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SEGUNDA LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA E EMPREGABILIDADE NA CATALUNHA DO SXXI
SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND EMPLOYABILITY IN THE CATALONIA OF THE SXXI
SEGUNDAS LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS Y EMPLEABILIDAD EN LA CATALUÑA DEL SXXI

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RESUMO

Introdução: Apesar de considerar o idioma Inglês, Língua Franca por excelência, empresas catalãs, devido à sua crescente globalização econômica cada vez mais profissionais com conhecimentos de línguas estrangeiras associadas a habilidades e atitudes relacionadas à empregabilidade. Estas características refletem as necessidades do mercado de trabalho, a qual coisa implica uma forte sinergia entre universidades e empresas para fornecer aos futuros licenciados habilidades mais adequadas para uma inserção trabalhista de qualidade.

Métodos: Nossa análise é baseada no estudo de dois perfis diferentes de graduados, por um lado, estudantes da Faculdade de Tradução e Interpretação da Universidade Autônoma de Barcelona e os outros alunos do grau de Turismo Euroaula- Universitat de Girona, duas áreas em que o conhecimento de segundas línguas é inevitável para a sua posterior incorporação no mercado de trabalho. Vamos nos concentrar em segunda línguas estrangeiras (francês, alemão, italiano, etc.) que fazem parte das necessidades crescentes do setor empresarial catalão.

Conclusões: Os estudantes que podem acreditar conhecimentos linguísticos em duas línguas estrangeiras, com competências transversais associadas à empregabilidade, são futuros profissionais muito cobiçados pelo mundo trabalhista. Nessa perspectiva, o mundo formativo deve se esforçar para reconsiderar um ensino de línguas estrangeiras mais alinhado com as necessidades de conhecimento, know-how e saber como ser.

Palavras-chave: Graduados, empregabilidade, línguas estrangeiras, Tradução, Turismo

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Despite considering the English language, Lingua Franca par excellence, Catalan companies, due to their growing economic internationalization, demand more and more professionals with skills in foreign languages associated with skills and attitudes linked to employability. These characteristics reflect the needs of the labour market, which implies a strong synergy between universities and companies in order to provide future graduates with the most suitable skills for a quality labour market insertion.

Methods: Our analysis is based on the study of two different profiles of graduates, on the one hand, students of the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation of the Autonomous University of Barcelona and on the other hand, students of the Degree in Tourism of Euroaula-University of Girona, two areas in which knowledge of second languages is unavoidable for their subsequent incorporation into the labour market. We will focus on second foreign languages (French, German, Italian, etc.) which are part of the growing needs of the Catalan business sector.

Conclusions: The graduates who can accredit linguistic knowledge in two foreign languages, associated with transversal skills linked to employability, are future professionals highly coveted by the world of work. From this perspective, the world of education must try to reconsider the teaching of foreign languages that is more in line with the needs of knowledge, know-how and know how to be.

Keywords: Graduates, employability, foreign languages, Translation, Tourism

RESUMEN

Introducción: A pesar de considerar la lengua inglesa, Lingua Franca por excelencia, las empresas catalanas debido a su creciente internacionalización económica demandan cada vez más profesionales con competencias en lenguas extranjeras asociadas a habilidades y actitudes ligadas a la empleabilidad. Estas características son el reflejo de las necesidades del mercado laboral, lo que implica una fuerte sinergia entre universidades y empresas para proporcionar a los futuros egresados competencias más idóneas para una inserción laboral de calidad.

Métodos: Nuestro análisis se fundamenta en el estudio de dos perfiles distintos de egresados, por una parte, alumnos de la facultad de traducción e Interpretación de la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona y por otra parte alumnos del Grado de Turismo de Euroaula- Universitat de Girona, dos ámbitos en los que el conocimiento de segundas lenguas es ineludible para su posterior incorporación al mercado laboral. Nos centraremos en segundas lenguas extranjeras (francés, alemán, italiano, etc.) que forman parte de unas necesidades crecientes del sector empresarial catalán.

Conclusiones: Los egresados pudiendo acreditar conocimientos lingüísticos en dos lenguas extranjeras, asociados a competencias transversales ligadas a la empleabilidad son futuros profesionales muy codiciados por el mundo laboral. Desde esta perspectiva, el mundo formativo debe esforzarse en reconsiderar una enseñanza de las lenguas extranjeras más alineada con las necesidades de del saber, saber hacer y saber estar.

Palabras claves: Egresados, empleabilidad, lenguas extranjeras, Traducción, Turismo

INTRODUCTION

Language acquisition, whether it is L0, L1 or L2, has always occupied a privileged position in Catalonia. On the one hand, because of the linguistic situation itself, since this community is characterised by its bilingual citizens due to the coexistence of two co-official languages, Catalan and Castilian Spanish. According to the IDESCAT report (2014), by the Government of Catalonia, 94.3% of the population over 15 years of age understands Catalan and 80.4% is able to speak it, while data concerning Castilian Spanish reach approximately 100%. This sociolinguistic situation that fosters high-level linguistic skills in Spanish and Catalan is the result of a policy of linguistic immersion promoted in 1983, whose objective was that students, at the end of compulsory schooling, had similar linguistic competencies in both co-official languages. In addition to the importance given to native languages, the willingness of training institutions to promote the teaching of other languages is added, taking advantage of the predisposition of some students who are bilingual and, therefore, who find it easier to learn other languages. This priority for the promotion of an L2 is reinforced within the framework of Higher Education; to obtain a degree title, the students need to accredit a B1 level in a second language, particularly English.

The importance given to other languages in Catalonia also depends on other geo-economic variables:

1. The privileged geographical situation of Catalonia, which, on the one hand, shares the border with France and, therefore, enjoys privileged access to the European Union and, on the other hand, the presence of the Port of Barcelona, which has become widely accepted as one of the most important at both national and international levels, due to the increase in its volume of transactions.
2. Catalonia and above all Barcelona have become an increasingly important centre of tourist attraction, the latter being the third best city in Europe and eighth in the world, according to Hosteltur, a leading magazine in Spanish tourism.
3. Recently, Barcelona has also become a centre of excellence for congresses, start-ups and European technology.
4. Catalonia welcomes a high percentage of immigrants. According to data from the Barcelona City Council, more than 221 different languages coexist in the city, which forces the agents in charge of linguistic and cultural mediation to know the languages spoken in the surrounding areas.

These socio-economic circumstances explain the reason why nowadays, and particularly in Catalonia, the labour market is increasingly in need of people with excellent foreign language skills. In Spain, according to the CIS barometer (December 2016), command of foreign languages is the second most important factor in finding a job nowadays, even more important than professional experience or computer skills. According to Adecco (the main human resources company in Spain), English is still the most requested language, as almost 9 out of 10 job positions require language skills. However, even if there are those who think that English is, par excellence, the only international language of prestige, other languages are also necessary when choosing a job, as is the case of French or German, which represent – each of them – more than 7% of the vacancies.

1. EMPLOYABILITY

Considering the different demands of the labour market, higher education is in the position of training future graduates in competences necessarily related to the notion of employability, besides having to teach them the contents that are intrinsically linked to their academic curriculum. Traditionally, the employability of future graduates has usually been associated with just two indicators:

- U-Ranking (Synthetic Indicators of the Spanish University System) that analyses Teaching, Research and Innovation and Technological Development of Spanish universities, offering a classification of institutions.
- Ranking of university careers with more professional opportunities. This ranking is usually the most used by future students to choose their career often to the detriment of their natural vocation.

Without entering into the dynamics of whether the rankings are actually reliable or not, these two types of indicators only focus on the quality of teaching, whether it is, for example, related to innovation or the extent to which professional insertion is undertaken. The truth is that the labour market recognises the importance of the training quality of future staff members, while also drawing attention to their competences, such as attitudes, know-how and know-how-to-be, characteristics that are associated with employability.

In fact, the very term "employability" implies many more variables related to the world of work. According to Hillage and Pollard (1998), employability is defined as "the ability to get a job, maintain it and get a new job if needed", and that implies a whole battery of "skills" and "attitudes" that make up certain transversal competences, different from the actual competences of the training curriculum and that are applicable to any professional or training profile. York (2004) updates the concept: "A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy". Employability should, therefore, be part of the training framework from the beginning of the training to at least graduation as

stated by Galán (2017), with the centres being responsible for suggesting a training programme that is capable of improving it, adding insertion knowledge, job search techniques and other skills.

In 2014, the report on the employability of the Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya¹ indicated that both companies and students felt that, for a good job placement, some skills and attitudes were essential: responsibility at work, being able to work as part of a team, learning skills, communication skills, autonomous work, ability to generate new ideas, problem-solving, decision-making skills, negotiation skills, leadership and finally command of foreign languages. Some of these competences of the first group are acquired in the education system (or they are integrated into other more general competences), but others must be acquired or developed on purpose. Ultimately, to a large extent, they meet the expectations of companies about their future workforce and reaffirm the need to take into account two relevant aspects: on the one hand, the commitment of the university with the employability of graduates and, on the other hand, the need not to lose sight of the perspective that a degree is a way to guarantee the acquisition of knowledge and of the know-how that is necessary for successful integration in the workplace.

1.1. Employability and foreign languages

The internationalisation of companies, as is the case in Catalonia, implies individuals with a high level of knowledge of foreign languages, a trend that contributes to the idea of English as a *Lingua Franca* par excellence. The phenomenon of globalisation, which entails, among other things, large amounts of commercial transactions, financial services, as well as manpower services, directly influences the choice of a practical language, a merely instrumental language, a *Lingua Franca* that promotes optimal communication to counteract, to a certain extent, the effects of a growing linguistic diversity, product of exchange flows that could hinder an efficient linguistic exchange. This *Lingua Franca*, recognised as an international language, is usually chosen based on certain verifiable variables that determine its weight within linguistic diversity. To determine this weight, we can use different variables (Calvet, 2010):

- Number of speakers of a language.
- Status of official language,
- Number of articles found in Wikipedia,
- Number of Nobel prizes in literature,
- Human Development Index,
- Internet penetration index
- Number of forward or back translations.

Taking into account all these variables, according to the Baromètre Calvet des langues du monde, the English language stands in the first position. The conclusion can't be more explicit: the English language is the one with the most influence (with 328 million Anglophone speakers) and, thus, the status of an international language ascribed to it is fair. In this light, it is not a coincidence that both primary and secondary education and higher education centres use so much effort in teaching that language to the detriment of others.

But, within the transversal competences that are part of the abilities and attitudes that foster employability, the oral and written communication skills in two foreign languages, at a professional level, are especially relevant (Cifuentes Pérez, 2017). This professional level poses a serious problem, as both companies and graduates themselves say they notice a significant gap between the real level of training and the level required by the labour market, an asymmetry reflected in the various surveys conducted on the labour market (AQU, 2016). According to these reports, knowledge of foreign languages represents one of the competences with the highest training deficit. On a scale of 10, students are placed at 3.7 in terms of their own skills and 5.8 in terms of the importance of L2 to qualify for good job placement. On the part of the companies, the assessment as to the importance of second languages seems more positive. In fact, employers value the usefulness of second languages with a score that would be around 7.6, although they recognise a training deficit, placing the level of graduates at 6.7. This gap between training and need can be explained considering two perspectives:

1. Students show a lower level in L2 than that required by the labour market, because of their total lack of knowledge of such language and because they give more importance to other skills.
2. Training in a highly philological L2 does not respond to the demands of the companies.

This finding is paradoxical, especially knowing the desire of the different university institutions to promote foreign languages skills, requiring an accredited level of B1 in English (mainly) at the end of the students' degree studies, to complete their graduation, and their efforts to offer Erasmus exchange opportunities in Europe to reinforce not only the intrinsic competences of the curriculum but also the communicative skills in an L2, so appreciated for a better employability. This difference between the perspective of the graduates and the needs of the companies diagnoses a lack of communication between the companies and the training institutions on the specific demands of the market.

¹ Report on the employability and skills of new graduates: the opinion of companies and institutions, Agència per a la Qualitat del Sistema Universitari de Catalunya (2014)

1.2. Employability and the other foreign languages

If we rely solely on the prestige of languages, we notice that the privileged position of English leaves no room for any other language. As Hagège (2006) states,

“... if a language, at a certain moment in its history, is no longer adapted to our needs, we may, without qualms, replace it with a different one that seems more appropriate” (Hagège, 2006: 7)

However, concerning the prestige of second foreign languages, the French and German languages are not insignificant. According to the report of the OIF (2014), French counts with more than 212 million French speakers worldwide (people who use French daily) and with 125 million students (L2), while German counts more than 90 million speakers and 15.4 million students who have chosen it as a foreign language. If we refer exclusively to the European Union, English is still the most studied foreign language in the first level of secondary school, with 96.7% of students, but followed by French with 34.1%, German with 22.1% and Spanish with 12.2%; in terms of international student mobility, the teaching languages besides English (the vast majority) include French, German and even Russian. The data gathered refer to the current socioeconomic reality and this is reflected in the numbers: French is considered the third business language in the world, after English and Chinese, according to a study by Bloomberg (2011), and it is the second business language in Europe after English and ahead of German, Russian, Portuguese, Italian and Spanish; it is the second most useful language for economic exchanges, after German and before Spanish, Arabic and Chinese for British companies and, finally, it is first place followed by German, Italian, Portuguese and Russian as necessary languages for culture, education, diplomacy and defence, according to the British Council.

Which languages -- other than English -- are most useful for conducting business around the world?

LANGUAGE	SCORE*	NUMBER OF COUNTRIES WHERE LANGUAGE IS OFFICIAL	NUMBER OF SPEAKERS, MILLIONS	POPULATION IN COUNTRIES WHERE OFFICIAL, MILLIONS	2011 GDP, USD, BILLIONS	GDP GROWTH % 2011-2016	EXPORTS + IMPORTS AS % GDP	SCHOOL LIFE EXPECTANCY, YEARS	WEIGHTED AVERAGE LITERACY RATE FOR ALL COUNTRIES WHERE LANGUAGE IS OFFICIAL	NUMBER OF INTERNET USERS, MILLIONS	INTERNET PENETRATION % OF POPULATION	GEOGRAPHIC CONTINITY (% OF SPEAKERS)	TOURISM RECEIPTS AS % OF GDP
Mandarin	57.0	1.0	845.0	1,331.5	6,515.9	57.4	49.1	11.6	94.0	444.9	52.7	-	0.8
French	51.7	27.0	67.8	341.5	4,115.9	11.1	70.0	10.1	65.3	59.8	88.2	9.5	2.1
Arabic	50.1	23.0	221.0	361.7	2,662.5	25.7	91.3	10.5	71.5	65.4	29.6	13.9	2.9
Spanish	49.2	20.0	329.0	410.4	4,558.6	16.5	50.9	14.1	92.9	153.3	46.6	11.8	2.3
Russian	44.6	4.0	144.0	172.7	2,134.9	23.9	52.9	14.2	99.6	59.7	41.5	20.2	0.8
Portuguese	37.7	8.0	178.0	249.2	2,783.1	21.8	30.6	13.2	85.1	82.5	46.4	-	0.8
Japanese	34.1	1.0	122.0	127.6	5,821.9	8.0	24.8	15.1	99.0	99.1	81.3	-	0.2
German	24.0	6.0	90.3	109.3	5,079.5	9.2	89.1	15.9	98.9	75.2	83.2	0.5	1.7
Italian	19.6	4.0	61.7	68.4	2,784.6	7.6	56.9	16.2	98.8	36.7	59.5	0.3	2.1
Korean	16.0	1.0	48.8	48.7	1,126.5	22.2	95.9	16.9	97.9	39.4	80.8	-	1.1
Turkish	13.7	1.0	50.8	75.7	822.6	22.1	49.7	11.8	90.9	30.1	59.3	-	3.7

Table 1 - The languages of Business, Bloomberg Ranking

Therefore, in terms of employability, without denying the superiority of the English language but in accordance with the guidelines of the European Council in Barcelona (2002) that recommended the learning of at least two foreign languages to adapt to a labour market demanding ever higher levels of internationalisation, the inclusion of second foreign languages in our students' curriculum is essential, not only to enrich it but also to give them some training advantage over their competitors when entering the job market.

2. METHODS

A CASE STUDY OF STUDENTS ATTENDING THE FACULTY OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING OF THE AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF BARCELONA AND STUDENTS OF THE DEGREE IN TOURISM OF EUROAULA – UNIVERSITY OF GIRONA

To assess the importance of second foreign languages leading to successful employability, within the framework of the course unit of Professional Practice and the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the Autonomous University of Barcelona and the Euroaula University School affiliated with the University of Girona, a study was conducted on the comments of companies and students regarding the importance of an L2 and taking into account the future graduates' professional profile. The students belong to two different fields, as far as the use of foreign languages is concerned. In the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting, foreign languages are the main instrument of professional action and thus the competences are much more based on philological knowledge, the in-depth knowledge of the language that is essential for the development of professional activities in translation and interpreting. The students of this faculty have as their first foreign language (known as Language B) English, French or German,

commencing their degree with a minimum level corresponding to B1 (for French and German) or B2 (for English). As for the second foreign language, known as Language C, they can choose between French, German, Portuguese, Italian, Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Russian. Regarding the world of tourism, foreign languages are necessary to develop professional activity in tourism, a field that needs workers with a high linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge that allows them to work in different contexts, mainly involving oral communication, such as in negotiation or conflict resolution. In Euroaula, students have the possibility to choose between French and German as a second foreign language.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Faculty of Translation and Interpreting – AUB

In order to assess the importance of second foreign languages for the Translation and Interpreting job market, information concerning the evaluation of the optional course unit “Work Placement”, which is part of the curriculum for fourth-year students completing a degree in Translation and Interpreting, has been used. This involves the completion of tasks related to translation, interpreting or other possible modalities such as foreign languages teaching, linguistic mediation in companies, entities or public institutions outside the AUB or in centres and entities of the same university. The objective is to provide the students with first-hand exposure to placements related to their training. The students’ evaluation is carried out through online surveys by an external tutor (of the collaborating company) and an internal tutor (professor of the FTI-AUB).

3.1.1. Items evaluated by the company (external Tutor):

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Level of the student’s native language - The student’s foreign language level (in this case, the second language) - The student’s level of extra-linguistic competence - The student’s level of instrumental competence - Level of Problem Solving - Level of responsibility | } | 60% of the grade |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 % of the grade 10% of the grade | | |

In the evaluation carried out by the company, aspects related to the students’ “knowledge” are evaluated taking into account not only their linguistic competences, but also transversal competences specific to their professional development.

3.1.2. Items evaluated by the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting teaching staff (Internal Tutor)

Evaluation is carried out bearing in mind different components and it includes what we call a “professional portfolio” that comprises transversal themes in a straight connection with the workplace. These topics have been the subject of training sessions aimed at showing the diversity of professional opportunities in the translation and interpreting market, exploring the main job search strategies, as well as identifying the accounting and tax responsibilities that the translator or the autonomous interpreter must face.

- Presentation letter
- Curriculum Vitae
- Samples of completed tasks
- Table showing fictitious pricing
- Fictitious invoice

During the 2017-2018 academic year, 90 companies collaborating in the field of translation, publishing, official institutions, international companies, research centres, NGOs and language schools, among others, collaborated with the Faculty. Among all these companies, the number of places offered for professional internships in foreign languages was 155, with linguistic profiles that included 9 foreign languages other than Spanish and Catalan.

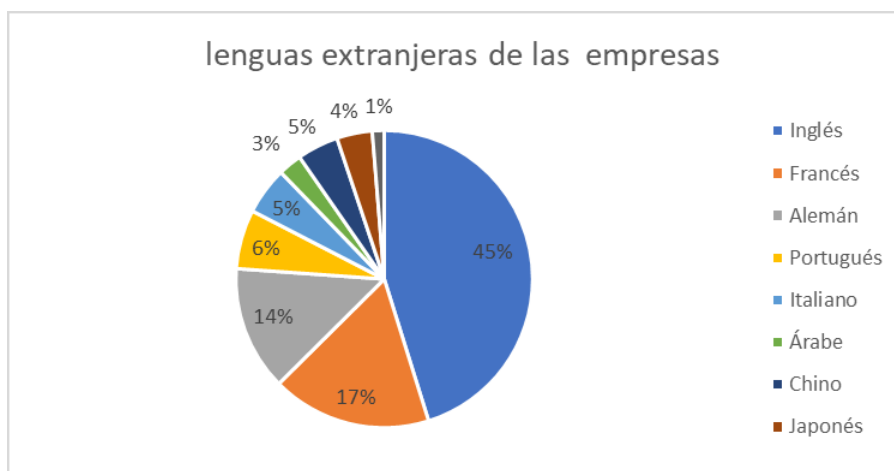


Table 2 - Foreign languages suggested by the collaborating companies

The total number of students enrolled in this course was 78. From the list of companies, students could choose up to 3 options depending on the type of companies and the working languages. The assignment of the traineeships was based on the working language required by the company and the linguistic combinations of the student, trying to privilege, as far as possible, the student's C language (second foreign language) with the aim of forcing the student to work in his/her second language to improve his/her skills and especially his/her fluency, a situation that would not occur if language B was the one to be used.

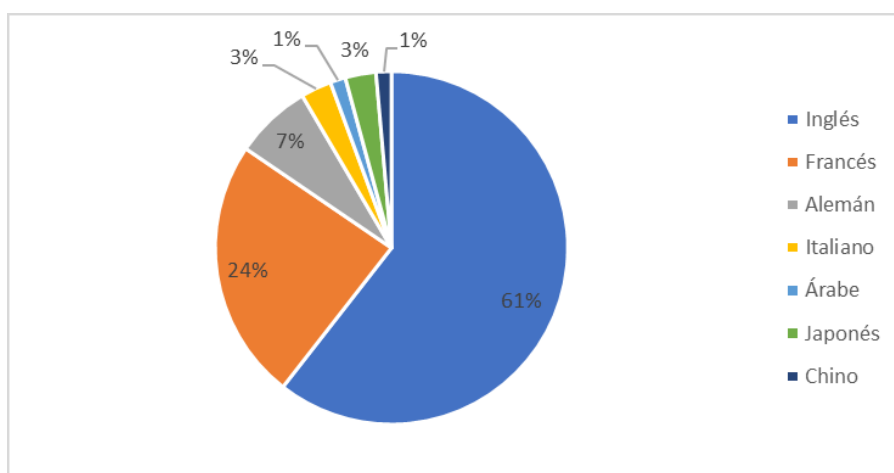


Table 3 - Languages used in professional practice (UAB)

The languages used during practice reflect, to a large extent, the needs of the labour market and they are the ones shown in the table. It is true that English is still the most used language (it corresponds to more than 60% of the sample) and it occupies the first place, while French is in the second position with 24%, German with 7%, Italian and Japanese with 3%, Arabic and Chinese with 1.5%. Regarding Japanese and Chinese, there is the need to minimise the impact of the numbers. In this study, Oriental languages (Chinese and Japanese) have only been evaluated as C languages. In the faculty, there is another degree named "Degree in Oriental Studies" whose professional practice is carried out in companies that ask for linguistic competences that do not correspond to those of our students of C language due to the great complexity of Oriental languages.

At the end of the internship, the evaluation carried out by the companies shows a very positive perspective on the students' language skills (command of one's native language, foreign language, extra-linguistic competence and instrumental competence) on the one hand and, on the other, transversal skills in straight connection with the competences that are necessary for successful employability, namely problem solving in an autonomous way, organisation of tasks and ability to work in groups. 85% of the grades awarded by the companies exceed 7 out of 10, which confirms the companies' appreciation of the students' level of linguistic and transversal competences. Regarding the students' opinion, this has been more than positive since, on the one hand, students value real work experience, namely working with their second foreign language, and, on the other hand, they realise the importance of incorporating

a second foreign language in their *Curriculum Vitae*, which allows them a vantage point over others in a workplace where the English language prevails and is considered as the only facilitator of employability, to a large extent.

It should be noted that the percentage of labour insertion of students who complete this university degree is very high (Galán, 2014). According to the report of the AQU on labour insertion of the graduates of Catalan universities of 2017, 65.8% of the students of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting at the Autonomous University of Barcelona find a job in less than 3 months and evaluate with a 7.3 their degree of satisfaction with their current job and with 8.5 their instrumental language skills in both languages.

3.2. Euroaula-University of Girona

Another market in which foreign languages are particularly important is tourism, a significant economic sector for Catalonia. The autonomous community received more than 18 million international tourists in 2017, which accounts for 10.5% of GDP, and whose countries of origin are Germany, France, Italy, Russia, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. According to the Barcelona City Council report on the main needs of the Tourism and Hospitality sector (2015), due to the growing diversity of the clients' origin associated with the need to offer a more personalised service, the labour market needs more and more workers in the sector who are proficient in several foreign languages.

To assess the prestige of second foreign languages in this sector, the students of the Tourism degree attending the Euroaula university school, affiliated with the University of Girona, also took part in the study. This degree incorporates into its study plan two foreign languages and professional practice, as mandatory conditions. The objective is that, at the end of the course, students can demonstrate excellent linguistic skills in English and in a second foreign language of their choice. Within the range of second foreign language possibilities, there is French and German, but there is also the possibility for students to choose a third language as an optional course unit, such as Italian, Russian and Chinese. As a second foreign language, French occupies the first position, chosen by 60% of the students over the four academic years. The compulsory study of a second foreign language arises from the needs of the tourism sector that has experienced remarkable growth in recent years, in part due to its internationalisation as an origin or destination country. Whether relating to customer care or to the use of new technologies, foreign languages are essential and Euroaula students recognise this, in part due to compulsory professional practice. Businessmen in the sector look for staff capable of communicating professionally in the language of its users, aiming at providing a more personalised service and ensuring the loyalty of the final client. In the commercial sector, tourism marketing and the state-of-the-art digital communication tools need to count on contents in several languages, privileging not only English but also other languages to contribute to greater visibility at the international level.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, 97 companies collaborated with our school and 92 internships were offered to 3rd-year students and 43 to 4th-year students.

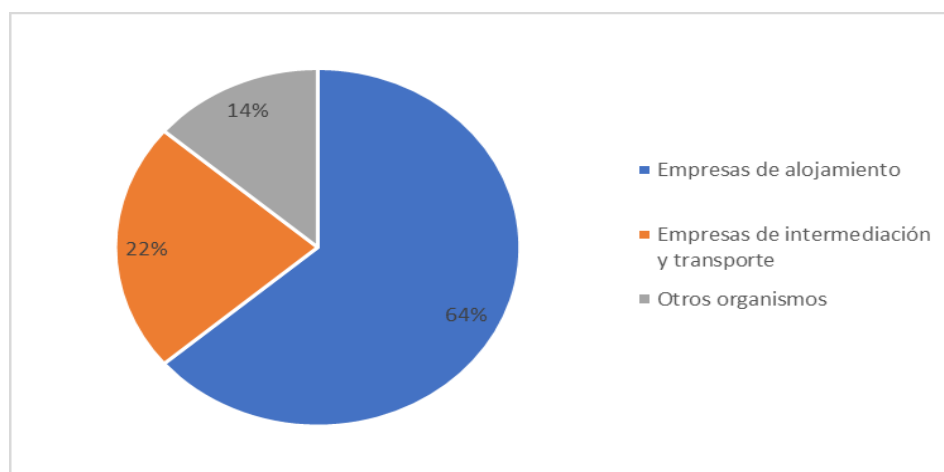


Table 4 - Type of tourism companies- Euroaula

As far as foreign languages are concerned, companies have similar needs to those described for Translation and Interpreting, according to the students' survey results. There is a hegemony of the English language, but also the need of French and German, followed by Italian, due to the increasing growth of business tourism, on the one hand, and of familiar tourism, on the other, largely coming from Europe (firstly, France, then Germany and Italy). After collecting students' views on employability through class discussions, Tourism students recognise the need for second foreign languages (especially within the quality accommodation sector), although they continue to favour the use of English in their professional practice. Regarding foreign languages, to improve the employability of future graduates, there was the decision to develop not only linguistic and extra-linguistic skills in the classroom, but

also all transversal skills that foster such employability (*Curriculum Vitae*, cover letters, oral presentations of ideas and projects, negotiation techniques and conflict resolution that may be needed on a daily basis), competences that will enable them to opt for a good job placement within the world of tourism, to get access to an appropriate job related to their training, with an income that is consistent with their academic level, and facilitate a more international career. From our point of view and taking into consideration the desiderata of the students, this implies changing the focus of foreign language teaching to encourage the use of foreign languages in a real working context in need of skills that are more related to employability and with more specific and more professional contents to improve the competitiveness of future workers.

CONCLUSIONS

With the universities' admission to the European Higher Education Area, the concern for the employability of future graduates has become a focus of much attention in the teaching plans of the different Catalan universities and the transversal competences are usually developed in L0 and in compulsory training sessions held by workers in the field. However, in the context of foreign languages, these skills are not usually part of the evaluative objectives, as the spotlight has been exclusively on linguistic competences. The presence of the working world in the classroom is real, but, in a very succinct way, associated with merely philological skills (vocabulary, standard sentences, etc.) without strengthening language use to improve know-how-to-be and know-how-to-act skills. For example, the increasingly growing trend to conduct job interviews in L2 and in real-life scenarios (in person, by phone or by Skype), to be able to see first-hand how the future worker handles difficult situations, indicates that the labour market needs staff with linguistic and extralinguistic skills, capable of using them in diverse, intense professional contexts, with some fluency and communicative ability in L2. These are the ones that will allow them to develop their professional life, their competitiveness as if they were using their L0.

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