanish, so they pronounce it wrongly on purpose. This occurs because of a kind of complex which disservices Spanish people and leads them to Hispanicize loan words in order not to seem arrogant or disdainful. Apart from this kind of complex, experts in education assure that English continues being a trouble for Spanish people because they feel ridiculous when they are pronouncing it. More common feelings of Spanish people speaking English are considered to be: afraid of not being understood, shamed because of grammatical mistakes and fear of being ridiculous. This is something really peculiar because it seems not to happen in other cultures.

There is something failing in the Spanish students' aptitude with relation to the acquisition of English. Some teachers affirm that the educational system does not train English teachers correctly, thus, obviously, they cannot make students reach a good level of English. Richard Vaughan¹⁰, teacher of English, affirms that Spanish teenagers should be bilingual because of the number of hours they are supposed to learn English.

With regard to the educational system, respondents to the CIS study are optimistic. More than a 40% considers that it is good or very good. There is almost unanimity in that a 73.6% of respondents considers that the acquisition of English should start in the second cycle of Infant Education.

Apart from these causes, Spain (as Germany, France and Italy) tends to translation in general, so it is difficult to see films in original version as is the case in most part of Europe. There are few cinemas which show films in original version and few people who attend them. The same happens with television: it is almost impossible to see soap opera episodes, for example, in original version. Maybe it is the Government who has to change this situation for improving the Spanish people's level of English. As an example of bilingualism we find Holland, where classes at university are given in both English and Dutch and films and TV serials are shown in original version.

We find people in Spain interested in learning English, who attend academies, most of them with native teachers, in which students are prepared for passing official exams.

¹⁰ In *Busco la fórmula mágica para que la gente pueda hacerse con el inglés sin dolor* in *El Imparcial* on Sunday, 3rd August 2008. (<http://www.elimparcial.es/contenido/19406.html>)

However, according to Xavier Domenech¹¹, manager of the *Océano Idiomas* academy, if a speaker stops practising a language, after two years his/her level of knowledge will have amazingly decreased. Some people choose a course abroad which allows them to improve oral skills and others decide to live and work in an English speaking country for several months in order to get linguistic immersion. Experts assure that it is essential for learning a language well to live for a while in an English speaking country; however, the number of Spanish students who take a course abroad is still very small.

A good option for learning English is starting when you are a baby. Bilingual schools allow children to get immerse naturally. These schools used to be very expensive because most of them were private. Nowadays, however, the number of public schools, thanks to the bilingual project carried out by La Comunidad de Madrid, is increasing amazingly. Next year 2010/2011, 242 public schools will be bilingual¹². The students who participate in this program, once they have completed primary education, will have to be able to use the English language for expressing and interacting orally and writing in simple and common situations. Thus, these students will be able to continue studying in English through a teaching model in which the student not only learns English as a foreign language but also receives part of the subjects in English. At universities, the use of English by students and professors is being an important objective and there are some universities like Pompeu Fabra or Carlos III, which offer degree courses taught entirely in English.

Taking into account these studies and experts on education opinions, we are going to try to investigate the possible causes why the English level of Spaniards is considered not good enough. In order to achieve my goal several surveys have been carried out.

The main objective of this analysis is to show, in the small sample taken, the most relevant characteristics which identify English classes in secondary education, the methodology used in the Spanish schools and the differences between public, state-assisted and private schools. Before starting with the analysis of the graphics and charts, it is really important to point out the most relevant features of the sample taken, that is, general characteristics and variables taken into account.

With regard to the general characteristics of the survey carried out, these are the following:

¹¹ In *El 42% de los españoles habla mal o muy mal inglés, un 34% regular y un 23% bien* in Europa Press published on Thursday, 13th September 2007 (<http://formacion.interbusca.com/noticias/espa%F1oles-habla-ingl%E9s-regular-bien-seg%FA-estudio-20070913174313.html>)

¹² In *Portal de educación de la comunidad de Madrid* (http://www.madrid.org/cs/Satellite?c=CM_Actualidad_FA&cid=1142588245438&language=es&pageid=1171014727331&pagenome=PortalEducacion%2FCM_Actualidad_FA%2FEDUC_actualidad)

Population: Spanish people

Sampling frame: It has been limited to a period of 15 years (people between 18 and 33 years old)

Sample size: 200 respondents

Allocation: Proportional

Sampling points: 50 municipalities

Sample procedure: random data collection

Realization date: from 1st March to 15th May 2010

The following are the variables selected:

Age of the respondents: People between 18 and 33 years old

Types of school and level of English achieved: The study gathers opinions from ex-students of public, state-assisted and private schools, with the aim of establishing relevant relations between the kind of institution and the level reached, in the case that graphics show that this relation is relevant.

Perception: This refers to the students' perception about their classes of English and about the didactic elements used in them. This is a way of showing the adequacy or the inadequacy of more traditional teaching methodology, which used only the course book, or in more dynamic methods, which use audiovisuals and other elements.

Objectives: This factor assesses if these people, nowadays, think that they have achieved the established objectives in the curriculum, and especially, if they are able to communicate abroad and to understand English language directly through personal conversations or from audiovisuals (films, documentaries, etc.).

In the next section of the paper, results obtained are shown by means of bar and pie charts. For exposing all these data clearly and visually, several graphics have been elaborated which collect the most relevant information commented previously. After this study of the results obtained, relevant conclusions will be drawn.

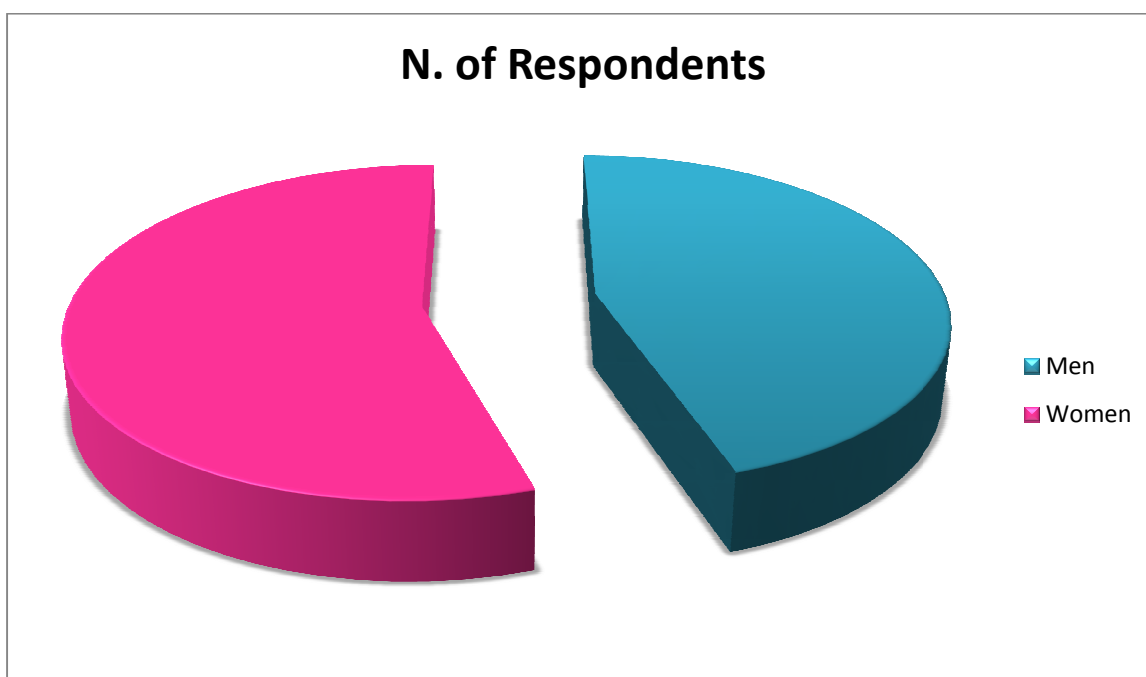
4. ANALYSIS

4.1. Analysis of the results obtained

Variables analyzed in the survey and results obtained, which have been analyzed for this study, are shown in this part of the paper. Questioned people are distributed as the following chart indicates.

Table 1.a: Total number of respondents

		N. of Respondents
Men		90
Women		110

Table 1.b: Total number of respondents

This first graph attempts to offer a visual image of the number of men and women interviewed. Although we have tried to extend the survey to the same number of participants from both genders, attempting the most possible homogeneity, finally it has been impossible.

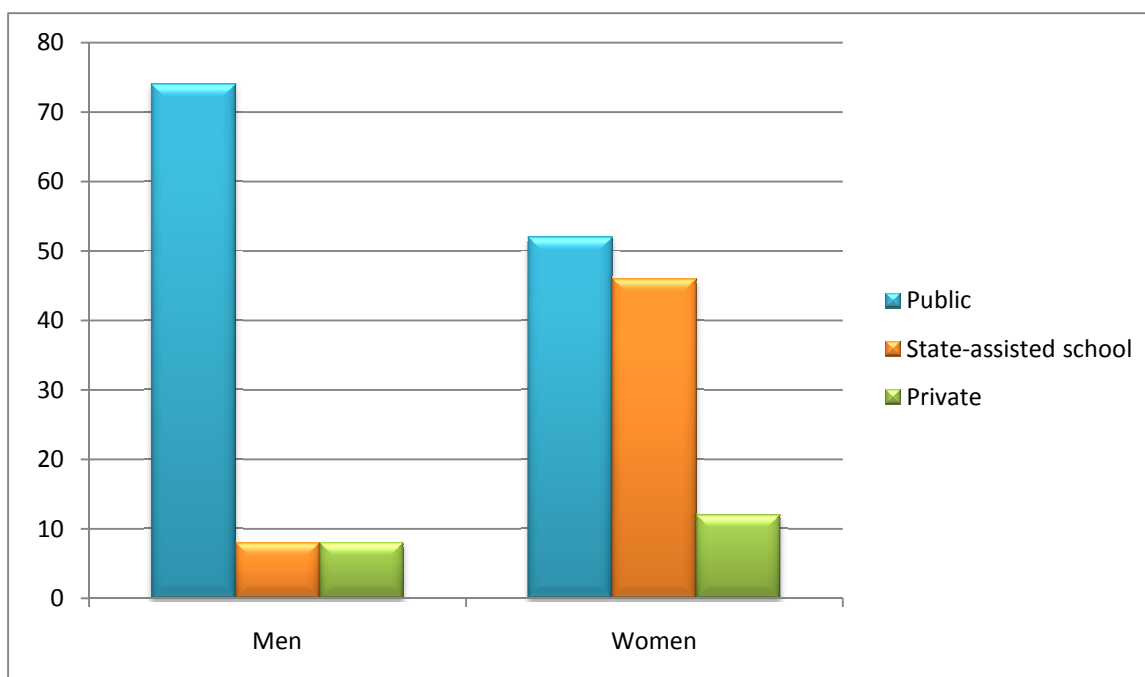
As it has been said previously, the study has been carried out in several regions of Madrid. People who have participated in this survey belong to a total of 50 municipalities: El Álamo, Alcalá de Henares, Alcorcón, Alcobendas, Algete, Aranjuez, Arganda, Arroyomolinos, Boadilla del Monte, Brunete, Cercedilla, Ciempozuelos, Collado Villalba, Colmenar Viejo, Coslada, Cubas de la Sagra, El Escorial, Fuenlabrada, Galapagar, Getafe, Guadarrama, Guadalix de la Sierra, Leganés, Madrid, Majadahonda, Meco, Miraflores de la Sierra, Móstoles, Navacerrada, Navalcarnero, Parla, Pinto, Pozuelo de

Alarcón, Rivas-Vaciamadrid, Las Rozas de Madrid, San Fernando de Henares, San Sebastián de los Reyes, Sevilla la nueva, Torrelaguna, Torrelodones, Torrejón de Ardoz, Torrejón de la Calzada, Tres Cantos, Valdemoro, Valdemorillo, Villa del Prado, Villamanta, Villanueva de la Cañada, Villanueva del Pardillo y Villaviciosa de Odón.

Table 2.a: Distribution of respondents by kind of school and gender

	Public	State-assisted school	Private
Men	74	8	8
Women	52	46	12

Table 2.b: Distribution of respondents by kind of school and gender



Most of the men questioned attended a public school: 74 of the polled men, that is, 82% of the total. According to the bar chart, their presence in state-assisted and private schools is really small, 9% approximately.

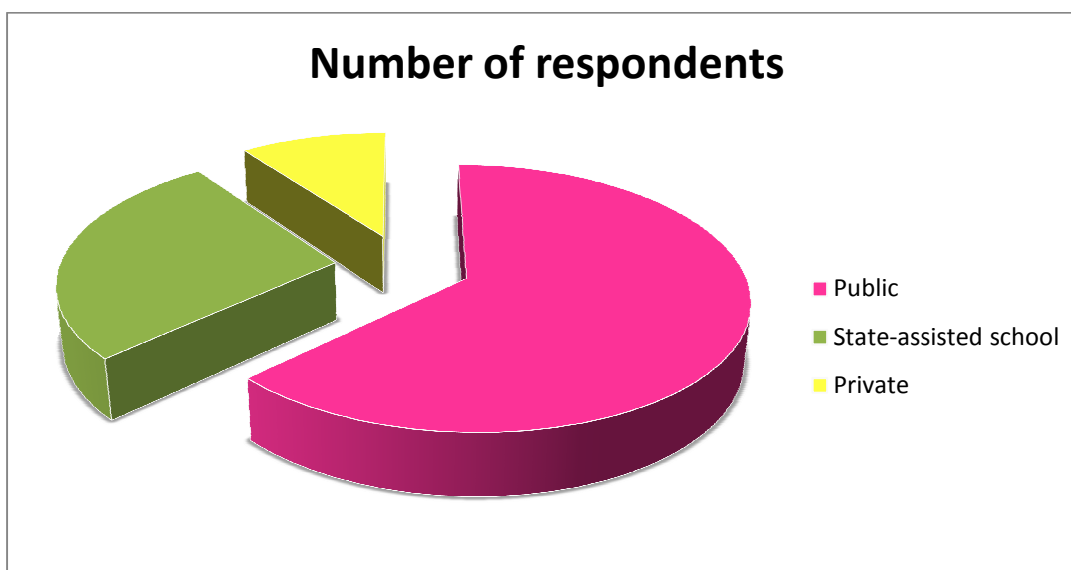
By contrast, the percentage of women who attended public and state-assisted schools is very similar, because 47.3% went to public and 42% to state-assisted schools. The minor percentage belongs to private schools with 11% of the women polled. In this one, the proportion between man and women is more homogenous.

The cause or causes of this heterogeneous distribution is not a goal of this study in itself, but it may be related with the level of English that men and women have achieved in their second language depending on the kind of school where they have studied. Taking into account that, state-assisted teaching can be considered, in some aspects, selective, not only regarding the students but also regarding the teachers. It is interesting to consider if there is any direct relation between the results obtained by men and women who have studied in state-assisted and public schools.

Table 3.a: Distribution of respondents by kind of school

Type of school	N. of respondents
Public	126
State-assisted school	54
Private	20

Table 3.b: Distribution of respondents by kind of school



In the pie chart we can observe that most of the respondents, 63%, attended a public high school whereas 27% went to a state-assisted school and only 10% to a private school. Although the sample of the study has been reduced to 200 people from Madrid, this figure confirms that public teaching continues being the most chosen system of teaching by Spanish people, maybe because of the proximity with their home, because of economical

matters or others. In any case, the exact reasons for this are beyond the scope of this study.

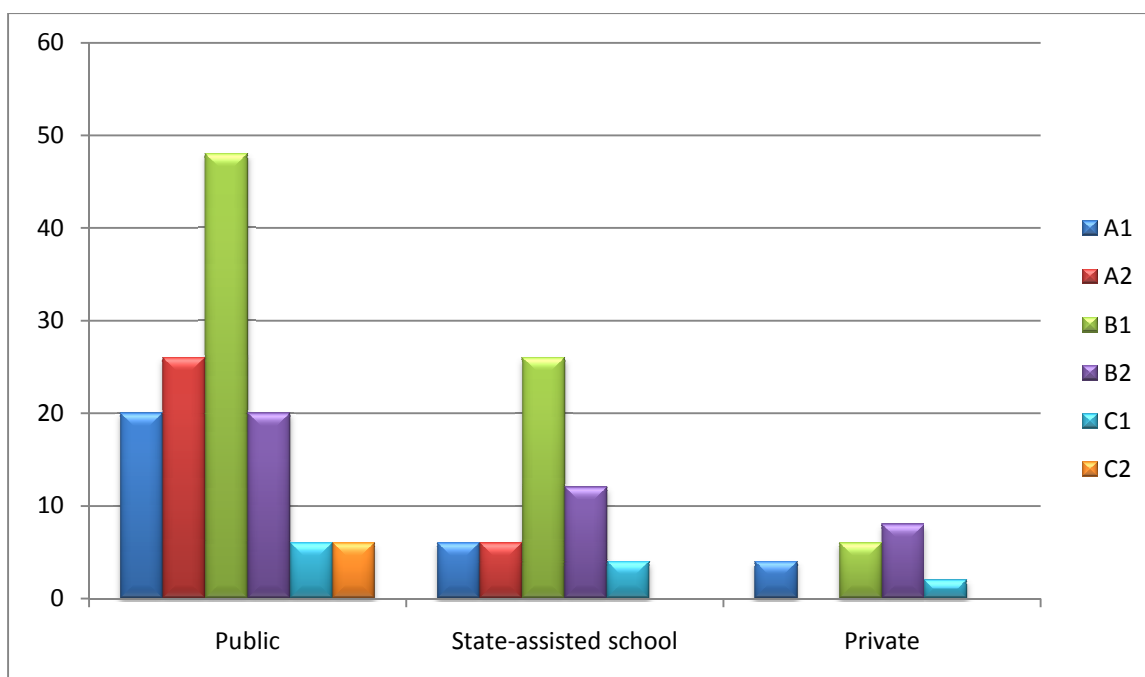
In subsequent graphs, the level of English which polled people say they have acquired in each of the different schools will be shown. It has been chosen to analyze the situation from a general point of view and taking into account that this study has been used as starting point for possible and more elaborated studies which can offer a general panorama of teaching and acquisition of English language in Spain.

According to the respondents' perception, the levels acquired by them, when they finished their secondary education, are the following:

Table 4.a: Subjective respondents' perception of level acquired

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Public	20	26	48	20	6	6
State-assisted school	6	6	26	12	4	0
Private	4	0	6	8	2	0

Table 4.b: Subjective respondents' perception of level acquired



These are the different levels according to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This framework divides learners into three broad divisions which can be divided into six levels: “A” stands for basic speaker (A1 Breakthrough and A2 Waystage), “B” stands for independent speaker (B1 Threshold and B2 Vantage) and “C” stands for proficient speaker (C1 Effective Operational Proficiency and C2 Mastery). The CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) describes what a learner is supposed to be able to do in reading, listening, speaking and writing at each level. These levels are described in the appendix 2.

Once the results of the level of English acquired in each of the three kinds of school have been presented individually, the aim of this bar chart is to establish and expose, in a clear and visual way, a comparison between them in order to propose several questions that can be answered in the light of the results obtained.

According to this graph, we can observe that in public high schools B1 level is predominant and reached by the majority, 38%. Level A2 follows with 20.6%. However, the same result can be observed for A1 and B2 which a 16% considers to have acquired. Superior levels established by The Common European Framework of Reference, C1 and C2 are which obtain the minor results with regard to the rest of levels, 5% said to have achieved some of them.

In the following kind of high school, the stated-assisted school, it is also level B1 the predominant one with a 59%. However, in this case, the second level is not A2 but upper intermediate B2, which 27% of the polled people considered to have achieved. The homogeneity is achieved in elemental levels A1 and A2 with a 13.6%. Only a 9% of them considers to have reached a C1 level. The most striking thing is that nobody considered to have achieved a C2 level, contrary to what is the case in public schools.

The last type of school analyzed is the private school, where less of the people polled are placed. In this case, the larger level reached is B2 with 40%, followed by B1 with 30%. Only a 20% chose A1, and nobody choose neither A2 nor C2, contrary to the two previous examples.

The previous comments are with regard to the analysis of each institution, because this comparative chart allows a second reading: instead of the levels achieved by each center individually, we can also consider the results applying to the levels acquired in general. Results are very similar to the results explained in previous paragraphs.

Table 4.c: Percentages of subjective respondents' perception of level acquired

	Public school	State-assisted school	Private school
A1	15.9%	11.1%	20%
A2	20.6%	11.1%	0%
B1	38%	48.2%	30%
B2	15.9%	22.2%	40%
C1	4.8%	7.4%	10%
C2	4.8%	0%	0%

Analyzing the figures in this graph, we can observe that the major level acquired is, in general but especially in state-assisted schools, B1 with a 48.2%, although in private centers this place is occupied by B2. A 20.6% achieves A2 in public schools whereas a 11.1% achieves the same level in state-assisted schools. Elementary level A1 and upper intermediate B2 got 15.9%, which makes us to think that although an important number of students acquired a good level of English, B2, there is also an important part of students who do not get through the first classes. The shorter percentages are for the most advanced levels C1 and C2. The best results are obtained in public schools (in the case of C2), opposite to the traditional belief about the lack of quality in this kind of institution. It has been taken into consideration that these results are based on the particular perceptions of the people polled.

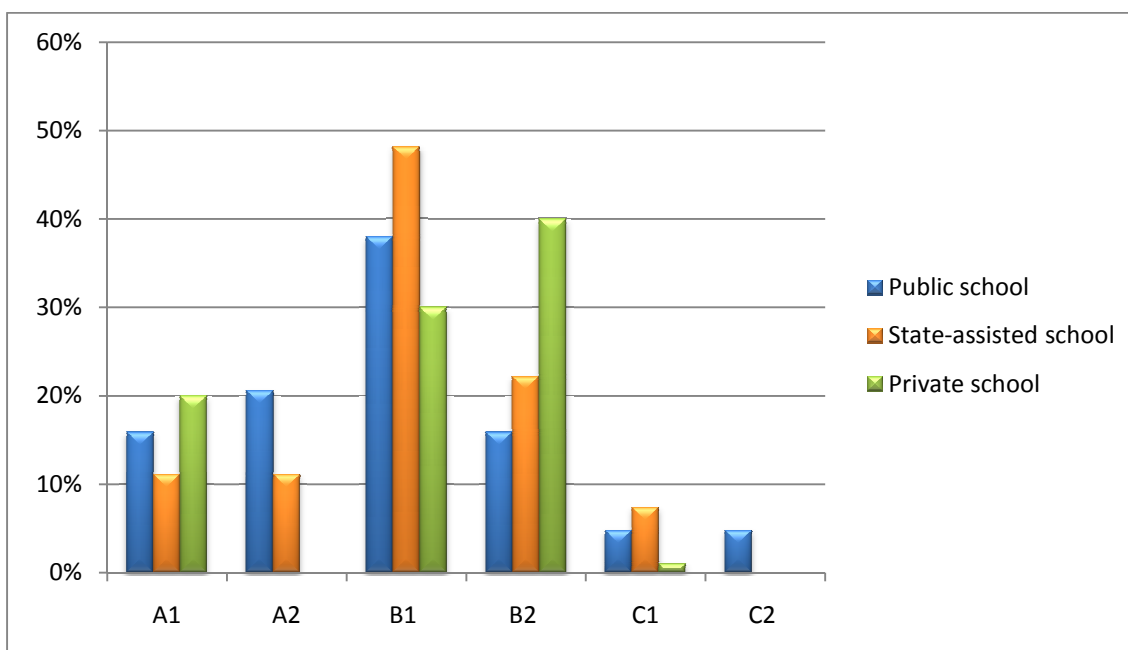
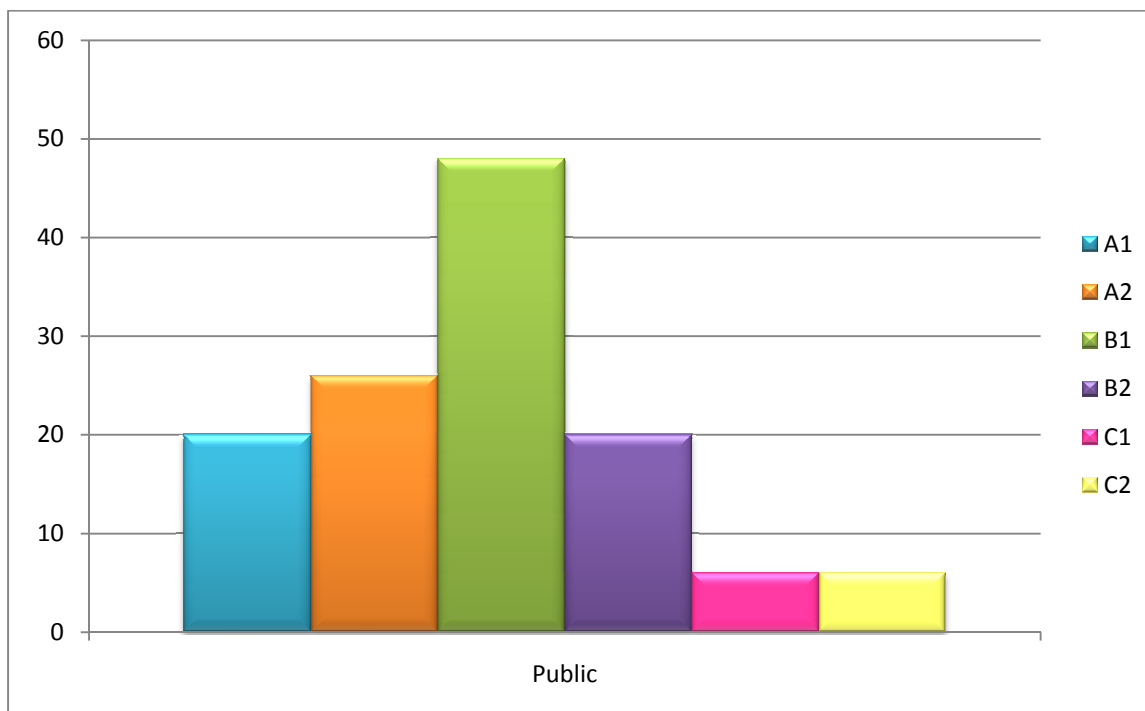
Table 4.d: Percentages of subjective respondents' perception of level acquired

Table 4.1.a: Subjective respondents' perception of level acquired in public schools

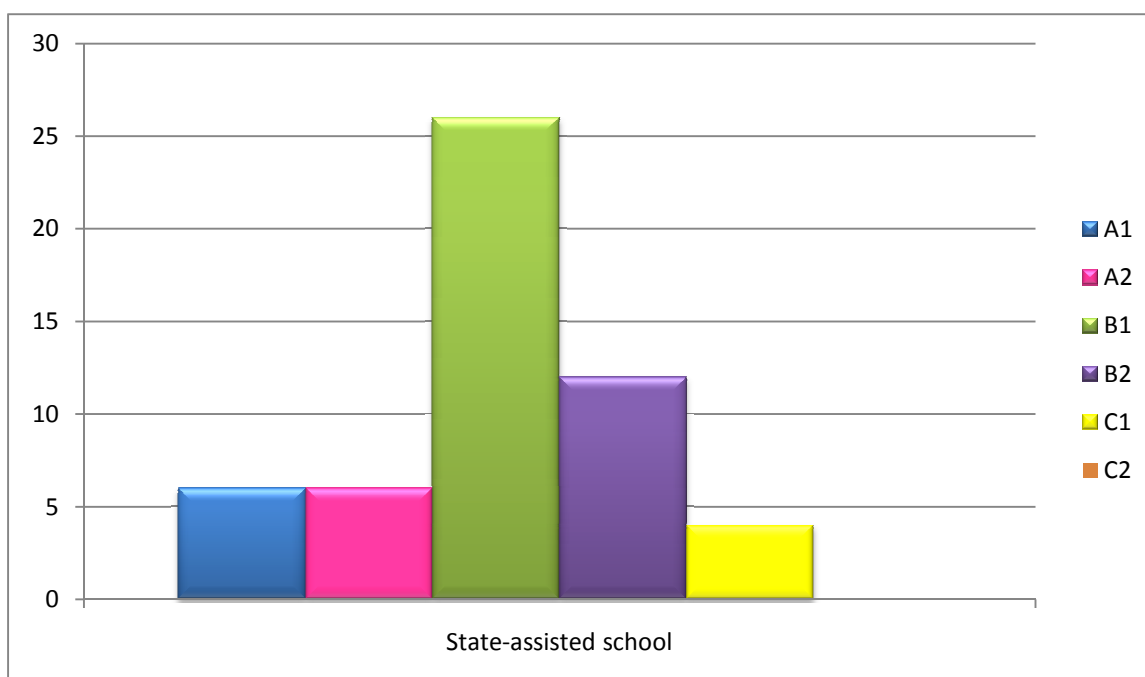
	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Public Schools	20	26	48	20	6	6

Table 4.1.b: Subjective respondents' perception of level acquired in public schools

In this bar chart, which corresponds to the level of English acquired in public schools, a clear predominance of B1 level can be observed, 38%. Level A2 follows it very far with 20.6%. However the same result for A1 and B2 can be observed, where a 16% considers to have achieved one of them. Superior levels C1 and C2 are obtained by a 5% of the respondents. Therefore, the levels can be placed from major to minor, with regard to the knowledge acquired, in the following way: B1, A2, A1-B2 and C1-C2. The level acquired can be considered low intermediate, but followed by upper intermediate and upper elementary.

Table 4.2.a: Subjective respondents' perception of level acquired in state-assisted schools

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
State-assisted school	6	6	26	12	4	0

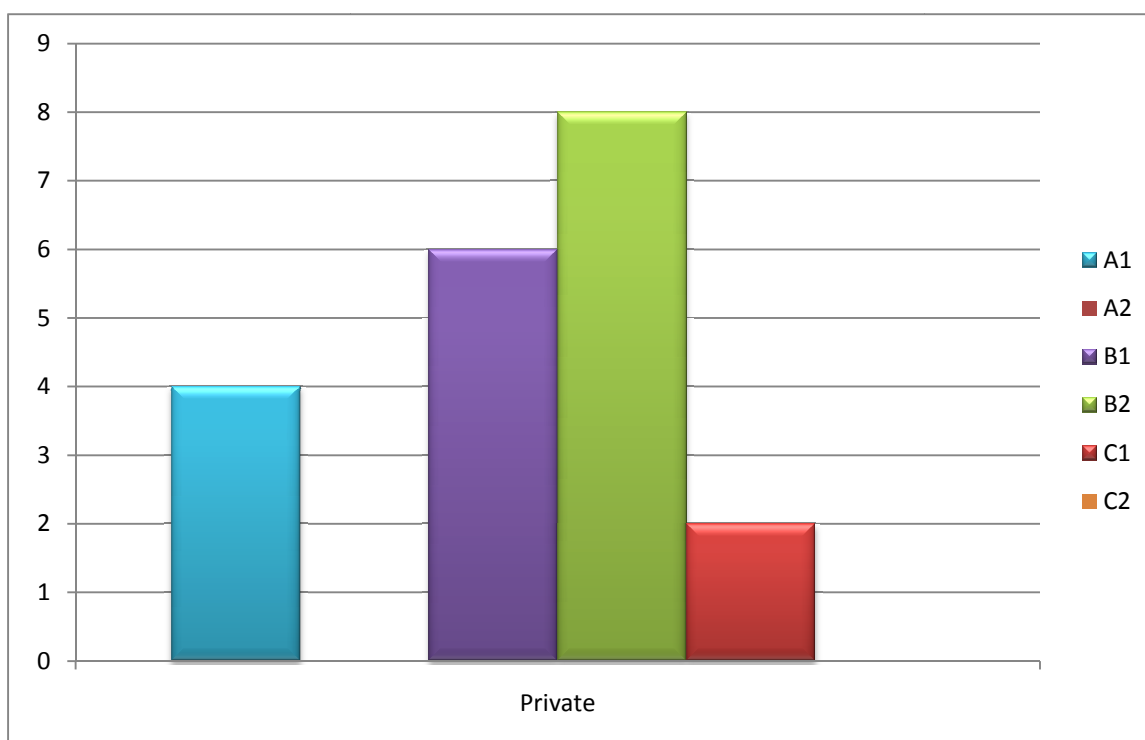
Table 4.2.b: Subjective respondents' perception of level acquired in state-assisted schools

With regard to state-assisted schools, it is also B1 the predominant level with a 59%. In this case, the second place is not taken by A2 but by upper intermediate B2, with a 27%. Homogeneity is obtained in the elementary levels A1 and A2 with a 13.6%. Only 9% of the respondents consider to have achieved C2, as opposed to the situation in the public institutions.

According to the graph, the survey collects the sequence B1, B2, A1-A2 and C1. Level proficiency C2 is not achieved by the respondents in this case. Thereby it can be deduced that, although the major level acquired is also B1, the following is upper intermediate B2, which implies a step ahead in the acquisition of linguistic competences in the case of state-assisted schools.

Table 4.3.a: Subjective respondents' perception of level acquired in private schools

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Private	4	0	6	8	2	0

Table 4.3.b: Subjective respondents' perception of level acquired in private schools

The third case corresponds to private schools, 13.5% of the people polled. In this case, the major level acquired is B2 with a 40%, followed by B1 with 30%. Only 20% of the respondents thought to have acquired level A1. There were no answers for either level A2 or level C2, as opposed to the previous examples.

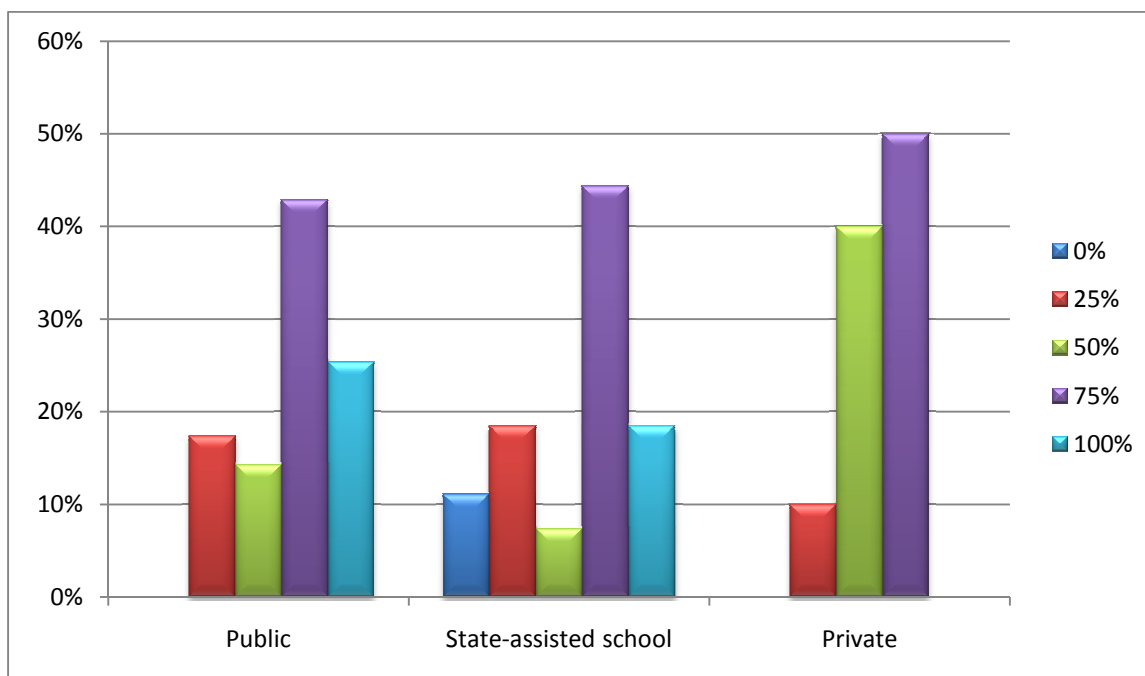
The sequence of the levels acquired in private schools is the following: B2, B1, A1 and C1. In this case it is very notorious that nobody considered to have acquired the maximum level according to Common European Framework of Reference, C2, whereas this has been indeed obtained in public schools. This result in private schools turns out shocking since it have been always considered that students in private schools have a higher level because of the high qualification of the teachers and minor overcrowding of the classes. Is there any relation between these results and the methodology used? In the following paragraphs this and other questions will be examined.

Table 5.a: Percentage of Spanish language used in English classes

	Percentage of Spanish language used in English classes									
	0%		25%		50%		75%		100%	
	n. r. ¹³	% ¹⁴	n.r.	%	n.r.	%	n.r.	%	n.r.	%
Public	0	0	22	17.4	18	14.3	54	42.9	32	25.4
State-assisted school	6	11.1	10	18.5	4	7.4	24	44.4	10	18.5
Private	0	0	2	10	8	40	10	50	0	0

Table 5.b: Percentage of Spanish language used in English classes

	0%	25%	50%	75%	100%
Public	0%	17.4%	14.3%	42.9%	25.4%
State-assisted school	11.1%	18.5%	7.4%	44.4%	18.5%
Private	0%	10%	40%	50%	0%

Table 5.c: Percentage of Spanish language used in English classes

¹³ n.r. → number of respondents

¹⁴ The sign % indicates percentages taking into account that:
 100% in public school corresponds with 63 students
 100% in State-assisted school corresponds with 27 students
 100% in Private school corresponds with 10 students

Spanish is commonly used in English classes in all kinds of schools. In the graphs relating to the private schools, none of the respondents has answered that, in their classes of English, teachers only used Spanish; however, it is only in state-assisted schools where the class was entirely given in English. In most of the cases, 75% of Spanish is used in the English classes, a circumstance that limits the acquisition of skills and communicative competences by students, because they cannot practice the language they are learning in order to reinforce the knowledge acquired.

4.2. Answers given by respondents

Respondents' answers to question number 6:

*¿Cómo recuerda sus clases de inglés en secundaria?*¹⁵

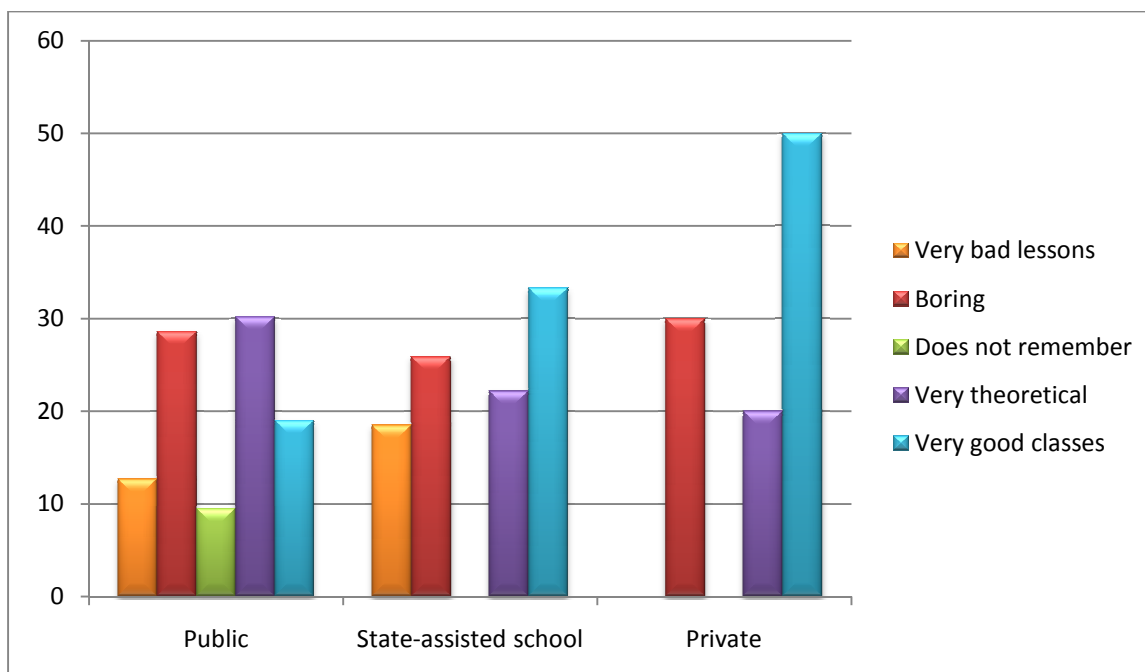
Table 6.a: English classes

	Very bad lessons	Boring	Does not remember	Very theoretical	Very good classes
Public	16	36	12	38	24
State-assisted school	10	14	0	12	18
Private	0	6	0	4	10

Table 6.b: English classes

	Very bad lessons	Boring	Does not remember	Very theoretical	Very good classes
Public	12.7%	28.6%	9.5%	30.2%	19%
State-assisted school	18.5%	25.9%	0	22.2%	33.3%
Private	0	30%	0	20%	50%

¹⁵ How do you remember your English classes?

Table 6.c: English classes

In this bar chart, opinions about the kind of classes are shown. 12.7% of the polled people who studied at a public school think that English classes were really bad and consider that their teacher was not sufficiently trained. Surprisingly this percentage is higher in state-assisted schools whereas it is inexistent in private schools in which the student considers English classes very good, funny and really practical in 50% of the respondents. Almost the same percentage in the three institutions, 28.6%, 25.9% and 30%, thinks their English classes were really boring, disorganized and impractical. In public high schools the opinion stands out that the classes were very theoretical and only grammar was practiced, in 30.2% of the respondents. The fact that nobody in private schools thinks their English classes were really bad or their teacher not enough trained is really representative.

An eighteen-year-old young woman said: *“Daban bastante pena, la verdad. El nivel era bastante bajo y no avanzábamos mucho. El resultado quedó plasmado en las PAU”*

A twenty-year-old woman said: *“Dependiendo del profesor que tenía cada año podían ser más o menos teóricas; en cualquier caso siempre se buscaba la interacción en inglés entre alumnos y profesor”*

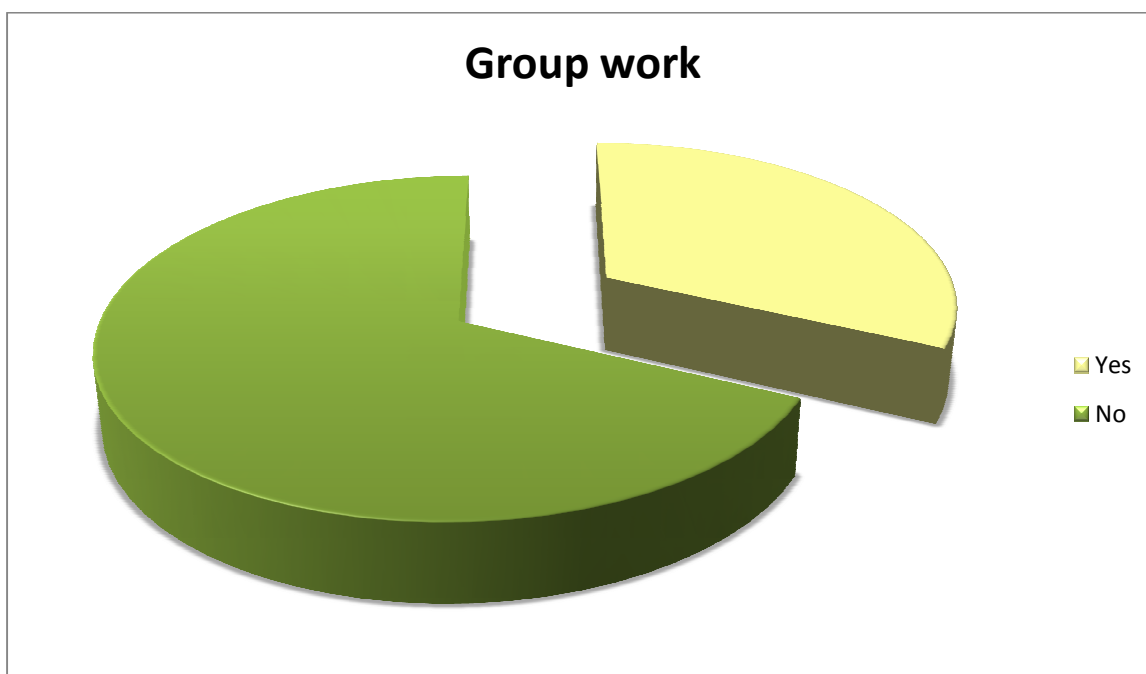
Respondents' answers to question number 7:

*¿Trabajaba en parejas, grupos...?*¹⁶

Table 7.a: Group work

Yes	No
64	136

Table 7.b: Group work



Most respondents (68%) affirm that they did not work in pairs or groups in their English classes. An eighteen-year-old woman answered: *“Nunca. Nos sentábamos por parejas pero rara vez trabajábamos en equipo. Como mucho, y muy de vez en cuando, realizábamos un ‘speaking’ por parejas”*

On the contrary, only 32% of respondents said that they worked in pairs or groups. According to the pie chart, most respondents worked in class individually. A twenty-three-year-old woman said: *“El trabajo era principalmente individual pero en ocasiones también hacíamos trabajos en grupo y a menudo se practicaban diálogos (roleplay) en pareja”*

¹⁶ *Did you work in pairs, groups...?*

A thirty-two-year-old woman said: “*Solían ser clases individuales, rara vez se trabajaba en parejas y nunca en grupos*”

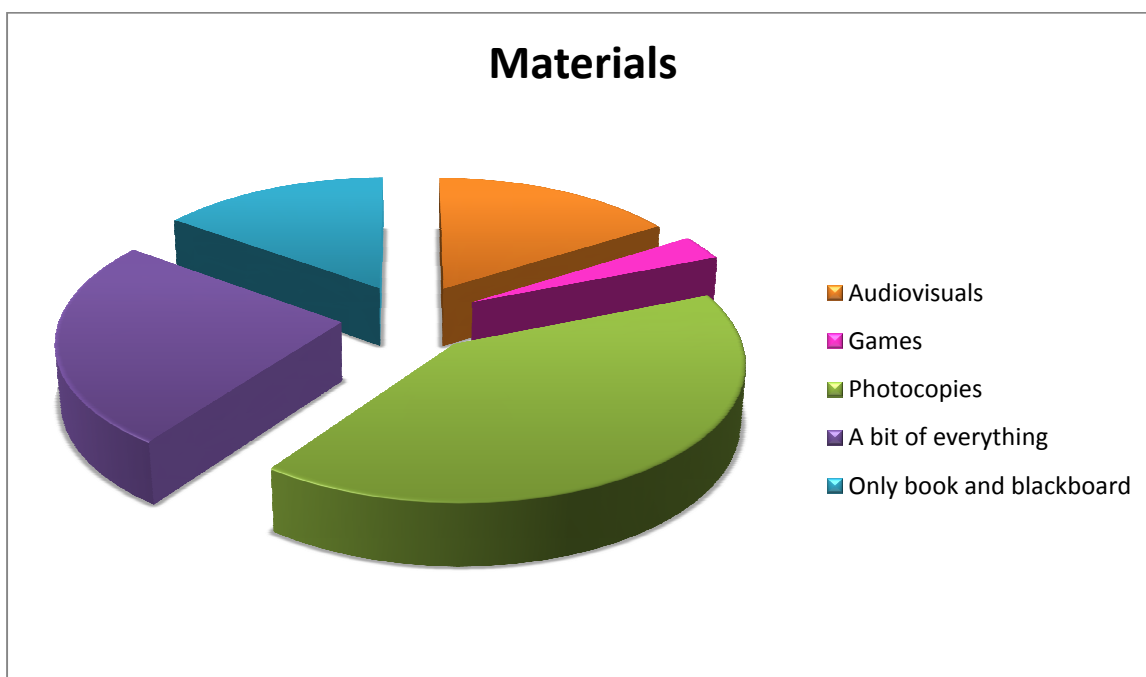
Respondents' answers to question number 10:

*¿Qué otros materiales, además de libros, se utilizaban en sus clases?*¹⁷

Table 8.a: Materials

Materials	
Audiovisuales	16%
Games	3%
Fotocopias	41%
A bit of everything	25%
Only book and blackboard	15%

Table 8.b: Materials



With regard to the materials used in class, the survey shows that photocopies are widely used in the classroom. A twenty-four-year-old woman answered: “*Siempre hicimos muchos ejercicios de fotocopias (de otros libros de texto, distintos del de clase),*

¹⁷ What other materials were used in your classes apart from books?

escuchábamos canciones y completábamos la letra y a veces veíamos películas con subtítulos en inglés”

Contrasting with a 41% of respondents who said that photocopies were the material most used, a 25% said that several materials were used in the classroom. The course book and the blackboard as the only elements in the English teaching were chosen by 15% of the respondents. In the last place, a 16% said that games were used in the classes with educational purposes.

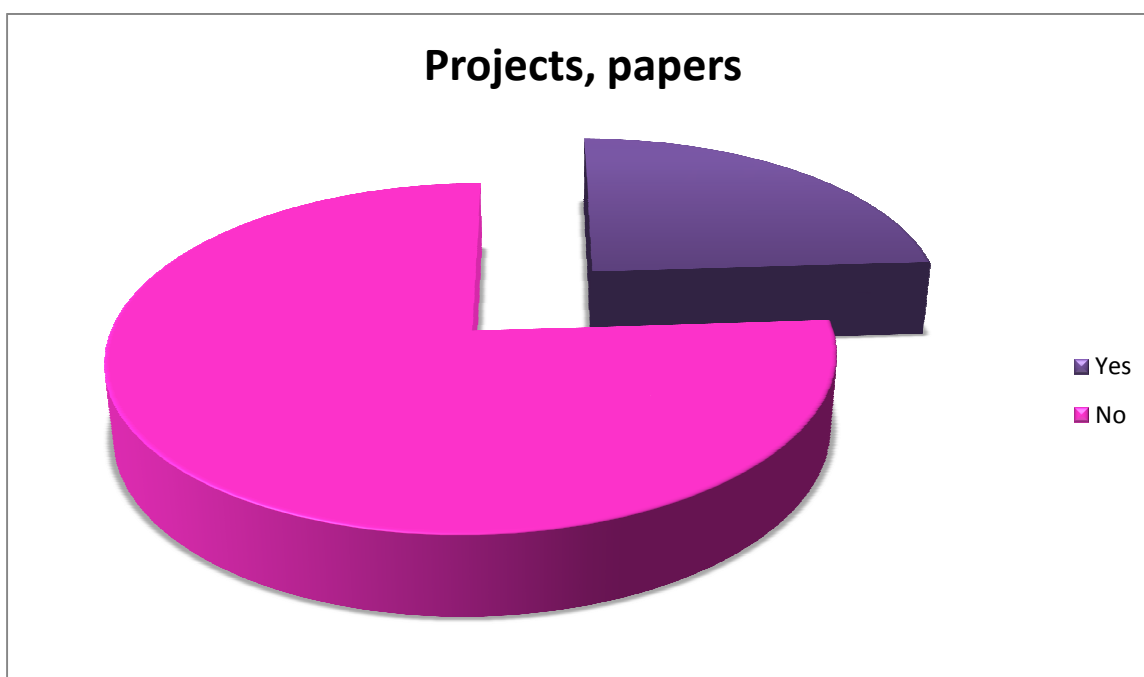
Respondents' answers to question number 11:

¿Recuerda haber realizado algún trabajo o proyecto para la asignatura de inglés?¹⁸

Table 9.a: Projects

Yes	No
48	152

Table 9.b: Projects



¹⁸ *Do you remember if you had to prepare any paper or project for your English classes?*

A 76% of respondents states that no paper or project were elaborated in English classes, whereas a 24% assures that a project or paper was part of the English assignments.

A twenty-five-year-old woman answered: *“Aparte de trabajos en grupo sobre algún personaje histórico, he hecho alguna exposición oral de un trabajo individual sobre un tema libre escogido por mí (la exposición duraba entre 5 y 10 minutos)”*

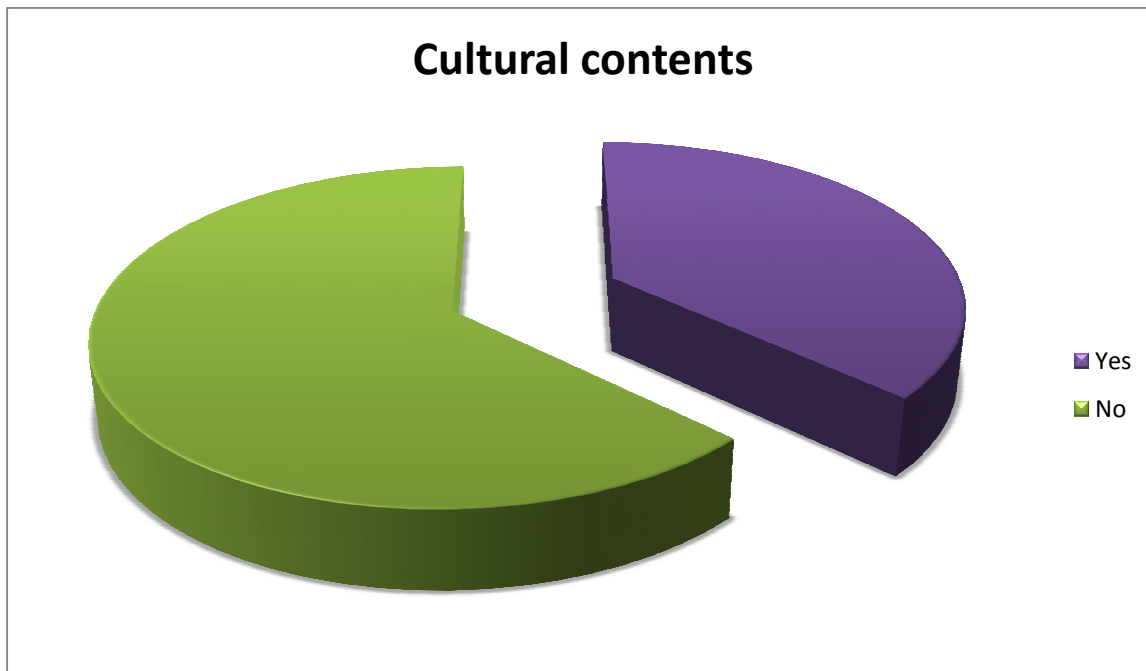
Respondents' answers to question number 12:

¿Ha recibido en secundaria alguna clase de inglés en la que se introdujeran contenidos literarios, históricos o culturales referidos a los países de habla inglesa?¹⁹

Table 10.a: Cultural contents

Yes	No
74	126

Table 10.a: Cultural contents



¹⁹ Have you ever received any lesson of English with cultural, historical and literary integrated contents?

A 63% of respondents was not given any content-based class. However, a 37% of respondents assure that cultural or literary contents were introduced in the English classes.

Respondents' answers to question number 13, 14, 15, 16 & 17:

¿Hablaba usted inglés en clase con sus compañeros o profesores?²⁰

¿Actualmente, se puede comunicar en inglés en un país extranjero?²¹

¿Entiende fácilmente a un hablante nativo de lengua inglesa?²²

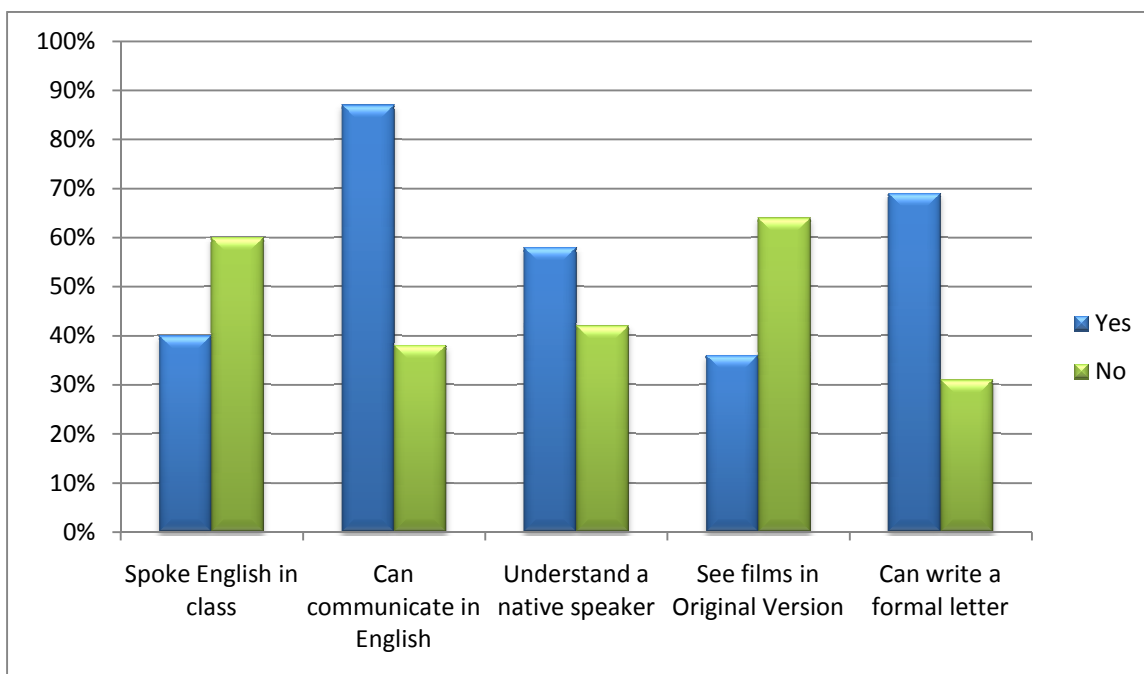
¿Puede ver películas en versión original (inglés)?²³

¿Es capaz de escribir una carta formal en inglés?²⁴

Table 11.a: Communication

	Yes	No
Spoke English in class	40%	60%
Can communicate in English	87%	38%
Understand a native speaker	58%	42%
See films in Original Version	36%	64%
Can write a formal letter	69%	31%

Table 11.b: Communication



²⁰ Did you speak English with your teacher or classmates?

²¹ Can you communicate in English nowadays?

²² Can you understand a native speaker easily?

²³ Can you see films in original version (English)?

²⁴ Can you write a formal letter in English?

Most respondents (60%) assure that English was not spoken in their English classrooms, whereas a 40% used English for communication. Linguistic immersion was more difficult in the first case than in the second one.

As regards the possibility of communication in English abroad, an 87% can interact with native speakers whereas a 38% believes that communication in English is almost impossible. Therefore the level acquired seems to be sufficient at a basic level.

A 58% of the respondents states that it is able to understand a native speaker, whereas a 42% says that it is really difficult to understand oral English.

Only a 36% of respondents can see a film in original version whereas a 64% of them is incapable of understanding the whole plot.

Finally, a 69% affirms that writing a formal letter is almost impossible and a 31% says that it could be possible with the help of a dictionary and the Net. This result could indicate that, despite the fact that it is really difficult for respondents understand oral English, it is easier to write.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The results obtained in this study indicate that, in a formal context of acquisition, teachers should emphasize on aspects such as the intensity in the use of English as vehicular language and pedagogical approach developed in the classroom, mainly in order to promote a better communicative competence.

One of the initiatives for resolving the deficiencies of the Spanish educational system concerning English language teaching is a program developed by the Ministry of Education, which facilitates courses abroad for teachers who want to reinforce their knowledge of English and, consequently, encourage the necessary linguistic immersion in their classes.

This survey has been carried out with the aim of analyzing the way students perceive English teaching as a foreign language in secondary education. Public, state-assisted and private schools have been analyzed. Respondents, between 18 and 33 years old have attended different educational systems. The conclusions drawn out from this study are shown below.

With regard to the level of English acquired, B1 is predominant, especially in public schools, followed by B2 in private schools. Advanced levels C1 and C2 are hardly ever acquired, only C1 is reached in public schools.

According to the results, the language most used in English classes is Spanish. Only a small percentage of respondents in state-assisted schools has said that their classes were taught entirely in English. This fact makes difficult the linguistic immersion, needed for a correct development of the communicative skills.

As regards the perception that the students had about their classes, most of them describe them as very *“theoretical”* and *“really boring”*, especially in public schools and state-assisted schools. The majority of the students who considered English classes as very good, attended private schools.

This perception is related to the development of work in class. Most respondents affirm that they had never worked in pairs or groups. They also said that materials used in classes were only photocopies and the course book in most of the cases. Based on this, it can be deduced that, in most of the cases, the method used corresponds to traditional grammar methods based on grammar and repetition of exercises. For these reasons classes are defined as boring. Cultural and historical contents were not developed widely in the English classes.

Due to the methods used, which are far from communicative methods, almost half of the respondents said that they were not able to communicate with a native speaker although they were able to write a formal letter. The respondents seem to have acquired basic competences which are not sufficient for communicating abroad.

Once the results have been analysed, we can conclude by saying that the communicative approach should be used more frequently in the English classes. The use of this method would help students to develop the necessary communicative competences in the English language in different contexts in a better way.

This document does not represent the point of view of Spanish people. The interpretations and opinions contained in it are those of the author.

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7. APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Questionnaire guide used for interviewing the respondents.

Edad		Sexo	Nivel de estudios			
Idiomas que habla:		Trabaja actualmente: Si / No				
1.	Nivel de inglés que tiene al finalizar secundaria de acuerdo con el Marco común europeo de las lenguas (MCE)	A1 A2 B1 B2 C1 C2	Véase correspondencia de titulaciones en el anexo.			
2.	¿Cuántos años hace que finalizó sus estudios de secundaria?					
3.	Señale entre las propuestas el último curso (de secundaria) realizado. (señale el último curso de secundaria tanto si ha continuado o no con estudios superiores)	1ºBUP 2ºBUP 3ºBUP COU	1ºESO 2ºESO 3ºESO 4ºESO			
4.	¿Ha realizado estudios universitarios? Indique cuáles.	1ºBACHILLERATO 2ºBACHILLERATO				
5.	¿Cursó sus estudios de secundaria en instituto público, colegio concertado o colegio privado?					
6.	¿Cómo recuerda sus clases de inglés de secundaria?					
7.	¿Trabajaba en grupos, parejas...?					
8.	¿Las clases eran impartidas en inglés o en español?					
9.	¿Qué porcentaje de español se utilizaba en las clases?	25% 50% 75% 100%				
10.	¿Qué otros materiales, además de libros, se utilizaban en las clases?	Audiovisuales, fotocopias, juegos...				
11.	¿Recuerda haber realizado algún trabajo o proyecto para la asignatura de inglés? Describa brevemente en qué consistía ese trabajo.					
12.	¿Ha recibido en secundaria alguna clase de inglés en la que se introdujeran contenidos literarios, históricos o culturales referidos a los países de habla inglesa?					
13.	¿Hablaba usted en inglés en clase con sus compañeros o profesores?					
14.	¿Actualmente, se puede comunicar en inglés en un país extranjero?					
15.	¿Entiende fácilmente a un hablante nativo de lengua inglesa?					
16.	¿Puede ver películas en versión original (inglés)?					
17.	¿Es capaz de escribir una carta formal en inglés?					

Appendix 2: Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

Títulos equivalentes a los niveles:

A1 → ESOL 1-2; Trinity Grades 1,2

A2 → Key English Test (KET); Young Learners; BULATS 1; ESOL 3-4; Trinity Grades 3,4

B1 → Preliminary English Test (PET); BEC 1; BULATS 2; ESOL 5-6; Trinity Grades 5,6

B2 → First Certificate in English (FCE); BEC 2; BULATS 3; ESOL 7-9; Trinity Grades 7,8,9

C1 → Certificate in Advanced English (CAE); BEC 3; BULATS 3; ESOL 10-11; Trinity Grades 10,11

C2 → Certificate of Proficiency in English (CPE); BULATS 5; ESOL 12; Trinity Grades 12

Descripción de los niveles:

Nivel A1: Se adquiere cuando el estudiante es capaz de comprender y utilizar expresiones cotidianas de uso muy frecuente así como frases sencillas destinadas a satisfacer necesidades de tipo inmediato; cuando puede presentarse a sí mismo y a otros, pedir y dar información personal básica sobre su domicilio, sus pertenencias y las personas que conoce y cuando puede relacionarse de forma elemental siempre que su interlocutor hable despacio y con claridad y esté dispuesto a cooperar.

Nivel A2: Se adquiere cuando el estudiante es capaz de comprender frases y expresiones de uso frecuente relacionadas con áreas de experiencia que le son especialmente relevantes (información básica sobre sí mismo y su familia, compras, lugares de interés, ocupaciones, etc.); cuando sabe comunicarse a la hora de llevar a cabo tareas simples y cotidianas que no requieran más que intercambios sencillos y directos de información sobre cuestiones que le son conocidas o habituales y cuando sabe describir en términos sencillos aspectos de su pasado y su entorno así como cuestiones relacionadas con sus necesidades inmediatas.

Nivel B1: Se adquiere cuando el estudiante es capaz de comprender los puntos principales de textos claros y en lengua estándar si tratan sobre cuestiones que le son conocidas, ya sea en situaciones de trabajo, de estudio o de ocio; cuando sabe desenvolverse en la mayor parte de las situaciones que pueden surgir durante un viaje por zonas donde se utiliza la lengua; cuando es capaz de producir textos sencillos y coherentes sobre temas que le son familiares o en los que tiene un interés personal y cuando puede describir experiencias, acontecimientos, deseos y aspiraciones, así como justificar brevemente sus opiniones o explicar sus planes.

Nivel B2: Se adquiere cuando el estudiante es capaz de entender las ideas principales de textos complejos que traten de temas tanto concretos como abstractos, incluso si son de carácter técnico siempre que estén dentro de su campo de especialización; cuando puede relacionarse con hablantes nativos con un grado suficiente de fluidez y naturalidad de modo que la comunicación se realice sin esfuerzo por parte de ninguno de los interlocutores y cuando puede producir textos claros y detallados sobre temas diversos así como defender un punto de vista sobre temas generales indicando los pros y los contras de las distintas opciones.

Nivel C1: Se adquiere cuando el estudiante es capaz de comprender una amplia variedad de textos extensos y con cierto nivel de exigencia, así como reconocer en ellos sentidos implícitos; cuando sabe expresarse de forma fluida y espontánea sin muestras muy evidentes de esfuerzo para encontrar la expresión adecuada; cuando puede hacer un uso flexible y efectivo del idioma para fines sociales, académicos y profesionales y cuando puede producir textos claros, bien estructurados y detallados sobre temas de cierta complejidad, mostrando un uso correcto de los mecanismos de organización, articulación y cohesión del texto.

Nivel C2: Se adquiere cuando el estudiante es capaz de comprender con facilidad prácticamente todo lo que oye o lee; cuando sabe reconstruir la información y los argumentos procedentes de diversas fuentes, ya sean en lengua hablada o escrita, y presentarlos de manera coherente y resumida y cuando puede expresarse espontáneamente, con gran fluidez y con un grado de precisión que le permite diferenciar pequeños matices de significado incluso en situaciones de mayor complejidad.

	Comprensión auditiva	Comprensión de lectura
A1	Reconozco palabras y expresiones muy básicas que se usan habitualmente, relativas a mí mismo, a mi familia y a mi entorno inmediato cuando se habla despacio y con claridad.	Comprendo palabras y nombres conocidos y frases muy sencillas, por ejemplo las que hay en letreros, carteles y catálogos.

A2	Comprendo frases y el vocabulario más habitual sobre temas de interés personal (información personal y familiar muy básica, compras, lugar de residencia, empleo). Soy capaz de captar la idea principal de avisos y mensajes breves, claros y sencillos.	Soy capaz de leer textos muy breves y sencillos. Sé encontrar información específica y predecible en escritos sencillos y cotidianos como anuncios publicitarios, prospectos, menús y horarios y comprendo cartas personales breves y sencillas.
B1	Comprendo las ideas principales cuando el discurso es claro y normal y se tratan asuntos cotidianos que tienen lugar en el trabajo, en la escuela, durante el tiempo de ocio, etc. Comprendo la idea principal de muchos programas de radio o televisión que tratan temas actuales o asuntos de interés personal o profesional, cuando la articulación es relativamente lenta y clara.	Comprendo textos redactados en una lengua de uso habitual y cotidiano o relacionada con el trabajo. Comprendo la descripción de acontecimientos, sentimientos y deseos en cartas personales.
B2	Comprendo discursos y conferencias extensos e incluso sigo líneas argumentales complejas siempre que el tema sea relativamente conocido. Comprendo casi todas las noticias de la televisión y los programas sobre temas actuales. Comprendo la mayoría de las películas en las que se habla en un nivel de lengua estándar.	Soy capaz de leer artículos e informes relativos a problemas contemporáneos en los que los autores adoptan posturas o puntos de vista concretos. Comprendo la prosa literaria contemporánea.
C1	Comprendo discursos extensos incluso cuando no están estructurados con claridad y cuando las relaciones están sólo implícitas y no se señalan explícitamente. Comprendo sin mucho esfuerzo los programas de televisión y las películas.	Comprendo textos largos y complejos de carácter literario o basados en hechos, apreciando distinciones de estilo. Comprendo artículos especializados e instrucciones técnicas largas, aunque no se relacionen con mi especialidad.
C2	No tengo ninguna dificultad para comprender cualquier tipo de lengua hablada, tanto en conversaciones en vivo como en discursos retransmitidos, aunque se produzcan a una velocidad de hablante nativo, siempre que tenga tiempo para familiarizarme con el acento.	Soy capaz de leer con facilidad prácticamente todas las formas de lengua escrita, incluyendo textos abstractos estructurales o lingüísticamente complejos como, por ejemplo, manuales, artículos especializados y obras literarias.
Interacción oral		
A1	Puedo participar en una conversación de forma sencilla siempre que la otra persona esté dispuesta a repetir lo que ha dicho o a decirlo con otras palabras y a una velocidad más lenta y me ayude a formular lo que intento decir. Planteo y contesto preguntas sencillas sobre temas de necesidad inmediata o asuntos muy habituales.	Utilizo expresiones y frases sencillas para describir el lugar donde vivo y las personas que conozco.
A2	Puedo comunicarme en tareas sencillas y habituales que requieren un intercambio simple y directo de información sobre actividades y asuntos cotidianos. Soy capaz de realizar intercambios sociales muy breves, aunque, por lo general, no puedo comprender lo suficiente como para mantener la conversación por mí mismo.	Utilizo una serie de expresiones y frases para describir con términos sencillos a mi familia y otras personas, mis condiciones de vida, mi origen educativo y mi trabajo actual o el último que tuve.
B1	Sé desenvolverme en casi todas las	Sé enlazar frases de forma sencilla con el fin

	situaciones que se me presentan cuando viajo donde se habla esa lengua. Puedo participar espontáneamente en una conversación que trate temas cotidianos de interés personal o que sean pertinentes para la vida diaria (por ejemplo, familia, aficiones, trabajo, viajes y acontecimientos actuales).	de describir experiencias y hechos, mis sueños, esperanzas y ambiciones. Puedo explicar y justificar brevemente mis opiniones y proyectos. Sé narrar una historia o relato, la trama de un libro o película y puedo describir mis reacciones.
B2	Puedo participar en una conversación con cierta fluidez y espontaneidad, lo que posibilita la comunicación normal con hablantes nativos. Puedo tomar parte activa en debates desarrollados en situaciones cotidianas explicando y defendiendo mis puntos de vista.	Presento descripciones claras y detalladas de una amplia serie de temas relacionados con mi especialidad. Sé explicar un punto de vista sobre un tema exponiendo las ventajas y los inconvenientes de varias opciones.
C1	Me expreso con fluidez y espontaneidad sin tener que buscar de forma muy evidente las expresiones adecuadas. Utilizo el lenguaje con flexibilidad y eficacia para fines sociales y profesionales. Formulo ideas y opiniones con precisión y relaciono mis intervenciones hábilmente con las de otros hablantes.	Presento descripciones claras y detalladas sobre temas complejos que incluyen otros temas, desarrollando ideas concretas y terminando con una conclusión apropiada.
C2	Tomo parte sin esfuerzo en cualquier conversación o debate y conozco bien modismos, frases hechas y expresiones coloquiales. Me expreso con fluidez y transmito matices sutiles de sentido con precisión. Si tengo un problema, sorteo la dificultad con tanta discreción que los demás apenas se dan cuenta.	Presento descripciones o argumentos de forma clara y fluida y con un estilo que es adecuado al contexto y con una estructura lógica y eficaz que ayuda al oyente a fijarse en las ideas importantes y a recordarlas.
Expresión escrita		
A1	Soy capaz de escribir postales cortas y sencillas, por ejemplo para enviar felicitaciones. Sé rellenar formularios con datos personales, por ejemplo mi nombre, mi nacionalidad y mi dirección en el formulario del registro de un hotel.	
A2	Soy capaz de escribir notas y mensajes breves y sencillos relativos a mis necesidades inmediatas. Puedo escribir cartas personales muy sencillas, por ejemplo agradeciendo algo a alguien.	
B1	Soy capaz de escribir textos sencillos y bien enlazados sobre temas que me son conocidos o de interés personal. Puedo escribir cartas personales que describen experiencias e impresiones.	
B2	Soy capaz de escribir textos claros y detallados sobre una amplia serie de temas relacionados con mis intereses. Puedo escribir redacciones o informes transmitiendo información o proponiendo motivos que apoyen o refuten un punto de vista concreto. Sé escribir cartas que destacan la importancia que le doy a determinados hechos y experiencias.	
C1	Soy capaz de expresarme en textos claros y bien estructurados exponiendo puntos de vista con cierta extensión. Puedo escribir sobre temas complejos en cartas, redacciones o informes resaltando lo que considero que son aspectos importantes. Selecciono el estilo apropiado para los lectores a los que van dirigidos mis escritos.	
C2	Soy capaz de escribir textos claros y fluidos en un estilo apropiado. Puedo escribir cartas, informes o artículos complejos que presentan argumentos con una estructura lógica y eficaz que ayuda al oyente a fijarse en las ideas importantes y a recordarlas. Escribo resúmenes y reseñas de obras profesionales o literarias.	

Appendix 3: Barometer CIS February 2010

Estudio nº 2.830	Barómetro de febrero	Febrero 2010
Pregunta 7		
Me gustaría saber si Ud. considera que, hoy en día, tiene mucha, bastante, poca o ninguna importancia conocer idiomas extranjeros.		
Mucha importancia	50.3	
Bastante importancia	40.8	
Poca importancia	6.0	
Ninguna importancia	1.3	
N.S.	1.3	
N.C.	.3	
(N)	(2491)	
Pregunta 8		
Y, actualmente en España, ¿qué grado de importancia cree Ud. que se le da al estudio de idiomas extranjeros en nuestro sistema educativo?		
Mucha importancia	10.4	
Bastante importancia	41.3	
Poca importancia	37.9	
Ninguna importancia	3.3	
N.S.	6.6	
N.C.	.5	
(N)	(2491)	
Pregunta 9		
Cuando Ud. tenía diez o doce años, ¿qué grado de importancia se daba al estudio de idiomas extranjeros en su colegio o instituto...?		
Mucha importancia	3.1	
Bastante importancia	15.7	
Poca importancia	40.4	
Ninguna importancia	39.0	
N.S.	1.3	
N.C.	.5	
(N)	(2491)	

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Pregunta 10

¿Y cómo valora Ud. la enseñanza de idiomas que actualmente reciben los/as alumnos/as en nuestro sistema educativo: muy buena, buena, mala o muy mala?

Muy buena	2.6
Buena	37.6
Regular (NO LEER) ¹	23.5
Mala	16.1
Muy mala	2.9
N.S.	16.7
N.C.	.6
(N)	(2491)

Pregunta 11

En su opinión, ¿el estudio de un idioma extranjero debería comenzar en la enseñanza...?

Infantil/Preescolar	73.6
Primaria	22.6
ESO	1.1
Bachillerato	.1
FP	.0
Universitaria	.2
N.S.	2.3
N.C.	.1
(N)	(2491)

Pregunta 12

A lo largo de su vida laboral o en sus estudios, ¿en algún momento se ha sentido perjudicado/a o en situación de desigualdad por no hablar un idioma extranjero?

Si	25.5
No	73.9
N.C.	.5
(N)	(2491)

¹ Los/as entrevistadores/as no ofrecen las opciones de respuesta "NO LEER", pero las registran cuando son mencionadas espontáneamente por las personas entrevistadas.

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Pregunta 13

Con respecto a los siguientes idiomas, ¿podría decirme si...?

1. Lo habla y lo escribe
2. Sólo lo habla
3. Sólo lo lee
4. Ni lo habla ni lo escribe ni lo lee

	1	2	3	4	N.C.	(N)
Inglés	22.9	6.4	7.1	63.1	.5	(2491)
Francés	8.8	5.8	4.5	79.2	1.7	(2491)
Portugués	1.2	1.2	1.6	92.8	3.2	(2491)
Alemán	1.6	1.2	.4	93.9	2.9	(2491)
Italiano	1.4	2.1	1.8	91.1	3.6	(2491)
Otro idioma (1)	0.7	0.5	0.2	-	98.5	(2491)
Otro idioma (2)	0.2	0.2	0.0	-	99.6	(2491)

PREGUNTAS 13a Y 13b: SÓLO A QUIENES HABLAN Y ESCRIBEN, SÓLO HABLAN O SÓLO LEEN ALGUN/OS IDIOMAS MENCIONADOS EN PREGUNTA 13

Pregunta 13aAunque un idioma se puede aprender a través de distintos medios (de forma simultánea o consecutiva), quisiera que me dijera dónde aprendió Ud. fundamentalmente el...

1. En el colegio o instituto
2. Con profesor/a particular o en una academia especializada
3. Estancia en el extranjero
4. En su casa, con programas de aprendizaje de idiomas a distancia
5. En su casa, era su lengua materna o la lengua de sus padres
6. Otros

	1	2	3	4	5	6	N.C.	(N)
Inglés	65.3	17.8	8.3	2.3	.8	4.5	1.1	(907)
Francés	65.1	10.1	12.8	1.1	1.9	5.9	3.2	(476)
Portugués	5.0	4.0	30.0	7.0	10.0	36.0	8.0	(100)
Alemán	21.5	15.2	34.2	5.1	.0	17.7	6.3	(79)
Italiano	8.3	6.1	37.1	3.8	3.0	31.1	10.6	(132)
Otros idiomas	4.3	8.7	23.9	10.9	15.2	19.6	17.4	(46)

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Pregunta 13b

¿Y cómo calificaría Ud. el aprendizaje de este/os idioma/s: muy difícil, bastante, poco o nada difícil?

	Muy difícil	Bastante	Poco	Nada difícil	N.C.	(N)
Inglés	9.5	43.7	38.8	7.2	.9	(907)
Francés	6.5	30.3	50.6	9.7	2.9	(476)
Portugués	1.0	10.0	59.0	23.0	7.0	(100)
Alemán	32.9	36.7	21.5	2.5	6.3	(79)
Italiano	1.5	15.2	55.3	15.9	12.1	(132)
Otro idioma (1)	29.7	24.3	16.2	18.9	10.8	(37)
Otro idioma (2)	.0	33.3	16.7	50.0	.0	(9)

A TODAS LAS PERSONAS ENTREVISTADAS

Pregunta 14

Su padre ¿habla o hablaba algún idioma extranjero? ¿Y su madre?

	Padre	Madre
Si	10.3	8.1
No	88.8	90.8
N.S.	.1	.0
N.C.	.8	1.0
(N)	(2491)	(2491)

Pregunta 14a

¿Cuál o cuáles?

	Padre	Madre
Inglés	42.0	32.0
Francés	50.2	58.1
Portugués	5.8	6.4
Alemán	15.2	11.8
Italiano	5.1	4.9
Rumano	.8	1.0
Árabe	2.3	1.5
Ruso	.4	.5
Holandés	.4	.0
Otros	.8	.0
N.C.	3.5	3.9
(N)	(257)	(203)

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Pregunta 15

En la actualidad, ¿está aprendiendo Ud. algún idioma extranjero?

Si	8.3
No	91.3
N.C.	4
(N)	(2491)

(Preguntas 15a y 15b)

PREGUNTAS 15a Y 15b: SÓLO A QUIENES, EN LA ACTUALIDAD, ESTÁN
APRENDIENDO ALGÚN IDIOMA EXTRANJERO (Pregunta 15)

(N =206)

Pregunta 15a

¿Me podría decir cuál?

Inglés	68.4
Francés	7.8
Portugués	2.4
Alemán	5.3
Italiano	3.9
Chino	1.9
Árabe	1.9
Ruso	1.0
Japonés	1.0
Otros	1.0
N.C.	5.3
(N)	(206)

Pregunta 15b

Y, ¿podría decirme cuál es el motivo principal por el que está aprendiendo este idioma?

Porque lo necesita para su trabajo y/o estudio	45.1
Por sus estudios	.0
Porque le gusta aprender idiomas	33.5
Porque va a trasladarse a vivir a otros países	1.5
Otro motivo	13.6
N.S.	.0
N.C.	6.3
(N)	(206)

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Pregunta 16

Independientemente de que sepa o no algún idioma extranjero, si tuviera oportunidad, ¿cuál le gustaría aprender?

Inglés	45.9
Francés	9.2
Portugués	.7
Alemán	6.1
Italiano	2.5
Rumano	.1
Chino	2.2
Árabe	.8
Ruso	.4
Japonés	.9
Otros	.1
Ninguno	26.5
N.S.	3.3
N.C.	1.3
(N)	(2491)

PREGUNTA 16a : SÓLO A QUIENES, SI TUVIERAN OPORTUNIDAD, LES GUSTARÍA APRENDER UN IDIOMA EXTRANJERO (Pregunta 16)

(N =1716)

Pregunta 16a

Y, ¿cuál es el motivo principal por el que le gustaría aprender este idioma?

Para promocionarse en su trabajo	19.0
Por sus estudios	1.7
Porque le gusta saber idiomas	32.2
Para poder viajar a otros países	26.9
Otro motivo	17.4
N.S.	1.0
N.C.	1.7
(N)	(1716)

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Pregunta 17

Ahora me gustaría que me dijera si está más bien de acuerdo o más bien en desacuerdo con cada una de las frases que le voy a leer.

	Más bien de acuerdo	Más bien en desacuerdo	N.S.	N.C.	(N)
Para aprender bien un idioma extranjero hay que empezar desde muy joven	91.8	6.8	1.3	.1	(2491)
Hoy en día con los nuevos métodos de aprendizaje, cualquiera puede aprender bien un idioma extranjero	64.7	23.1	11.9	.3	(2491)
Para aprender bien un idioma extranjero, es necesario un periodo de estancia en el país en que se habla ese idioma	73.6	20.7	5.2	.5	(2491)

Pregunta 18

¿Ha viajado Ud. alguna vez a un país extranjero?

Si	63.4
No	36.5
N.C.	.1
(N)	(2491)

(Preguntas 18a y 18b)

PREGUNTAS 18a Y 18b: SÓLO A QUIENES HAN VIAJADO ALGUNA VEZ A UN PAÍS EXTRANJERO (Pregunta 18)

(N =1580)

Pregunta 18a

¿Me podría decir con qué frecuencia suele viajar al extranjero?

Más de una vez al año	13.2
Una vez al año	18.5
Una vez cada dos años	10.9
Con menos frecuencia	56.7
N.C.	.7
(N)	(1580)

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Pregunta 18b

¿Y cuál es el motivo principal por el que viaja al extranjero? ¿Y en segundo lugar?

	Principal	2º lugar
Vacaciones/ turismo	76.8	16.5
Aprender/perfeccionar un idioma	1.6	5.4
Trabajo	13.9	6.0
Estudios	1.3	2.2
Otro motivo	5.6	17.3
N.C.	.9	52.7
(N)	(1580)	(1580)

Pregunta 19

Spongamos por un momento que, por razones de trabajo, estudio o familiares, tuviera que trasladarse a vivir a un país extranjero. ¿En principio, esa experiencia de vivir en el extranjero le parece que le aportaría más bien ventajas o más bien inconvenientes?

Más bien ventajas	39.9
Ni ventajas ni inconvenientes (NO LEER) ²	10.0
Más bien inconvenientes	43.4
N.S.	5.9
N.C.	.7
(N)	(2491)

Pregunta 20

En todo caso, de los siguientes posibles inconvenientes o aspectos negativos, ¿cuál sería para Ud. el más importante?

Aprender un idioma	21.1
Adaptarse a nuevas costumbre	15.3
Dejar a sus amigos/as o a su familia	54.6
Otro	2.5
Ninguno	4.1
N.S.	2.0
N.C.	.3
(N)	(2491)

² Los/as entrevistadores/as no ofrecen las opciones de respuesta "NO LEER", pero las registran cuando son mencionadas espontáneamente por las personas entrevistadas.

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Pregunta 21

Y entre las posibles **ventajas** o aspectos **positivos** que le enumero a continuación, ¿cuál sería para Ud. el más importante?

Aprender un idioma	42.3
Conocer nuevas costumbre	28.8
Conocer nuevos/as amigos/as	10.0
Otra	4.6
Ninguno	9.1
N.S.	4.3
N.C.	.9
(N)	(2491)

Pregunta 22

De los aspectos que le muestro en esta tarjeta, ¿cuál cree Ud. que era el más importante para encontrar trabajo **hace diez años**? ¿Y en segundo lugar? ¿Y en tercer lugar?

	1º	2º	3º
Experiencia profesional	52.6	21.2	10.4
Conocimientos informáticos	4.1	10.4	10.3
Formación académica	21.9	27.9	14.5
Conocimiento del mundo de los negocios	2.2	5.5	8.4
Buena apariencia	6.6	13.6	17.1
Don de gentes	2.6	6.1	12.0
Conocimiento de idiomas extranjeros	2.5	6.1	12.4
Otro	2.1	.8	1.3
N.S.	4.6	6.9	11.0
N.C.	.6	1.6	2.5
(N)	(2491)	(2491)	(2491)

Pregunta 23

Y cuál cree Ud. que es el más importante en la **actualidad**? ¿Y en segundo lugar? ¿Y en tercer lugar?

	1º	2º	3º
Experiencia profesional	40.2	21.8	12.9
Conocimientos informáticos	10.9	24.5	14.3
Formación académica	26.9	21.9	15.9
Conocimiento del mundo de los negocios	1.8	3.5	6.0
Buena apariencia	2.7	4.0	9.6
Don de gentes	.7	1.6	4.6
Conocimiento de idiomas extranjeros	8.5	15.2	25.4
Otro	3.9	.8	1.8
N.S.	3.5	4.7	6.8
N.C.	.8	2.0	2.6
(N)	(2491)	(2491)	(2491)

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Pregunta 24

¿Tiene Ud. hijos/as en edad escolar o estudiando?

Si	30.1	→ (Pregunta 25)
No	69.7	
N.C.	.2	
(N)	(2491)	

(Preguntas 24a a 24g)

PREGUNTAS 24a A 24g: SÓLO A QUIENES TIENEN HIJOS/AS EN EDAD ESCOLAR O ESTUDIANDO (Pregunta 18)

Pregunta 24a

¿Podría indicarme qué tipo de estudios está realizando?

	1er hijo/a	2º hijo/a	3er hijo/a	4º hijo/a	Último hijo/a en edad escolar
Infantil/Preescolar	19.6	22.4	25.0	20.0	100.0
Primaria	29.5	43.0	55.0	60.0	.0
ESO	22.4	18.2	15.0	20.0	.0
Bachillerato	.9	4.8	2.5	.0	.0
FP	5.2	3.9	2.5	.0	.0
Universitarios	15.4	7.8	.0	.0	.0
N.S.	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
N.C.	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
(N)	(749)	(335)	(49)	(5)	(2)

Pregunta 24b

¿En qué tipo de centro?

	1er hijo/a	2º hijo/a	3er hijo/a	4º hijo/a	Último hijo/a en edad escolar
Público	73.8	74.9	85.0	100.0	100.0
Concertado	18.6	18.5	10.0	.0	.0
Privado	7.3	6.3	5.0	.0	.0
N.S.	.0	.0	.0	.0	.0
N.C.	.3	.3	.0	.0	.0
(N)	(749)	(335)	(40)	(5)	(2)

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Pregunta 24c

¿Qué idioma/s extranjero/s estudia su hijo/a en el/los centro/s de enseñanza donde está estudiando?

(Multirrespuesta)

	1 ^{er} hijo/a	2 ^o hijo/a	3 ^{er} hijo/a	4 ^o hijo/a	Último hijo/a en edad escolar
Inglés	89.6	86.9	82.5	80.0	100.0
Francés	17.2	17.6	12.5	.0	.0
Portugués	.5	.0	5.0	.0	.0
Alemán	.9	1.2	5.0	.0	.0
Italiano	1.1	.0	.0	.0	.0
Otro idioma	.4	1.2	.0	.0	.0
Ninguno	9.2	12.2	7.5	20.0	.0
(N)	(749)	(335)	(40)	(5)	(2)

Pregunta 24d

Y, en general, ¿cómo valora Ud.: muy buena, buena, mala o muy mala la enseñanza de idiomas que recibe su hijo/a en su centro de enseñanza?/?

	1 ^{er} hijo/a	2 ^o hijo/a	3 ^{er} hijo/a	4 ^o hijo/a	Último hijo/a en edad escolar
Muy buena	11.3	8.5	10.8	50.0	50.0
Buena	52.8	51.4	40.5	25.0	50.0
Regular (NO LEER) ³	19.3	22.4	18.9	25.0	.0
Mala	8.8	10.5	18.9	.0	.0
Muy mala	3.8	3.7	8.1	.0	.0
N.S.	4.0	2.4	2.7	.0	.0
N.C.	.0	1.0	.0	.0	.0
(N)	(680)	(294)	(37)	(4)	(2)

³ Los/as entrevistadores/as no ofrecen las opciones de respuesta "NO LEER", pero las registran cuando son mencionadas espontáneamente por las personas entrevistadas.

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Pregunta 24e

Y, ¿podría decirme si su hijo/a ha utilizado o utiliza alguno de los siguientes sistemas para perfeccionar alguno de los idiomas que estudia en el centro de enseñanza? *(Multirespuesta)*

	1º hijo/a	2º hijo/a	3º hijo/a	4º hijo/a	Último hijo/a en edad escolar
Clases particulares en academia o profesor particular	26.6	89.0	24.3	25.0	50.0
Estancia cursos de verano en el extranjero	6.3	15.9	8.1	.0	.0
Estancia de un año en el extranjero	2.9	2.4	.0	.0	.0
Ninguno	68.8	.0	70.3	75.0	50.0
(N)	(680)	(82)	(37)	(4)	(2)

Pregunta 24f

¿Y podría decirme si su hijo/a recibe clases particulares, acude a una academia, o por algún otro método, aprende algún idioma diferente al/los que estudia en su centro de enseñanza?

	1º hijo/a	2º hijo/a	3º hijo/a	4º hijo/a	Último hijo/a en edad escolar
Si	2.0	1.8	.0	.0	.0
No	92.9	86.0	90.0	80.0	100.0
N.C.	5.1	12.2	10.0	20.0	.0
(N)	(749)	(335)	(40)	(5)	(2)

Pregunta 24g

¿Cuál o cuáles?

	1º hijo/a	2º hijo/a	3º hijo/a	4º hijo/a	Último hijo/a en edad escolar
Inglés	53.3	.0	--	--	--
Francés	13.3	.0	--	--	--
Alemán	26.7	.0	--	--	--
Italiano	13.3	.0	--	--	--
Chino	6.7	.0	--	--	--
N.C.	.0	100.0	--	--	--
(N)	(15)	(6)	(0)	(0)	(0)