

UNIVERSITY OF LLEIDA

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***COMPETING LINGUAE FRANCAE:
THE PLACE OF ENGLISH AND SPANISH FOR CHINESE
STUDENTS***

A Final Degree Project submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in
English Studies

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“To have another language is to possess a second soul”

- Emperor Charlemagne

“Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere”

“学习是永远跟随主人的宝物 [學習是永遠跟隨主人的寶物]”

[Xuéxí shì yǒngyuǎn gēnsuí zhǔrén de bǎowù]

- Chinese proverb

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and Carmen Helena Pineda Ciendua, the best psychologist and mother.

Abstract

This research project focuses on the role of English and Spanish as *linguae francae*. More specifically, the research attempts to answer the following questions: (i) What is the place of English and Spanish as *linguae francae* in the world, in general, and in China, in particular? (ii) What kinds of foreign language teaching/learning attitudes and practices are characteristic of the Chinese educational system? (iii) What are the motivations, expectations and experience of Chinese students in study abroad programmes, in general, and in the programme of the University of Lleida, in particular? The study constitutes an attempt to answer each of these questions in two ways: a review of the literature and a pilot study with 26 Chinese students at UdL. The research reveals that even though English is a very dominant foreign language in China, Spanish is a language on the rise and mainly for economic reasons. The results of the study also point at the impact of the dominance of the grammar-translation method in the perspective of Chinese students about language learning. Finally, the study shows the relevance of taking part in a SA programme for Chinese students as well as their experience of them.

KEY WORDS: English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), Spanish as a lingua franca, study abroad, foreign language teaching and learning, China.

Resumen

Este trabajo de investigación se basa en el rol de los idiomas inglés y español como *linguae francae*. El objetivo del estudio es responder a tres preguntas: (i) ¿Cuál es el lugar del inglés y del español como *linguae francae* en el mundo y en China particularmente? (ii) ¿Qué actitudes y prácticas son características del sistema educativo chino para la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras? (iii) ¿Cuáles son las motivaciones y expectativas de los estudiantes chinos que participan en programas de intercambio universitarios y, más concretamente, en el programa de la Universidad de Lleida? El estudio constituye un intento de responder cada uno de estas preguntas a través de la revisión de la bibliografía sobre el tema y de un estudio piloto con 26 estudiantes chinos en la UdL. El estudio revela que siendo el inglés una lengua extranjera altamente dominante en China, el español es una lengua en auge, debido principalmente a razones económicas. Los resultados del estudio también indican el impacto del dominio del método de gramática-traducción empleado en la enseñanza de lenguas en China. Finalmente, el estudio muestra el grado de relevancia que los estudiantes chinos dan a estudiar al extranjero así como a sus experiencias vividas en el programa de intercambio.

Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction	6
Chapter 2. Literature review: <i>linguae francae</i> and foreign language teaching/learning in china ..	8
2.1. English and Spanish as <i>linguae Francae</i>	8
2.1.1 English and Spanish in the world	8
2.1.2. The place of English and Spanish in China.....	15
2.2. Foreign language teaching and learning in China	18
2.2.1. Foreign language teaching and learning practices in China	18
2.2.2. Language learning attitudes of foreign language Chinese students	20
2.3. Chinese students in study abroad (SA) programmes.....	23
2.3.1. Chinese students' motivations and expectations in connection with SA programmes .	23
2.3.2. The experience of Chinese students in SA programmes	25
Chapter 3. The case of chinese exchange students at the university of lleida.....	29
3.1. Methodology	29
3.1.1 Stage One: the interviews.....	30
3.1.2. Stage two: the questionnaires.....	30
3.2 The motivation and expectations of Chinese students at UdL	31
3.2.1. Stage one: the interviews.....	31
3.2.2. Stage two: the questionnaire	33
3.2.3. Discussion	36
3.3. The experience of Chinese students at UdL.....	37
3.3.1. Stage one: the interviews.....	37
3.3.2. Stage two: the questionnaire	39
3.3.3. Discussion	41
Chapter 4. Conclusions	43
References	46
Appendix: The questionnaires.....	50

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This study was motivated by two aspects of my personal experience. The first one is connected with my three-year experience of living in Taiwan, which allowed me to interact with the Chinese culture and to discover several differences between Eastern and Western cultures. This was a very enriching process for me, which brought a different perspective to my notions of the world and of culture. My time in Taiwan allowed me to become aware of the deep roots and the present relevance of traditions and Confucian thinking in Chinese culture and that this as an impact on Chinese people's views of education and language. After two and half years of studying Chinese Mandarin in Taiwan, I could perceive that second language teaching and learning in China does not emphasize natural communication. After taking a university subject on English poetry, I also became aware of the importance of memorization and translation in language learning, and that this was a barrier for the Taiwanese students, who were more interested in communicating with foreigners in a daily basis. Finally, I learnt that Chinese people perceive studying abroad is very important for education. During my stay in Taiwan, I lived with a traditional Chinese family that had two sons, both of whom went to study abroad. I remember talking with the mother about how important it was for her that her sons took advantage of their opportunity to study abroad so that after completing their studies they could return to work in Taiwan. This caught my attention, as I considered then (and I still do) that knowing several foreign languages would give me the opportunity to work abroad.

The second reason for this study was my experience at the University of Lleida in Spain, where every year I encountered an increasing number of Chinese exchange students in the study abroad programme of the university. After getting to know some of the students, it called my attention that all of them where following a degree in Spanish in China and that they considered Spanish as a very important language. It was also a surprise for me that their Spanish proficiency was very high; their level of English was also quite good.

This research project focuses on the role to English and Spanish as *linguae francae*. More specifically, the research attempts to answer the following questions: (i)

What is the place of English and Spanish as *linguae francae* in the world, in general, and in China, in particular? (ii) What kinds of teaching/learning attitudes and practices are characteristic of the Chinese educational system? (iii) What are the motivations, expectations and experience of Chinese students in study abroad programmes, in general, and at the programme of the University of Lleida, in particular? After this brief introductory chapter, Chapter 2 consists of a review of the literature on the topic of the project and in connection with the three main research questions. In chapter 3, I present the results of a pilot study focusing on the same three questions as the literature review and which I carried out with the Chinese students who are taking part in the SA programme of the University of Lleida (UdL) between the months of January and April of 2013. Chapter 4 contains the conclusions of this research as well as my personal reflection about what it has meant to me.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW: LINGVAE FRANCAE AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING/LEARNING IN CHINA

2.1. English and Spanish as *lingvae Francae*

In this section, I attempt to give an overview of the present situation of English and Spanish as *lingvae francae*. The section is divided into two subsections: The first one focuses on the role of English and Spanish in the world and the second is about the place of these two languages in China nowadays.

2.1.1 English and Spanish in the world

English is the main language for books, newspapers, international travel and business, academic conferences, science and technology, diplomacy, sports, pop music and advertising. In 1989 Brian McCallen (1989) published a study on the English language and its global use that revealed the considerable amount of income the industry for learning English as second language (L2) represented for the UK. At the time that McCallen did his research, there was no doubt that English was taking a high position among other languages as the most common option for learning an L2. Eight years later, the work of Graddol (1997) is another attempt to summarise the position of English in the world, and it was estimated that in 2000 over one billion people were going to choose English as L2. Nowadays, the English language has invaded our world and its study has become a need more than an option.

There are two main reasons that could explain the current place of English in the world. First of all it could be said that the British colonial expansion built the basis for the global use of English. Overseas settlements allowed English to become a hybrid language after the contact with other cultures and languages (Graddol, 1997). English turned into a supplement for communicative needs, and it adapted and evolved gradually for suiting those colonized places. A second strong reason could be attributed to the popularity of English in the 20th century, which is closely related to the

growth of the United States (US) as a superpower. In the 20th century English influenced the economic, technological and cultural sectors. Globalisation affected the use of English and therefore it is possible to say that English started to overshadow most other languages i.e. French. What is the future of English language then?

Since English has been boosted by two waves of remarkable impact, British imperialism and the US economic power, several theories about the future of English have been discussed. Graddol (1997), for instance, foresaw a bilingual society where professional people would speak English as a second language at a first stage and, subsequently, the author predicted, there is a high chance that the world would become dominated by monolingual speakers of English only. Moreover, Graddol (1997) said that there was no reason to believe that any other language will replace English until at least the middle of the 21st century given that, for instance, in most countries trade and communication between them takes place in English and the investments that governments have made on the English language are very significant. In a slightly more recent study, Crystal's (2003) revealed that among the proportion of the world's books annually published in each language, English was the most widely used foreign language at 28%, followed by Chinese 13.3% and German 11,8%, which indicates the extremely high degree of importance of English language in both present and future terms.

In order to better understand the expansion of English, it is important to take into consideration Kachru's (2006) concentric circle model¹ with which he represents the idea of the English language divided into three concentric circles (see figure 1). The Inner Circle includes countries where English is used as a first language (a mother tongue) such as the US, the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. These countries are normally said to be 'norm-providing' in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) and English as English Language Teaching (ELT), in other words, English language norms are developed in countries that belong to the Inner Circle. The Outer Circle comprises countries such as India, the Philippines and Singapore, where English is used as a second language. Many of these countries were colonies of the Inner Circle countries and have indigenized (or localised) varieties of Englishes today. What Graddol foresaw for the future of English was that L2 speakers of English would move towards the inner circle (since the number of people using English keeps growing and

¹ *World Englishes: critical concepts in linguistics, Volume 4*, Publisher: Taylor & Francis, 2006

adopting English as their first preferred language). On the other hand, L1 users of English would head to the Outer Circle, adapting their varieties of English to those varieties spoken by the speakers in the Outer Circle. As a result, Graddol predicted that this would generate a gradual homogenisation of the English language.

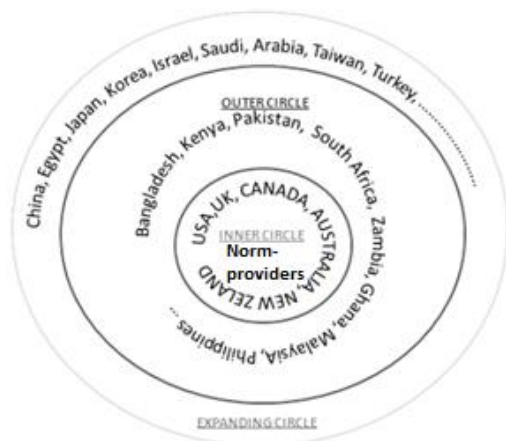


Figure 1. Concentric circle model (Adapted from Kachru, 1997).

The spread of English has caused the adoption of different ‘labels’ by linguists to refer to the way it is used by non-native speakers. Among these different labels we have English as Lingua Franca (ELF), English as International Language (EIL) and World English. According to Seidlhofer (2004) nowadays English is very frequently used as a ‘contact language’ between people who share neither a common native tongue nor a common culture, and English as a lingua franca has emerged as a way of referring to communication in English between those speakers with different first languages. For Firth (1996) most ELF interactions also take place among ‘non-native’ speakers of English. Kilickaya (2009: 3) considers English as “currently the best option for communication among people from different language backgrounds, thereby being labelled as ‘English as an International Language (EIL)’ or ‘English as a Lingua Franca’”. Brutt-Griffler (cited in Seidlhofer, 2004) explains that EIL, along with ‘World English’ are cover terms for users of English spanning throughout Inner Circle, Outer Circle, and Expanding Circle contexts (Kachru 1992). In 2001, Flowerdew and Peacock (cited in Seidlhofer, 2004) stated that the international language of academic research and publication at this moment is English, hence its international degree of importance as lingua franca and motivational effect on the need for non-native speakers to learn English as L2. Hyland (2002) corroborates this idea when he says that the English

language is the essential instrument in the professional life, and acquiring communicative skills mainly in EIL is fundamental for the professional world.

In order to give a more precise idea of the popularity of English, I have included below some figures provided by the British Council (n.d.):

- English has official or special status in at least seventy five countries with a total population of over two billion.
- English is spoken as a first language by around 375 million and as a second language by around 375 million speakers in the world.
- Speakers of English as a second language probably outnumber those who speak it as a first language.
- Around 750 million people are believed to speak English as a foreign language.
- One out of four of the world's population speak English to some level of competence; demand from the other three-quarters is increasing.
- English is the main language of books, newspapers, airports and air-traffic control, international business and academic conferences, science, technology, diplomacy, sport, international competitions, pop music and advertising.
- Over two-thirds of the world's scientists read in English.
- Three quarters of the world's mail is written in English.
- 80 per cent of the world's electronically stored information is in English.
- Of the estimated 200 million users of the Internet, some thirty-six per cent communicate in English.
- By the year 2000 it was estimated that over one billion people will be learning English.
- At any one time there are 130,000 students learning English and other skills through the medium of English in British Council teaching centres worldwide around 700,000 people come to learn English in the UK each year.
- British English language products are worth over 800 million pounds a year to the UK.
- The total expenditure of the 700,000 visitors to the UK annually to learn English is over 700 million pounds - possibly over one billion pounds.
- The English language makes it possible for British companies to develop markets, sell into them and form commercial alliances; it brings direct benefits.

Despite the present popularity of English as an international language, there are other languages that have a heavy weight in the world and that should be taken into consideration as possible rivals for English. Perhaps the two most important of these languages are Spanish and Chinese. Graddol (1997) already perceived the importance of both languages due to different reasons. In the case of Spanish, its importance was due to the fact that it is used in all of Latin America. In the case of Chinese, its progressive strength was attributed by Graddol mainly to the fact that it has more first-language users than any other language. In addition to Graddol (1997), Tamarón (1992) considered that one of the reasons for English to have rivals was that its increasing use as a second language has caused a fragmentation of the grammatical and lexical homogeneity of the language. For him, an important requirement for a lingua franca is to be universally intelligible and to maintain its standards. Therefore, as a result of the high degree of variation of English because of its wide usage, it is possible to say that English no longer unifies all those who speak it. Tamarón (1992) also said that the English language in the near future would be a sort of ‘corrupted’ lingua franca, simple and regarded as a pidgin that would contain a mixture of the eight hundred and fifty words from *Basic English*² within different cultures. For him, English would become an unintelligible dialect, a degraded language with a deteriorated lexical structure (Tamarón, 1992). Tamarón’s belief could be reconsidered at the moment, given that 21 years have passed. From a personal point of view, English has not been corrupted inside the national curricula in the sense that English as a FL follows the ‘norm-providers’ references in most of the countries where it is taught. However, there are cases to take into consideration such as *Singlish* (Singaporean English), which is a form of slang English commonly used in Singapore. *Singlish* uses English words with Chinese grammar, often with loanwords from the other official languages of Singapore (Malay and Tamil) and it shares many similarities with pidgin varieties of English (Wee, 2004). For a non-Singaporean speaker, *Singlish* can easily give the impression of "broken English" or "bad English". Some examples are shown in table 1 below³:

²**Basic English** is a simplified subset of regular English-based language created by linguist and philosopher Charles Ogden (1930) as an international auxiliary language, and as an aid for teaching English as a Second Language. Basic English contains 850 core words theoretically enough for everyday life.

³Taken from Chinese-Forums Online. “Singlish: is it a real language?”. Web 18/12/07. Visited 06/06/13

SINGLISH VERSION	ENGLISH VERSION
Dat person there cannot trust.	<i>That person over there is not trustworthy.</i>
Tomorrow dun need bring camera.	<i>You don't need to bring a camera tomorrow.</i>
He play soccer also very good one lah.	<i>He's very good at playing soccer too.</i>
I go bus-stop wait for you.	<i>I will be at the bus stop waiting for you</i>

Table 1: Examples of Singlish sentences and its equivalents in English.

Tamarón (1992) describes in detail some of the main advantages of the Spanish language in front of English (and other languages). In the first place, Spanish has an orthography which is reasonable and less complex than, for instance, French or English. In the second place, the phonetics is simple and transparent and it corresponds to its written form. Thirdly, Spanish is the most spoken Romance language and is also a key element inside this language group. The author exemplifies this last idea saying that it would make more sense for an American businessman who trades in Mexico and Portugal to choose learning Spanish rather than Portuguese.

The gradual spread of Spanish being learned as a second or foreign language is confirmed by data from the Instituto Cervantes (2012). According to this source there are more than 495 million Spanish speakers in the world, which makes Spanish the second language most spoken as an L1 as well as the second language used in international communication. Here is some further information given by the Instituto Cervantes (2012) on their website:

- Due to demographic reasons alone, the percentage of people speaking Spanish as L1 is increasing, whereas Chinese and English as L1 stabilises.
- In 2030 about 7.5% of the global population will speak Spanish. Only then, Chinese language will overtake Spanish.
- In about 3 or 4 generations 10% of the world population will understand Spanish.
- In 2050 the US will be the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world.
- About 18 million students study Spanish as foreign language.
- There is a yearly increase of 8% in number of students' learning Spanish.

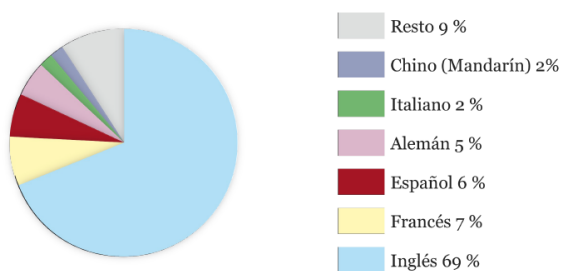
The image of Spanish as an international language is that it is a language widely spoken and most of the countries where it is spoken are concentrated in one world region, the American continent. The Berlitz report (Berlitz, 2005) also seems to be quite

optimistic about the future of Spanish. In this case, the report states that from the point of view of the number of L2 learners, Spanish occupies the third most studied language after English and French. The exact percentages are expressed below (Figure 2):

4. Número de estudiantes de español

El inglés, el francés, el español y el alemán, en este orden, son los idiomas más estudiados como lengua extranjera según el *Primer informe Bertlitz sobre el estudio del español en el mundo*, elaborado en el año 2005.

Gráfico 2. Idiomas más estudiados como lengua extranjera



Fuente: Primer Informe Bertlitz sobre el estudio del español en el mundo (2005).

Figure 2. Percentage of population studying different languages

The economic importance of the Spanish language is also made clear in the Berlitz report through figures such as the following:

- When two countries speak Spanish, the bilateral trade increases by 290%, compared to the situation in which the two countries do not share the language.
- Spanish publishing companies have 162 affiliated companies in 28 countries (more than the 80% in Latin America), which indicates the high connectivity of Spanish language and culture between certain countries.
- North America (Mexico, the US and Canada) and Spain represent 78% of purchase power among Spanish-speakers.
- The Spanish-speaking population in the US has shown to keep their mother language generation by generation.
- The purchasing power among Spanish speakers from 2007 to 2012 remains strong in comparison to other minority groups in the US.
- The number of tourists interested in learning Spanish in Spain has increased from 2000 to 2007 with 137%.
- Nowadays, the image of the Spanish language is well related to better economic perspectives for bilingual people able to speak Spanish.

The data above are consistent with the economic importance of the languages. According to Muñoz (2007) (cited in Instituto Cervantes, 2012) there exists a strong connection between the spread of the language and the economy of the countries that use that language. The Spanish language has earned a status of language for international trade within Latin America, and the positive economic impact that Latin American countries are having is associated with the importance of the Spanish language for several economical and commercial purposes such as the creation of Mercosur, a trade agreement established in 1991 between Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay. The government of Brazil, with a population of about 200 million people⁴ and while having Portuguese as official language, introduced an education reform in 2000, in which the Spanish language became a compulsory subject from primary school⁵. Mercosur's boosters rightly claimed that language is its secret weapon (Graddol, 1997). In 2008, Venezuela, Chile and Bolivia became associate members. Peru, Ecuador and Colombia have expressed their willingness to join the group and Mexico has shown a growing interest.⁶

2.1.2. The place of English and Spanish in China

After the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, China engaged in an important process of reconstruction of the political, social, economic, and educational domains (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002). Initially, the school curricula used before 1949 were adopted and this affected the place of foreign language teaching, which, in the case of English, it had already been taught since the late 19th century (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002). However, after 1949, English (together with 'non-communist' languages), was not the preferred second language because of Western attempts to isolate Communist China. At the same time, political relationships developed between the PRC and the Soviet Union during the early 1950s, and thus a Soviet influence on China's education was soon reflected. As a consequence, the new curricula offered Russian as L2 since 1952, and this made Russian the leading foreign language taught in China. From that time, other foreign language teaching declined

⁴ *World Population Prospects*. "Brazil, 2010". Web 6/12/12. 2010. Visited 04/06/13.

⁵ Moreno, Javier. *El País*. "Brasil decide si quiere hablar español". Web 18/06/00. Visited 05/06/13.

⁶ *Merco Press*. "About Mercosur". Web (n.d.). Visited 05/06/13.

dramatically, and in the case of English, was considered unpatriotic (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002). The awareness of the importance of strong foreign languages such as English and Spanish recovered its place in China in the late 1950s or early 60s, due to the need for technological and scientific knowledge, as well as trade relations with other countries. Thus, in 1957, the English language was reintroduced into the junior secondary curricula (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002). Subsequently, the Cultural Revolution in 1966 affected China's economic and educational development deeply since the country faced approximately another ten years of isolation (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002). The author explains that everything related to foreign languages was banned. The English teaching could only reappear in 1976, when the Cultural Revolution was over. After this date, the new policies of the Chinese government promoted foreign language as an important tool for learning cultural and scientific knowledge, for acquiring information in different fields from around the world, and for developing international communication (Silver; Hu & Iino 2002:37). The Open Door Policy in 1986 declared a need for "reforming China's economics, politics, technology and education in order to construct a country as a modern socialist nation, competent in various aspects of foreign languages" (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002).

Foreign language teaching faced a high degree of progress due to the PRC's reform and modernization program after the Cultural Revolution in order to open new opportunities for collaboration between the PRC and foreign countries. According to Hu (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002), the modernization programme encouraged by the government displayed English language mainly as an important cornerstone for international competition. Proficiency in global languages such as English and Spanish started to be seen as a key to success in a wide range of opportunities. It allowed people to ensure a place for studying an university degree, going abroad for further education, finding a well-paid job in the public and private sectors, include the many foreign-invested companies or joint ventures in China, and being eligible for promotion to higher professional ranks (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002).

The programmes for learning foreign languages in China have been re-structured especially since the end of the 20th century. For instance, pre-school education in large cities and developed areas in China started to offer English lessons (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002). Since 1994, there has been an annual increase of more than one million primary English learners and in 2001 there were eight million primary school pupils studying English as a school subject for approximately two to three hours a week (Silver; Hu and

Iino, 2002). According to Hu (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002), Chinese junior secondary students learn foreign languages as a compulsory subject, where English takes the first place. The same happens with senior secondary schools, whose curriculum consist of a three-year pre-academic programme including foreign language as a subject as well.

Although the teaching of Spanish as L2 in China for secondary schools is very low in comparison to English, it is becoming more popular as a university degree. According to Santos (2009) in the academic year 2003-2004 there were 1588 Chinese students who applied for a Spanish degree, which represented a 20% increase from the previous year. Moreover, Méndez (2005) mentioned that in 2005 there were twenty universities in China that included a Spanish department, and there were several projects for opening Spanish departments in universities such as Harbin and Hunan. It is important to mention that nowadays students who choose to learn Spanish as an L2 are mainly university students whose major is English and first-year Spanish majors start their degree without knowing Spanish at all (Méndez, 2005).

To summarise this section 2.1, it could be said that the origin of the expansion of English is the British Empire and it continued with the economic and cultural power of the US. Nowadays, English has the special recognition among different economic and social domains that give a language the status of a truly international language. It surpasses other languages in number of speakers, geographical extension and the number of countries in which the language has an important or even official status. On the other hand, Spanish is beginning to have a profound impact among the domains of trade, science, tourism and globalization. The population of both L1 and L2 Spanish speakers is increasing year after year, and although English fulfils the function of *lingua franca* at the moment, Spanish is a thriving language and could once be considered a strong rival for English dominant role.

English and Spanish were probably introduced in China in the late 1800s. However, historical events considerably slowed the spread of these languages and it took well into the second half of the 20th century to make English compulsory in many Chinese schools. Spanish is starting to gain popularity due to the increasing economic ties of China with the Spanish-speaking countries.

2.2. Foreign language teaching and learning in China

The goal of this section is to answer two questions. In the first place, I will explore the issue of the prevalent foreign language teaching and learning practices in China. In the second place, I will give an overview of the attitudes towards foreign language teaching and learning.

2.2.1. Foreign language teaching and learning practices in China

The education system in China has been deeply influenced by Confucian thinking. According to Hu (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002), the role of education in Chinese society is highly important due to the Confucian belief that education rewards the soul and satisfies the personal development. In addition to this, Confucianism promotes the idea that education brings social recognition and moral qualities. Confucius promoted the cultivation of moral virtues emphasising the moral development which was considered to be the basis of successful education, and this has shaped the perceptions of the process of teaching and learning and expectations inside Chinese (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002:53). The Confucian belief in the role of repetition has been portrayed in the Chinese saying “Read one hundred times, and the meaning will emerge” (Hu, Silver, Iino, 2002:55).

It could be said that Confucianism has helped to shape the Chinese education system at all levels, including foreign language teaching and learning. Foreign languages are at present very much promoted in China and have an important role in society. According to Hu (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002:53), the methodology for teaching foreign languages is highly focused on memorizing grammar and vocabulary. According to Méndez (2005) and Sánchez (2008), in China the concepts “language” and “grammar” are closely related. It seems that there is a belief (not only for the academic fields but generally speaking) that a person could have a good command of a language only if there is a full knowledge of its grammar structures. This belief could be attributed to the Confucian thinking mentioned above.

It is also important to take into account that FL learning in China was conditioned by the historical background of China previously to the Open-Door Policy in 1949; Mendez (2005) explains that before the proclamation of PRC in 1949, the main objective for learning a foreign language was to pass government examinations and to

be able to read scientific or technological texts in foreign languages. Due to this, the knowledge of grammar structures in foreign languages was much more relevant than developing the speaking or listening skills. This could explain the success of the grammar-translation method for learning foreign languages in China.

The grammar-translation method is simple: the teachers' aim is to translate rather than to teach and apparently students find it a convenient way to learn. Cortazzi and Jin, (1996: 183) explain that the process of the grammar-translation method applied in China consists of tasks in which students first are supposed to look up every new word in a dictionary, then students are expected to write down the FL words in their Chinese equivalents. Subsequently, students would try to understand every detail of the text given, and finally students are supposed to highlight any difficult phrases and sentences from the text. Below is the methodology used in grammar-translation in detail. According to the authors, this method could still be found at any level of ELT in the PRC in 2001 (Hu, Silver& Iion, 2001: 48):

- The teacher prepares extensively before the class, identifying all possible language points in the text, writing a detailed lesson plan full of explanations and examples, and penciling notes in the margin of the text in order to be able to expound every likely grammar point or word meaning which could arise.
- In class, the teacher begins with a careful review of the language points learned in the last class, reads the text aloud herself or asks individual students to read aloud the paragraphs in turn, corrects their mistakes in pronunciation and intonation, and asks a few general comprehension questions.
- The teacher goes over the bilingual list of new words provided in the textbook, discussing the meaning and parts of speech of these words, presenting antonyms, synonyms and collocations containing these words, and giving example sentences to show how these words should be used.
- Having presented the new words, the teacher starts to analyse, sentence by sentence, the text both grammatically and semantically, explain and exemplify language points in exhaustive detail, paraphrase or translate difficult sentences, and ask questions (usually literal ones) to check the students' understanding.
- After part of the text has been dealt with in such a manner, the teacher asks the students to summarize or retell the content of the covered part one after another until they memorised every word.

- Then, the teacher guides students through the written exercises of translation, sentence manipulation, blank-filling, etc., to consolidate the language points.
- Finally, the teacher summarizes the language points taught and assigns homework.

It is important to mention that other systems such as the American Audiolingual Method (ALM) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) have been promoted after the creation of the PRC for FL teaching, although they have remained as less dominant methodologies. According to Hu (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002), ALM was imported into the PRC in the early 1960's as an oral-based approach to the learning of a foreign language based on linguistic structuralism.

CLT started in the 1970s in Europe as a product of second language acquisition research. Hu (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002), explains that CLT focuses on the communicative competence as the primary goal of language teaching and learning. The author says that in CLT teaching should be centred on communicative functions and learners should be provided with ample opportunities to use the target language for communicative purposes and learn the language through using it.

After the Open-Door Policy the Chinese Ministry of Education (MOE) presented different programs for the foreign languages curriculum in order to incorporate Western models and practices. However, authors such as Méndez (2005), Sánchez (2008) and Hu (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002) defend that the grammar-translation method continues to lead the field of foreign language teaching in China, in comparison with methods such as ALM and CLT, which have failed to receive widespread support. It seems that the grammar-translation method has been deeply rooted in the Chinese society and its status could be attributed to the resemblances to the Chinese traditional Confucian thinking which emphasises the connection between language and grammar.

2.2.2. Language learning attitudes of foreign language Chinese students

When dealing with learning attitudes, there are several aspects to take into consideration such as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, teaching methodology, social values, traditions and culture, among others. Below are some aspects about Chinese students that caught my attention at the moment of writing this research paper.

First of all, and according to what has been discussed in the previous section, I would like to have a look into the aspect of the teaching methodology in China. Due to the dominance of the grammar-translation method in China, great emphasis has been placed in learning the grammar and vocabulary of the FL. According to Méndez (2005) Chinese students are good at ‘learning’ language skills, but deficient at ‘acquiring’ them. The author explains this idea by saying that in China it is common to find students who have a good knowledge of the rules and norms of the foreign language but who, at the same time, present a high degree of difficulty to take part in FL communication.

Méndez (2005) writes about his personal experience as a Spanish language teacher in China, and he explains that students constantly requested him for the Chinese equivalent of the Spanish words when learning new vocabulary and that even if there were students with a good level of Spanish, they were not able to communicate naturally. Méndez also explains that there is a tendency in Chinese students to apply morphological or grammatical structures from other languages they have studied and that, basically, English language traces were commonly found at the moment of building a sentence in Spanish language. Méndez’s analysis of one popular Spanish course book with the title of *Xibanyayu Sucheng* criticises the extended use of Chinese text for explaining the grammar rules and the excessive use of vocabulary-translations. The author criticised the book’s explanations as too simple and irrelevant (Méndez, 2005:41). For a better understanding of Méndez’s critical analysis of Spanish teaching and learning methods in China it is convenient to take into consideration Krashen’s Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories. According to Krashen (1981) SLA occurs when an individual uses an L2 without an extensive use of conscious grammatical rules. Acquiring a language, Krashen explains, requires that natural communication takes place within a communicative context: “*speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding*” (1981:5). SLA can be identified with the common routines and patterns that students learn when studying a L2, which includes grammar and vocabulary learning and memorization. Krashen (1981) believed that language learning, as opposite to language acquisition, destroyed the natural-communication flow between the speakers due to the fact that natural communication cannot occur if the language has been consciously learnt (1981:13). Since Chinese students of FL behave as language learners mostly, this could be a problem at the moment of expressing themselves in a

foreign language, which could in turn affect their intrinsic motivations at the moment of learning any FL.

A second relevant aspect that affects Chinese students' attitudes towards FL is the importance of commercial relations between China and the world. According to Méndez (2005), the revolutionary speech by the reformist leader of the Communist Party of China Deng Xiaoping changed the perspective of Chinese society towards foreign languages. It was in the middle of 1980s that Deng promoted his famous sentence "To get rich is glorious" (致富光荣). In his public speech, Deng stressed the importance of the economic reform in China, and criticized those who were against economic and openness reforms. His catchphrase unleashed a wave of personal entrepreneurship that continues to drive China's economy today (Iritany, 2004). What Iritany said is important for understanding probably the main reason for Chinese students to choose FL as a major degree: to have better job opportunities. Authors such as Méndez (2005), Hu (Silver; Hu and Iino, 2002), Sánchez (2008), and Byram and Feng, (2006) among others, state that there is a tendency on Chinese students to choose international languages as major degrees because of the higher chances they give them for accessing a professional world above the normal standards. In 2005, Méndez (2005) stated that approximately 65% of Chinese students with a degree in Spanish Studies had found a job related to the business area. The remaining 35% had been hired by the government, were working as teachers, or went on to study for postgraduate degrees (Méndez, 2005).

A third aspect to take into consideration about the learning attitudes of Chinese students of FL is social values and beliefs. Chinese students give a high degree of importance to the opportunity of learning any FL in the country where it is spoken. The results of two different surveys, one by Méndez (2005) and the second one by Gu (2009), revealed that most of the participants (Chinese university students of Spanish or English) felt unsatisfied for not being able to study abroad in their last year of their undergraduate period. In addition to this, they believed that international languages allowed them to interact with other cultures and were helpful for communicating with people all over the world.

Concluding this section, I would like to say that although foreign languages have been present in China since the end of the 19th century, nowadays China is much more concerned about foreign languages, especially for socio-economic reasons. The specific characteristics of the Chinese language as well as Confucianism may explain the

teachers' and learners' tendency towards memorisation and repetition in contrast with the promotion of natural communication in the language classroom. In addition to this, it seems that Chinese students need Chinese language as a basis for understanding foreign languages, and natural communication in FL is commonly left aside.

2.3. Chinese students in study abroad (SA) programmes

This section contains a review of the literature on the expectations, motivations and practices of Chinese students who take part in study-abroad (SA) programmes. The section is divided into two subsections. In the first one, I attempt to answer the question about the motivations and expectations of Chinese students. In the second section I analyse the experiences of the students during their stay abroad.

2.3.1. Chinese students' motivations and expectations in connection with SA programmes

As I have said in section 2.2.1, Confucianism thinking about the importance of education and formation are strongly vivid in the contemporary society of the PRC and are closely connected to the popular belief that good education will guarantee a better future. According to Mazzarol and Soutar (2002) (cited in Bodycott, 2009), for Chinese families, spending on their child's education is a top priority. A study in 2001 by China's National Bureau of Statistics (2001) showed that more than 60 per cent of Chinese families invest at least one third of their income in their children's education. Moreover, Bodycott (2009) revealed that modern Chinese society retains traditional ideals such as the strong parent-child relationship characterized by the responsibility that sons from one-child families have towards their parents. Chinese families, then, rely enormously on their sons/daughters for having stability and life-care, and therefore they consider it important to give their child as many resources as possible. Gareth (2005) (cited in Bodycott, 2009) explained that a Chinese graduate with a FL degree who has studied abroad is perceived by parents and society to have better skills and employability prospects. Thus, it could be said that Chinese students are highly conditioned by their parents in the decision making process for studying abroad.

The number of Chinese students that join SA programs is increasing year after year. Gareth (2005) (cited in Bodycott, 2009) found out that mainland China is one of the main sources of international students for many countries (mainly Australia, the US and the UK) and that the students' main objective for joining SA programmes is to obtain experience and qualifications to perform well inside the highly competitive Chinese economy. Sánchez (2008) explained that in many cases, SA Chinese students do not intend to integrate into the FL speakers' community or to take part in real social situations and contexts. The author argued that there is a high chance that most Chinese students of FL intend to work in China within the field of business, translation or tourism, and therefore, whenever they join a SA programme it is with this purpose in mind. A total of 339,700 Chinese left mainland China to study abroad in 2011 and more than 90% of them were self-supported, whereas the other ones were sponsored by the government or their employers (English News, 2012).

As for Spain as an SA destination, the number of Chinese students doubled from 2003 to 2011 (Europa press online, 2012). According to this last source, Chinese students considered Spain to be an idyllic place for learning Spanish as well as for starting business plans with Spain or Latin America. These students revealed their intentions to co-work with Spanish speaking countries while having their main office in China.

Another main factor that motivates Chinese students going to study abroad is the possibility of future migration opportunities after graduation. According to Bodycott (2009), Chinese students choose to study abroad for ensuring their future economic security as a result of improved employment opportunities and with this the possibility of migration (2009:364). Yang (2007) revealed some other general motivation factors for mainland Chinese students that should be taken into consideration to explain the decision to take part in a SA programme as well as the specific location to go: the knowledge and awareness of the institution, its reputation, and general knowledge of the destination country; positive attitude toward supporting international education in the destination country; recommendations and the influence of relatives and friends; tuition fees, living expenses, travel cost and social cost; environment considerations including climate, lifestyle, crime, safety and racial discrimination; geographical proximity to mainland China; social or educational links to family or friends living in the destination country, or family or friends studying there; perceived higher standards of education and employment prospects; and the availability of scholarships for study, among others.

2.3.2. The experience of Chinese students in SA programmes

Chinese students learning style preferences are different from western students. A comparative study made by Ramburuth and McCormick (2001: 338) revealed that in the case of Australian students and students from other Western countries there is a tendency to have an “individualistic model” in their social structures, whereas Asian cultures tend to adopt a “corporate identity”. Basu-Zharku (2011) explains that while collectivism emphasises the distinction between in-group and out-group, engaging in cooperative tasks, and focusing on what people have in common, individualism is characterized by engagement in competitive tasks, by public situations, and by an emphasis on what makes the individual distinct.

According to Burnet and Gardner (2006), people from collectivistic cultures find it hard to set aside their cultural identity, and this could reinforce the idea that Chinese individuals believe that the group is the basic unit of society and that social relationships constitute the core of the self. Perhaps this is the reason why most of Chinese students have a tendency to live in groups of Chinese people while studying abroad. Pérez-Milans (2010) suggests that there is a tendency on Chinese exchange students to make closed circles of relations composed exclusively by Chinese students. This author carried out an analysis of the experiences of Chinese newcomers in secondary schools in Madrid, which showed that from all the groups of secondary school students, those from China occupied the most distant position.

Other studies have also pointed out the idea that Chinese students encounter more difficulties in accessing social spaces inside western contexts due to the cultural differences. A study carried on by Byram & Feng (2006) about Chinese students in SA programs in Queens University in Belfast (UK) revealed that most of the Chinese students showed a tendency to experience “cultural shock” when joining Queens University. The authors argued that the cultural shock often results in feelings of helplessness, loneliness, frustration and anxiety towards the host country. Apparently, there is a large gap between Western and Asian cultures and this confirms the students’ lack of interest to integrate into their host countries’ cultures. Byram & Feng (2006) also explain that most of the Chinese students faced stressful periods, since many of

them wished to obtain good marks (perhaps in order to be more competent when they return to China).

Zhang (1992) (cited in Wan 2001) and Chua (2011) report that another cultural clash experienced by Chinese students inside western societies is the behavioural response to authority. Thus, whereas in Chinese education, respect and submission towards authorities (parents, adults and professors) is highly important, Western societies have a tendency to show discomfort with authority more freely. According to Wan (2001), in China “teachers are regarded as someone superior who should be respected” (2001: 7), the way of addressing teachers is in formal form of “you” 您 (nín / nín), and teachers and students address each other by their last name, never by their first name. Both teachers and students are expected to dress formally and students would hardly ever argue with teachers in class because disagreement is seen as a sign of disrespect inside Chinese culture.

Burnet and Gardner (2006) propose a model for describing the Chinese student’s experiences. The model contemplates five stages of acculturation: Encounter, Disorientation, Reaction, Independence and Internalisation. The first stage deals with the impact generated by entering a new culture, with new situations and in which Chinese students are expected to respond. In most of the cases students were excited and positive about interacting in a new environment and culture. The second stage, Disorientation, occurs when students realise the vast cultural differences between their home and their host country, which normally brings anxiety and depression feelings among the students. Some of them, the authors explain, feel the language difficulties as a huge gap that disturbs their daily life development. The third stage, Reaction, occurs when the Chinese students start to adapt and adjust to their host culture. Students become more ‘active’ inside their daily life activities, they are more familiar with everyday language of the host place (Ireland, in the case study) and routines are established as well as recognition of places and what surrounds them. Stage four, Independence, occurs when students feel their life is easier than it was before and they become more independent. The importance of this stage is that students feel as if they have grown up, in the sense that they live a life without the parental control and they must face adulthood responsibilities, such as paying bills, cooking food, and doing everything on their own. The last stage, Internalisation, occurs when the student adopts an intercultural identity between his/her own culture and the host country. Burnet and

Gardner (2006) were not able to find any case of Internalisation, since, they explain, the Chinese students that they studied were on a relatively short stay of 2 years in the UK.

In connection with their daily activities, it seems that the preferences for Chinese students, in front of western students, are quite different. Burnet and Gardner (2006) say that Asian international students have fewer distractions compared to other students while enrolling in SA programmes due to the social pressure (especially the family pressure) and personal expectations on them regarding their academic level. Leisure-related activities such as joining sports activities, eating outside, and attending gatherings with other students take a second position, for them it was a priority to succeed in their academic requirements. This could be explained for the degree of relevance that Chinese traditions give towards education.

From the point of view of their educational programme while studying abroad, Wan (2001) states that Chinese exchange students consider their classes in the host university very interactive, but at the same time more chaotic than in China, which explains the level of stress that they experience in SA programmes being higher than in China. In the survey carried out by Yang, Webster and Prosser (2010), among Chinese students in SA programmes in twenty different countries, it was shown that the two most important abilities learnt by Chinese exchange students were intercultural competences and personal competences, such as self-awareness and self-independence.

An article written this year by the local newspaper *El Segre* (El Segre, 2013) about Chinese exchange students in the University of Lleida (UdL) in Spain, stated that although participating in most of the activities organized by the UdL, Chinese exchange students were more likely to stay at home rather than to out at night, which seems to be a regular leisure activity among other exchange students such as the Erasmus students. Chinese students who were interviewed explained their preferences for travelling and visiting European main cities instead such as Paris or Rome as leisure activities rather than going out to pubs and discos.

I conclude this section by saying that the dominant motivation that explains why Chinese students take part in SA programme is an instrumental (rather than integrative) in that their main goal is to improve their language skills in order to increase their job opportunities back in China. Thus, most Chinese students are less interested in cultural learning, which places them in a more likely situation of experiencing cultural shock due to the differences between both Western and Eastern societies. It is also important to consider that the educational background of Chinese students encourages team work,

which is different from the Western system, which encourages individualism. In addition to this, Chinese students respect norms and authorities much more closely than students from other origins, and they invest as much time as possible on their educational programme.

CHAPTER 3. THE CASE OF CHINESE EXCHANGE STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LLEIDA

In this chapter, I present the results of a pilot study I carried out with the Chinese students who are taking part in the SA programme of the UdL. This enables us to analyse to what extent the information I obtained from my review of the literature coincided with the experience of this specific group of Chinese students. I divide this chapter into three sections. In section 3.1 I introduce the main methodological tools I employed in order to gather information. In the following section, 3.2 I describe the students' motivations and expectations in choosing UdL for their one- or two-year long SA programme. Finally, in section 3.3, I analyse their experiences while at UdL .

3.1. Methodology

The main emphasis of this pilot study is to learn about the place of English and Spanish for Chinese students at UdL while taking into account their experience at UdL. The study focused on the Chinese exchange students in the University of Lleida during the academic year 2012-2013, who come from Tianjin Foreign Studies University (TFSU) in China.

This study combines qualitative and quantitative methods. The first is a method of inquiry based on inductive subjective reasoning derived from data collected through the researchers' participants or non-participants observation as well as in-depth interviews. Quantitative research, on the other hand, follows a deductive approach based on a series of hypotheses. Data is collected through easily quantifiable questionnaires, whose responses are subjected to statistical analysis.

In this study stage, the qualitative research consists of three in-depth interviews in which the aim was to explore motivations and experiences of the students as well as the degree of relevance they give to English and Spanish. Stage two was based on two questionnaires administered to the students, through which I could further investigate their experiences and points of view about their stay at UdL and their language attitudes.

3.1.1 Stage One: the interviews

The qualitative study in this paper includes three interviews conducted at the beginning of 2013. The first interview took place in January and was held with UdL's Professor Dr. Javier Terrado, coordinator of the SA programme for Chinese students and professor of History of Spanish language. The second interview was in February, with eleven Chinese exchange students. This group of students included 5 male and 6 female students whose ages were between 19 and 22. All students were either in the second or third year of the degree in Spanish Studies. The third interview took place in March with UdL's lecturer Olga Fransi (responsible for Chinese exchange student's affairs at UdL). The topics raised in the different interviews were: the situation of Spanish and English languages in China, the main reasons for Chinese students to join SA programs, the process of enrolment of the Chinese exchange students at UdL and the Chinese exchange students' experiences at UdL.

3.1.2. Stage two: the questionnaires

The quantitative part of the study is based on two questionnaires which were administered to a total of twenty-six Chinese students, which represent 58% of the total number of Chinese exchange students at UdL in 2012-2013. The two questionnaires were exactly the same except for the fact that one focused on the Spanish language and the other one was centred on English. The questionnaire was adapted from Ordorica's (2003) study about the motivation of university students to study a foreign language (see Appendix 1). The two questionnaires were translated into Mandarin Chinese in order to be able to obtain the most accurate responses from the students and to avoid the constraints of their competence in either English or Spanish. The questionnaire also included a supplementary section, which I designed myself, consisting of 4 questions, and it aimed to find out about the comparative views between English and Spanish in terms of their professional usage (专业用途), culture (文化), language learning difficulties (语言难度), and personal experiences (个人经验). Nine of the questionnaire respondents were in the second year of the Spanish Studies degree and the other fourteen participants were in their third year. The questionnaire included multiple choice and closed answer options. The first question deals with the students' disposition for learning English/Spanish. Question 2 deals with the students' intrinsic or extrinsic

motivations for language learning. Question 3 is about their plans after finishing their Spanish Studies degree. The fourth question is concerned about identifying the students' attitudes towards learning a FL as a personal election rather than an external requirement. Finally, in question 5 students are requested to specify their problems with English/Spanish classes. In this last question, reasons such as timetables, instructors, classmates, textbooks, feelings towards the FL were possible choices to select. A justification of the student's answers was required in order to have further details about the reason of their choice.

3.2 The motivation and expectations of Chinese students at UdL

This section deals with the motivations and expectations of Chinese students about their Spanish and English language learning experience as well as their SA programme at UdL. In section 3.2.1, I analyse the answers I obtained in the interviews with the students and the two instructors in connection with these topics. Section 3.2.2 focuses on the responses given by the students to the different items in the written questionnaires. I conclude with a third section, 3.2.3 in which I comment on what I consider to be the most significant results of the analysis.

3.2.1. Stage one: the interviews

In the course of the interview with the students, the following factors were mentioned by them in response to the questions of what motivated them to take part in a SA programme in Spain:

1. Recommendations and the influence of relatives (especially parents) and friends played an important an important role in decision making for joining SA.
2. The image presented of UdL at their home university.
3. Overseas studies give prestige and is seen as second option to failure of entrance in a Chinese top universities.
4. Intentions to gain experience and knowledge in Spain, especially for improving their Spanish level.
5. Spanish language studies give job opportunities such as the possibility to be a translator, an interpreter or work in the business sector.

6. Some students wish to improve their English as well and they know English language lessons are offered at UdL as well.
7. Expectations for living in Europe: Improved life standards/ better public organizations/ different culture/ healthy environment.

The lecturers, in the interview, mentioned two more ideas which could be connected with the motivation of Chinese students to take part in a SA programme at UdL:

1. The UdL makes an effort to promote its exchange programme with TFSU by sending a representative every year to the Chinese university. .
2. UdL and TFSU exchange agreement started 7 years ago. Chinese students are can acquaint themselves with the university through Chinese students who have previously taken part in the programme, who give positive feedback.

With respect to the relevance of English and Spanish languages, Chinese students consider both languages as important international languages, and they justify this by saying that they are part of the three most spoken languages in the world including their own. Table 2 below presents a comparative chart about the most significant ideas that reflect the students' views about the place of English and Spanish:

TOPIC	ENGLISH	SPANISH
Prestige	English has been present in China for several years and it is very present in the school curricula. More popular than Spanish as a foreign language.	There is a yearly increase of Spanish departments in Chinese universities. Spanish has been earning popularity in Chinese society in the last 40 years
Level	Students present an average of B1/B2 ⁷ English language level due to 8-10 years of contact with the language.	Students come to Spain to improve their Spanish level. They already have average of B1/B2 Spanish language level for studying at TFSU 2-3 years.
Communicative function	Chinese students would use English for communicating with those exchange students which do not have a full command of Spanish language.	Students would use Spanish for communicating in every-day situations in Spain, as well its usage predominates as FL in front of English.

⁷ The **Common European Framework of Reference for Languages** is an official guideline used to describe achievements of learners of foreign languages across Europe mostly.

Table 2 : a comparative chart about the most significant ideas that reflect the students' views about the place of English and Spanish.

Some courses at UdL are taught in the Catalan language due to the local Catalan/Spanish bilingual situation. Some Chinese students found this an obstacle in learning Spanish, as they were not familiar with this language. Furthermore, as most of the students were not intending to stay in the local region, they were less interested in learning Catalan language or culture.

3.2.2. Stage two: the questionnaire

The results of answers 1 to 4 regarding survey 1 (motivation towards learning Spanish language) and survey 2 (motivation towards learning English) are presented in the table 3 below. Subsequently in table 4, the results of the supplementary section 6 of survey 1 about the importance of English and Spanish language are presented. An interesting point to take into consideration was that students show a tendency to take advantage of the opportunities to use Spanish, since some of them, even though the questionnaire was prepared in Chinese, decided to write their answers in Spanish. This tendency could also be appreciated during the interview with them, when some of them switched between the two languages. Please note that the results of answers 5 about the experiences of the Chinese students in the UdL will be analysed in section 3.3. of this paper:

QUESTION	SECTION	RESULTS SURVEY 1 SPANISH	RESULTS SURVEY 2 ENGLISH
1. What's your willingness (basis) for studying Spanish/English?	A Nothing.	88.4%	50%
	B Few	0%	11.6%
	C Regular	7.6%	30.7%
	D A lot	0%	7.7%
	No Answer (NA)	3.8%	0%
2. Why do you study Spanish/English for?	A I am interested in getting to know the culture of Spanish/English speaking countries.	65%	61.5%
	B In order to acquire new ideas and to amply my perspectives.	57.7%	76.9%
	C I like Spanish/English.	54%	46.1%
	D In order to understand songs, movies and other media.	30.7%	73.1%
	E In order to obtain knowledge about things related to my major/ professional life.	42.3%	38.4%
	F I am interested to learn a second language.	27%	34.6%
	G Only in order to meet the graduation requirements.	15.3%	23.1%
	H In order to communicate with people who only speak Spanish/English.	15.3%	26.9%
	I In order to study a post-graduate degree.	0%	3.8%
	J It is a personal challenge.	42.3%	30.7%
	K In order to obtain a better job.	88.4%	65.3%
	NA	3.8%	0%
3 Do you plan to finish the Spanish/English course or just finish the four levels required?	Finish: 4 levels: NA:	84.6% 3.8% 11.5%	69.2% 26.9% 3.8%
4. Would you study Spanish/English although it was not a graduation requirments?	Yes: No: NA:	73.1% 23.1% 3.8%	80% 20% 0%

Table 3: Survey 1 and 2 results.

It was striking to find out that a total of 88.4% of the students presented a low degree of willingness towards learning Spanish, which could be attributed to their previous experiences with the learning methodology in their home country based on a grammar-translation method. The answers in question 2 revealed that students have a have strong extrinsic motivation to learn Spanish, since that 88.4% think that by knowing Spanish their job opportunities increase. This motivation towards Spanish is

corroborated by the fact that 42% claimed to study Spanish in order to acquire an important skill for their career. The students' point of view could be explained by the strong emphasis that the government of China is placing on the importance of international trade and the dominant belief in China in social-economic mobility through academic preparation.

Among the factors that correspond to the intrinsic motivation to learn Spanish, a total of 65% of the students valued the Spanish culture as appealing to their personal interest, which could be attributed to their experience in Spain, after having lived in the country for a few months, and their familiarity with the food, the society, the history and the people. The students' positive attitude towards the Spanish culture is confirmed by the fact that 73% students manifested that they would have studied Spanish as personal interest and a 54% expressed to like the Spanish language.

The results obtained in question 1 of the questionnaire reveal that a total of 30.7% of the students show regular willingness for learning English, which could be attributed to the situation of English as lingua franca between China and the foreign countries. The students' motivation for learning English shows a balance between intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The most important intrinsic motivational factor to learn English is to acquire new ideas and perspectives (76.9%). This response is very much in accordance with the Open Door Policy promoted by the Chinese government. A total of 80% of the students manifest that they would have studied English even if it was not a requirement at university. Other intrinsic factors for learning English was to understand films, music, and texts, which could be due attributed to cultural attraction of the United States.. Similar to the results about the extrinsic motivation for learning Spanish, a total of 65.3% of the students perceive that a good command of English will give them better job opportunities.

The key findings about the place of Spanish and English for the Chinese students at UdL is presented below:

TOPIC	Spanish	English
Language contact	They have been learning Spanish for approximately 3 years before arriving to Spain.	They have been learning English since secondary school, which represents an average of 10 years of learning. Some of the students, however, have been at English language academies before.
Methodology of learning	Student's experience of learning Spanish was mainly through a grammar-translation method, although in some cases it varied if their Spanish teachers were native Spanish speakers.	Students' experience of learning English was through a grammar-translation method mainly and most of their teachers have been native speakers of Chinese.
Perceptions about the language	Spanish is easier to learn than English. Students prefer the structure of Spanish easier and the pronunciation and vocabulary "easier to memorize" due to the fact that Spanish 'is read as it is written'.	Students felt that English is harder to read and pronounce. They consider English as a global language, and for this reason it is very important.
	Students believe that Spanish as L2 choice is less common, and therefore it provides them with "more job opportunities".	Students believe that English as foreign language is "more commonly studied" than Spanish.
	The structure of Spanish is very different from the structures of Chinese	Some English language structures are similar to those of Chinese.

Table 4: The place Spanish and English for the TFSU's students in the UdL.

3.2.3. Discussion

There seems to be some sort of contradiction between the high degree of interest the students show in discovering both Spanish and English cultures, and the low degree of willingness to learn both languages. Since this is a pilot study it must be taken into consideration that students might have misinterpreted question 1. In the translation of the survey they probably thought that they had to comment on whether they have a good basis for learning the language, instead of a having a good motivation. Table 4 also shows us that the students are highly aware of the universality of English and this could be explained because of their high degree of contact with the language in their ordinary life in China. It seems that both their extrinsic and intrinsic motivations for learning English have been boosted in balance either by the spread of English as international language and by the promotion of the language by the Chinese government. The students consider that English helps them to have more knowledge and to widen their perspectives. As for Spanish, students see the language as a personal challenge.

Therefore, the learning of Spanish language can be explained mostly through extrinsic motivation factors.

It seems clear that the decision of the students to join the SA is mainly influenced by the students' expectation to improve their language skills, obtaining better qualifications and becoming more competitive in the professional market. It is clear that the economic boost of China has persuaded the students about the need to be as qualified as possible in their professional careers. Moreover, the majority of students perceived the SA programme as a great opportunity for high-quality education and the influence of parents and relatives was the single most motivating factor for them to join the UdL SA programme.

3.3. The experience of Chinese students at UdL

This section deals with the experiences of Chinese students joining the SA programme offered by the UdL in 2012-2013 and learning English and Spanish as part of their UdL curricula. As I did in section 3.2 with the analysis of the students' motivations and expectations for the stay abroad and for their language learning, I divide this section into two parts. In section 3.3.1. I analyse the answers I obtained in the interviews, and in section 3.3.2. I focus on the answers the students gave in question 5 of the questionnaire. I conclude with section 3.3.3 in which I comment on what I consider to be the most relevant results of the analysis.

3.3.1. Stage one: the interviews

Chinese students at UdL trustfully shared their experience for this pilot study. Both lecturers Dr. Terrado and Fransi shared their experience with the Chinese students in the UdL. During the interviews with the students and the lecturers, there appear an important series of everyday experiences and ideas which I list below according to two main categories: academic experiences and non-academic experiences. From the point of view of the academic experience the following comments were made either by the students or by one of the instructors:

1. Collaborative vs. individualistic learning styles: One of the lecturers commented during the interview that Chinese students' learning-style preferences were different than those of Western students. This was acknowledged by the second lecturer by saying that Chinese students tend to engage more easily in collaborative tasks among themselves in order to carry out their assignments, and that western students show a more individualistic approach to study.
2. An opportunity to learn: The students expressed their satisfaction with their experience of studying abroad in Spain. For them it meant (i) a new experience of learning methods, (ii) an opportunity to live in a different and unfamiliar continent for them, and (iii) a chance to use Spanish on an everyday basis. All of them declared that they wished to return to China when their exchange program finishes, and they all had their return flight tickets for the coming month of June at the time the interview took place in February 2013.
3. Professional competence: The Chinese students confirmed in the interview that they felt more competent to work in China after their SA experience. About 5 of them intended to work as teachers of Spanish, 3 would like to work for trading companies in China, 2 wanted to work in the tourism sector and 1 wanted to continue a post-graduate degree on international business in China.
4. Academic choice: In the interview with the eleven students, all of them suggested more possibilities for choosing courses taught in Spanish and not in Catalan. For reasons mentioned before.
5. Socialising: the Chinese students claimed that they couldn't socialize with the UdL's students as much as they expected. Chinese students claimed to have spent more time among TFSU exchange students than among Western students. This was reinforced by lecturer Fransi.
6. Academic level: Most of the Chinese students mentioned a general higher demand from Chinese teachers in terms of assignments and other homework. Students liked the significantly smaller classes (approximately 20 students or fewer vs sometimes hundred students at TFSU). Students as well said that teachers at UdL were more approachable than in China, which they appreciate.
7. Spanish language improvement: Most of the Chinese students felt their Spanish language proficiency improved during their stay in Spain, whereas the English level did not improve that much.

From the point of view of the non-academic experience of Chinese students, the following comments appeared in the course of the interviews with the lecturers and the students:

8. Cultural differences: The interview with the students revealed that all of them experienced a “cultural shock” after arriving at Lleida. Some of them found it difficult to adapt to the meal-times, since in China lunch time is at noon, while in Spain it is around 14.00h. Another aspect that they found hard to adapt to was the close social distance they perceived between lecturers and students. In the third place, they found the city of Lleida rather small and with more inconvenient trading hours of the shops.
9. Personal independence: Six of the students agreed on having experienced a higher degree of self-awareness and personal independence during the SA program than in China; the other five claimed to be used to personal independence because they grew up in small towns and when they entered the university they already had to leave their families..
10. Accommodation: The mutual support among the Chinese students was reinforced by the fact that during their stay in Lleida, they chose to live in flats together, in groups of 3 to 4 and they liked this arrangement.
11. Activity: The daily routine of the Chinese students seems more passive in comparison to that of Western students. Nine of the Chinese students mentioned that they think that they spend an average longer time studying/relaxing at home than most of the Western students, who seem to go out more often. Leisure-related activities such as joining sports activities, eating outside, and attending gatherings with other students took a second position after studying. This idea was also mentioned by both lecturers.

3.3.2. Stage two: the questionnaire

For more details about the Chinese exchange students’ experiences about the process of learning Spanish and English as foreign languages, the answers to question 5 in the questionnaire can be taken into consideration. I present the results in two tables. Table 5 reflects the key findings of the Chinese students’ experiences of learning English and Spanish are explained and Table 6 indicates the key findings about Chinese student’s learning of English and Spanish at UdL.

Topic	Learning Spanish	Learning English
First encounter with the language	When joining the Spanish major at TFSU; Spanish-speaking native teachers in the second year.	With Chinese native teachers mostly; at secondary school (age 12) ; some of the students had attended English language evening schools.
Teaching methodology	Student's experience of learning both Spanish and English was through the grammar-translation methodology. . For them learning Spanish or English requires memorising the grammar of the language and paying special attention to the differences with Chinese.	
Degree of difficulty of the language	Spanish language is easier to learn than English: (i) easier to read (words are pronounced as they are written), (ii) grammar and vocabulary easier to 'memorise'	Students felt that English is harder to read and pronounce.
Relevance of the language	Students believe that Spanish as L2 choice is less common, and therefore they can "get more job opportunities".	Students experienced that English as foreign language is "more commonly studied" than Spanish.
Acquaintance with culture	Little acquaintance with Spanish-speaking culture before coming to UdL	Greater acquaintance with English-speaking culture

Table 5: Experiences of the TFSU exchange students about learning English and Spanish

The most significant findings from my point of view about the Chinese student's experiences of learning English and Spanish students at during their SA programme at UdL in 2012-13 are presented immediately below in table 6:

Topic	Learning Spanish at UdL	Learning English at UdL
Language improvement	They use Spanish constantly and therefore their proficiency has improved.	Their English proficiency has not improved but become worse. On the contrary, students considered their English worsen because they seldom use English in daily life routines.
Level	Some students felt that the level of the Spanish language lessons they were having at UdL was lower than in TFSU	English classes are taught by Spanish teachers, with a Spanish accent, which caused misunderstanding.
	Difficulties to follow some classes due to the fast rate of speech of the lecturer.	
Method	Some students considered the methodology tedious and repetitive.	Students' do not like the fact of not following a specific textbook.
Interaction with classmates	Students were unhappy about not having many of their lessons with local students. They considered this a highly disadvantageous part of their SA programme.	
Teacher-student interaction	Students felt that in some cases	Students complained that in their

	they felt ignored by their teacher, whom they found unfriendly and arrogant.	English lessons there was no teacher-student interaction. and they felt that their opinion was not taken into consideration and thus they did not feel like participating in class.
Class schedule	Student's complained that the Spanish lessons' schedule coincided with their lunch time, and that this affected their willingness and motivation to attend classes.	Students were not happy about the constant changes of class times and cancellations. They also criticised the occasional lack of punctuality of their teacher.
Subject contents	Students understood more features about the Spanish culture and society.	Not all classes were considered as productive as others.

Table 6: Experiences of the TFSU exchange students about learning English and Spanish languages in the UdL.

3.3.3. Discussion

The analysis of the Chinese students' experience with Spanish and English as well as with the new academic and social environment that the UdL represents for them has yielded several aspects to be taken into account in order to understand the impression of success or failure of the students in the personal venture to learn the languages and to take part in a SA programme. Thus we can see that in terms of their academic and non-academic experience during their SA programme at UdL students had a tendency towards collaborative learning styles, different from the western students who show a more individualistic approach to study; students experienced a severe "cultural shock", since most of them found it difficult to adapt to the meal-times, social distance between lecturers, city life-style, among others. In the third place, it was interesting how students were constantly using Spanish language and it could be said that during their SA in UdL, students gained language awareness and sensitivity for Spanish language use. This could be explained by the students' favouritism towards Spanish at the moment of interacting with westerners; Spanish was their leading foreign language and English took a second position.

Students shared their joy, dilemmas and frustrations with the SA program at UdL as well as the difficulties related to language barriers and the classroom environment. Most of the students were satisfied with their SA experience, as it has allowed them to open their mind and understand other cultures and life-style. There were some aspects that the students said to dislike in their SA experience from the

classes enrolled in the UdL which were mainly related to the class schedule, some lecturers and the different teaching method.

CHAPTER 4. CONCLUSION

The specific aim of this study was to explore the place of English and Spanish as *linguae francae* with a special emphasis on the perspective of Chinese students in the SA programme at UdL. The project was based on four main issues: 1) the importance of English and Spanish as *linguae francae* in general and in China; 2) the attitudes and the practices of Chinese students and educators towards foreign language learning; 3) the experience of study-abroad Chinese students in general; and 4) the experience of study-abroad Chinese students at UdL.

In connection with the role of English and Spanish as world *linguae francae* (section 2.1.1.), this project has shown that English has been recognised and adapted for several functions as an international language such as to promote intercultural communication and social development. English is seen as (a) an instrumental tool in the economic, technological and cultural international sectors, (b) a ‘contact language’ between people who do not share an L1, and c) the international language of scientific research. Moreover, English as a foreign language surpasses other languages in number of learners and speakers, since over one billion people use English every day. Therefore, it could be said that English retains its position of *lingua franca par excellence* in comparison with other languages. Spanish is beginning to be highly recognised and valued as a foreign language. There are 495 million Spanish speakers in the world and Spanish is the second most used language in international communication. An increasing number of students learn Spanish as a foreign language nowadays. Although it is not considered a *lingua franca* yet, Spanish has much potential to become one due to economic and demographic factors. Therefore, in the future Spanish could be considered as a strong rival to English as the most important international language.

Different statements could be made about the current and future position of English and Spanish in China (section 2.1.2.). This research has shown that English has been present in China for several years as part of the national curriculum and English is considered an essential skill for Chinese people in order to promote themselves socially and economically. Spanish started to be more popular after the 1986’s Open Door Policy in China, mainly due to the increasing trade with Latin America.

In relation to foreign language teaching and learning practices in China (section 2.2.1), this project has shown that the basis of foreign language teaching remains the traditional grammar-translation method. This method has been deeply rooted in the Chinese school system, and it is consistent with a wide-spread social belief that in order to have a good command of a language it requires a full knowledge of its grammar structures. My personal experience of an 'English poetry' subject at a university in Taiwan confirms this idea, because in class, the lecturer (a Chinese professor) would translate each stanza, word by word from English to Chinese. None of the approximately 100 students were encouraged to give their opinions and students were not involved with the meaning of the poem itself. They would not use it as a basis for interacting or expressing themselves; and yet, the students seemed to be quite comfortable by using this method.

In connection with the foreign language learning attitudes of Chinese students (section 2.2.2), this study has shown that there are three relevant aspects that affect students' motivations and expectations to learn foreign languages. The first one is the teaching methodology which might cause complications and motivation-loss towards the learning of foreign languages. The second relevant aspect that affects Chinese student's attitudes towards foreign language is the importance of commercial relations between China and other countries. Chinese society places emphasis on the fact that studying foreign languages will give them access to better professional opportunities. The third relevant aspect that affects students' decisions to learn a foreign language are social values and beliefs that FL learning permits them to communicate and interact with other cultures. These same factors influence the students' motivations and expectations in connection with SA programmes (section 2.3.1). However, the most relevant one is the instrumental extrinsic motivation of obtaining a better job. It was found that Chinese families invest more than one third of their income in education and studying abroad is highly encouraged in Chinese society, because it is considered as an essential aspect of the preparation for a professional career.

As for the experience of Chinese students in SA programmes (section 2.3.2) the study shows that the Chinese students' learning style and daily activities are different from Western students. Chinese students prefer a collective style of learning prioritising their academic work to other leisure/socializing activities. In addition to this, it was found that Chinese students might experience a 'culture shock' during their SA

programs, which results in feelings of helplessness, loneliness and frustration towards the host country.

The pilot study allowed me to learn about the specific motivations and expectations of Chinese students at UdL (section 3.2). It is clear that they chose to study abroad to enhance their professional future. This is the result of the general idea in China that Spanish language is gaining importance as an international language and that being able to speak the three most spoken languages in the world (Chinese, English and Spanish) increase one's professional opportunities.

According to the results of the pilot study, the experience of Chinese students at UdL (section 3.3) in terms of the activities they engage in during the SA program coincides very much with the experience of other Chinese students in different countries, as can be seen in the literature review. In this sense, it is worth mentioning about their low interest in activities such as sports, eating outside, and other social events. They live and socialize mostly with the other Chinese students from the exchange group. Moreover, students seem to have no wish to integrate into the Spanish and/or Catalan culture. The students also seem not to have internalized the values in the academic context of a Spanish university, since they felt some degree of displacement towards some of their enrolled subjects.

As a final conclusion, it could be said that the pilot study I reported on in Chapter 3 is in line with the literature that I have reviewed in Chapter 2. As the sample was very small, no real conclusions can be made yet. However, it would be interesting to repeat this study with a larger sample size, probably following different groups of Chinese students in different degrees as well as universities. Furthermore, the survey questions should be made more specific to make sure that the Chinese students' opinions are being presented more accurately. Applying the results, in turn, could lead to an improvement of the quality of the SA experience for the Chinese students. In this way, the local students could also benefit from the experience of being exposed to an increasingly intercultural environment. Finally, in order for the SA programme to be more successful, perhaps it would be important to encourage local students to join a SA programme in China, which would provide them with extremely valuable experiences and would make the ties between UdL and TFSU even stronger. After all, as Charlemagne said once, *"To have another language is to possess a second soul"*.

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Appendix: The questionnaires

Survey 1: Spanish version

ENCUESTA SOBRE MOTIVACIÓN 动机调查

附件 1: Español 西班牙语

Edad 年龄: _____ Carrera 专业: _____

Semestre 学期: _____ Nivel / Idioma 水平/语言 _____

Horario 学时: _____

1.- ¿Cuál es tu disposición para estudiar español? 你学习西班牙语时的基础是？

a. Nada 从零开始 _____ b. Poca 了解一点 _____ c. Regular 一般 _____ d. Mucha 了解很多 _____

2.- ¿Para qué estudias español? (anota 5 opciones) 你为什么要学习西班牙语？(选择五项)

a) _____ Me interesa conocer la cultura de otros países de habla española

我有兴趣了解西班牙语国家的文化

b) _____ Para adquirir nuevas ideas y ampliar mi perspectiva

获取新的思路并且开拓眼界

c) _____ Me gusta el idioma español

我喜欢西班牙语

d) _____ Para entender canciones, películas, revistas, etc.

可以理解歌曲、电影、杂志等等。

e) _____ Para aprender cosas que tienen que ver con mi carrera/profesión

用来学习与我专业/职业相关的内容

f) _____ Me interesa aprender un segundo idioma

我喜欢学习第二门外语

g) _____ Solo para cumplir con el requisito de egreso.

只为了满足毕业要求

h) _____ Para conversar con personas que solo hablan español

为了与只讲西班牙语的人交流

i) _____ Para estudiar un posgrado

为了研究生课程

j) _____ Es un reto personal

这是个人目标

k) _____ Para obtener un mejor empleo

为了获取更好的工作

3.- ¿Planeas terminar el curso de español, o tan sólo completar los 4 niveles que exige la UDL? ¿Por qué?

你想完成西班牙语的 课程，还是仅仅完成UDL要求的四个级别的水平？为什么呢？

_____ Terminar 完成 _____ Sólo 4 niveles 仅仅四个水平

4.- ¿Estudiarías español aun cuando no fuera un requisito de egreso? 即使不是毕业需求你也会学习西班牙语吗？

_____ Sí 是 _____ No 否

¿Por qué? 为什么？ _____

5.- ¿Que es lo que no te gusta de tus clases de español? 西班牙语课程的什么内容是你最不喜欢的？

a) ___Horario 时间

¿Por qué? 为什么?_____

b) ___Maestros 教师

¿Por qué? 为什么?_____

c) ___Otros alumnos 其他学生

¿Por qué? 为什么?_____

d) ___Texto 课本

¿Por qué? 为什么?_____

e) ___El método no cumple mis expectativas 教学方式与我期待的不符

¿Por qué? 为什么?_____

6.- Could you compare the role of English and Spanish in these fields? 你以比较英语和西班牙语在以下领域扮演的角色吗？:

1. Professional usefulness 专业用途:

2. Culture文化:

3. Language difficulty语言难度:

4. Personal experience个人经验:

English version

ENCUESTA SOBRE MOTIVACIÓN动机调查

附件 1: Inglés 英语

Edad 年龄: _____ Carrera 专业: _____

Semestre 学期: _____ Nivel / Idioma 水平/语言_____

Horario 学时: _____

1.- ¿Cuál es tu disposición para estudiar inglés? 你学习英语时的基础是？

a. Nada 从零开始___ b. Poca 了解一点___ c. Regular 一般___ d. Mucha 了解很多___

2.- ¿Para qué estudias inglés? (anota 5 opciones) 你为什么要学习英语？(选择五项)

a) ___ Me interesa conocer la cultura de otros países de habla inglesa

我有兴趣了解英语国家的文化

b) ___ Para adquirir nuevas ideas y ampliar mi perspectiva

获取新的思路并且开拓眼界

c) ___ Me gusta el idioma inglés

我喜欢英语

d) ___ Para entender canciones, películas, revistas, etc.

可以理解歌曲、电影、杂志等等。

e) ___ Para aprender cosas que tienen que ver con mi carrera/profesión

用来学习与我专业/职业相关的内容

f) ___ Me interesa aprender un segundo idioma

我喜欢学习第二门外语

g) ___ Solo para cumplir con el requisito de egreso.

只为了满足毕业要求

h) ___ Para conversar con personas que solo hablan inglés

为了与只讲英语的人交流

i) ___ Para estudiar un posgrado

为了研究生课程

j) ___ Es un reto personal

这是个人目标

k) ___ Para obtener un mejor empleo

为了获取更好的工作

3.- ¿Planeas terminar el curso de inglés, o tan sólo completar los 4 niveles que exige la UABC? ¿Por qué?

你想完成英语的课程，还是仅仅完成UABC要求的四个级别的水平？为什么呢？

___ Terminar 完成 ___ Sólo 4 niveles 仅仅四个水平

4.- ¿Estudiarías inglés aun cuando no fuera un requisito de egreso? 即使不是毕业需求你也会学习英语吗？

___ Sí 是 ___ No 否

¿Por qué? 为什么？_____

5.- ¿Que es lo que no te gusta de tus clases de inglés? 英语课程的什么内容是你最不喜欢的？

a) ___ Horario 时间

¿Por qué? _____

b) ___ Maestros 教师

¿Por qué? _____

c) ___ Otros alumnos 其他学生

¿Por qué? _____

d) ___ Texto 课本

¿Por qué? _____

e) ___ El método no cumple mis expectativas 教学方式与我期待的不符

¿Por qué? _____