



FACULTAD DE TURISMO Y FINANZAS

GRADO EN TURISMO

The relevance of English in the Tourist Industry

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TÍTULO:

THE RELEVANCE OF ENGLISH IN THE TOURIST INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT:

In this project, English is analysed as an international language and vehicle of communication in the tourist industry, especially in hotel industry and means of transports: air transport, water-based transport and rail transportation.

It is studied to what extent English is used by professional people in the sector and by inbound tourists, find out what is their level. Oral and written skills, departments and communication codes are analysed in order to verify the kind of English necessary to communicate in the service sector.

KEYWORDS:

English & Tourism; Knowledge; Accommodation, Transport; Language skills; Guests

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION: English as an International Language.

Spoken by about 470 million people in all over the world (figure 1.1), English is the third language of the Globe in number of speakers who take it as a mother tongue — between 300 and 400 million people—, as well as the third most spoken, behind the Mandarin and Spanish —with 955 and 405 million speakers, respectively—.

If those who take it as their second language are counted, then they are 200 million persons more.

Rank ↕	Language ↕	Native speakers in millions 2007 (2010) ↕	Fraction of world population (2007) ↕
1	Mandarin (entire branch)	935 (955)	14.1%
2	Spanish	390 (405)	5.85%
3	English	365 (360)	5.52%

Figure 1.1. Top languages by population

Source: Nationalencyklopedin

There is no doubt about English as an international language. The fast-technological development in English speaking countries has contributed to reach this title. Nowadays, it has become a vehicle for information and its knowledge is almost indispensable to communicate in sectors as Tourism and other business. In fact, most of the information that is available on Internet is written in English and authors like Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) consider that “the international language of research and academic publication is English and anyone who wishes to have ready access to this material needs to know the language”.

Every year the number of people who learn English multiplies. This increase is impelled by several factors such as the growth of the world population. Those who take English as a foreign language —studied in schools and other education centres, without being essential but getting more and more important thanks to the introduction of this subject for younger pupils, each year earlier—, turn out to be forced to learn it in order to be able to communicate in society, especially in this period of time when the thirst for traveling and discovering new places and cultures is incessant.

According to the analysis of the UNWTO¹ World Tourism Barometer, destinations of the whole world welcomed 596 million international tourists in the first nine months of 2016, which imply transport, hotels and touristic tours where probably English is the main language to establish the communication.

In the next chapters, these different segments inside Tourism will be studied in relation to this language, in order to understand why it is necessary in each part of the Tourist industry and in what ways affect directly to consumers and workers.

The case of travel agencies will be obviated due to the increase in technological issues, mobile apps and portals on the Internet. Guests do not need to go out from

¹ UNWTO: United Nations World Tourism Organization. The United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.

home to manage its travel desires. In this respect, English would not seem a priori an indispensable task to keep in mind. In many cases, webpages have the option to change the language, making the process easier to the customer.

Travel agencies are purchasing online booking platforms and it is estimated that in a few years, there will be a change in its performance method passing over to only its consultant function and travel management, without any other responsibility.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

When I first thought of this topic, my idea was to reflect the importance of English as an international language, specially inside the tourist industry with facts and figures. Then, I found other interesting objectives as well as:

- Find out the number of visitors from United Kingdom in Spain
- Find out the number of visitors from United Kingdom in Seville
- Find out the number of overnight stays by United Kingdom visitor in Spain
- Find out the number of overnight stays by United Kingdom visitor in Seville
- Check out if these results last over time, differentiate the language skills in the different departments of the hotels, both oral and written
- Investigate the professional skills necessities both in the front-desk and back-office
- Find out the level of English of employees in the Tourism sector in Seville
- Find out the level of English of non-Anglophone tourists who stay in hotels in Seville
- Compare these results with the required level of English in other country
- Verify the importance of English in transports
- Understand the internal codes for communication in means of transport
- Find out if English is the first language in these transports.

1.3. JUSTIFICATION

In general terms, Spain is associated to a basic level of English. Compared with other European countries, this statement could seem accurate but in the tourist industry, the level is intermediate/advanced thanks to the number of foreign visitors who come and use English as vehicle of communication. Employees need to learn and use the necessary skills and have the capacity of solve problems, doubts, requests, etc.

Although it is well known the fact that English is an international communication method, it is interesting to show its extent in hotel industry in Seville.

1.4. METHODOLOGY

Compilation of information from primary sources: official websites of statistics —both in Spain and United Kingdom—, specialised books and personal experience in the sector; as well as secondary sources: journals and recent news published in newspapers or online.

Almost all the bibliography has been directly searched in English as well as the webography, and only a few webs and articles have needed to be traduced. As material to translate these parts, specific words in the sector or expressions with different meaning, bilingual dictionaries and translation memories like Linguee, Pons, Wordreference or Google Translator have been used.

CHAPTER 2

ENGLISH IN HOTELS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Hotel business is an economic activity which consists of the provision of accommodation service, very usually linked to tourism industry.

As Charles R. Goeldner & J. R. Brent Ritchie (2009: 154) said: “providing overnight accommodation for travellers goes back into antiquity; it is the oldest commercial business”. Today, lodging services have enormous importance in tourism sector. It moves hundred million people and creates thousands of jobs, being an essential contribution to economy in many countries.

Searching on the ONS² bulletins, it is not difficult to find statistics for the total number of tourists who came to Spain in year 2015, which is the latest release. The results are well differentiated between countries and Spain is clearly the leader in terms of visitors from UK for at least one night, with 12,988 thousand visits (figure 2.1).

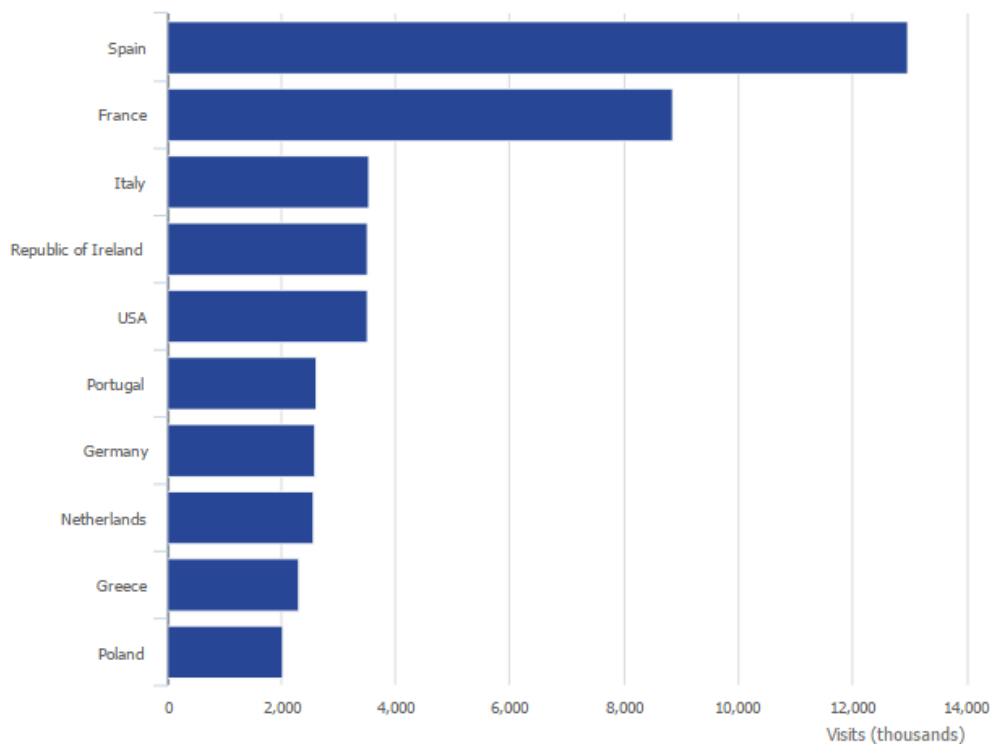


Figure 2.1. Top 10 countries visited by UK residents for at least one night, 2015

Source: International Passenger Survey (IPS) – Office for National Statistics

In Spain, there is a survey of tourist movements on borders called FRONTUR. It is the statistical operation of the Subdirección General de Conocimiento y Estudios Turísticos that gather information relative to the entry of visitors, travellers and tourist not residents in the country.

² ONS: Office for National Statistics in Great Britain.

According to this organization, only in July 2016, 42.8 million overnights were registered and Spain received 9,6 million international tourists, being United Kingdom the main residence country what represents the 23.0% of the whole (figure 2.2). Thus, 1,3 million Britons stayed at Spanish hotel establishments with a 27.4% of the total number of overnights (figure 2.3), at only seven points of difference with the following.

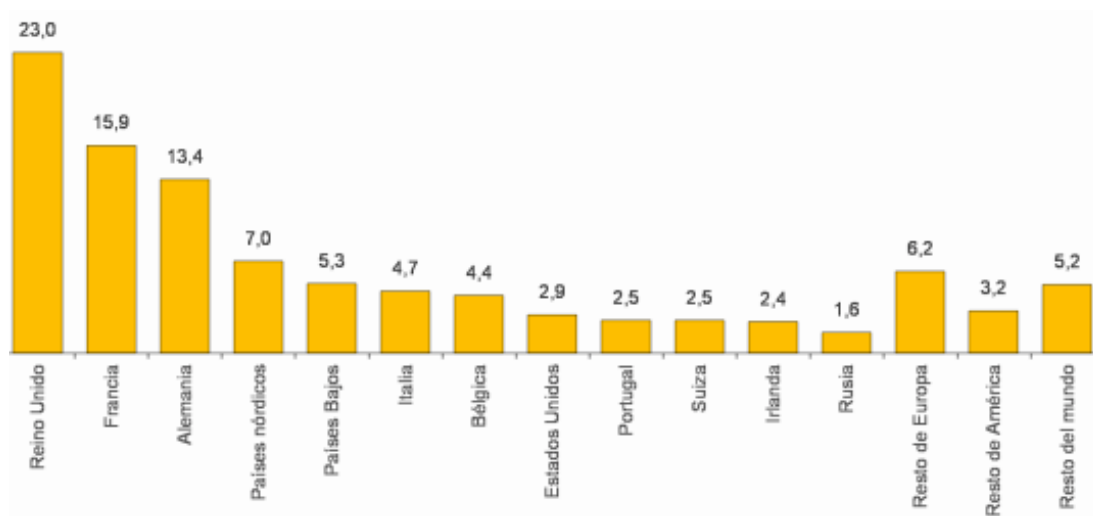


Figure 2.2. Arrivals of international tourists for residence countries in %

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE)

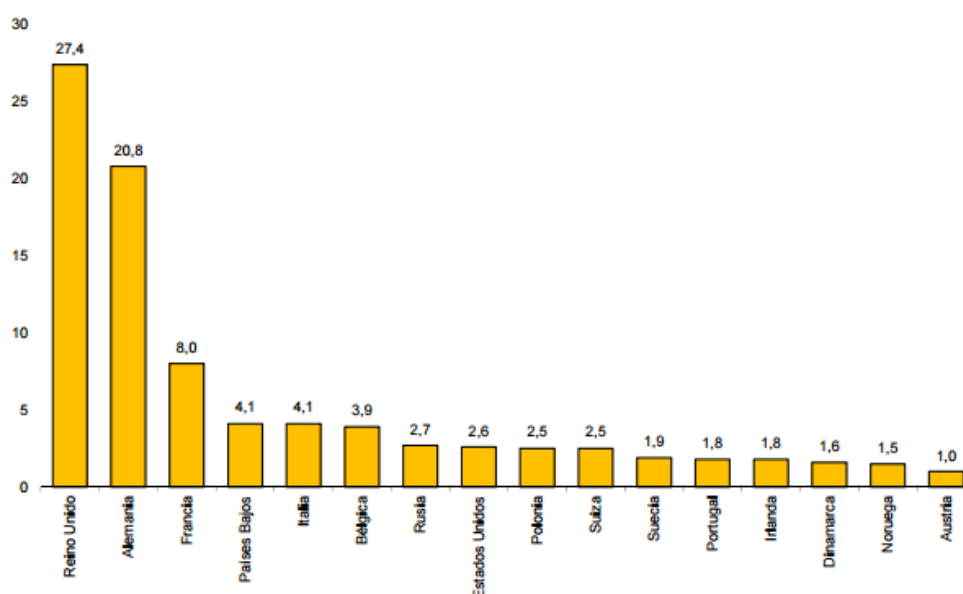


Figure 2.3. Distribution of overnights stays of not residents for the sixteen main residence countries in %

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE)

Statistics confirm the fact that in the last two years, United Kingdom has been the first country which sent tourists to Spain. But, according to EXCELTUR —*Alianza para la Excelencia Turística*—, the future prospects for 2017 are not as positive as in 2016. Although tourist activity will raise a 3.2%, British market won't increase, but it will continue being one of the most important growth drivers in Spanish economy.

In the first two months of 2017, Spain welcomed 833,072 visitors from United Kingdom (figure 2.4). These statistics makes difficult to believe the recess in British tourism in Spain.

	Viajeros		Pernoctaciones	
	2017M02	2017M01	2017M02	2017M01
Reino Unido	450.172 ³	382.900 ³	2.368.990 ³	2.323.853 ³

Figure 2.4. Number of visitors from United Kingdom, January and February 2017

Source: Encuesta de Ocupación Hotelera (EOH)

As we can see, English speaking tourists lead the number of visitors and overstays to our country. In order to satisfy the requirements of travellers, it is convenient to have a better knowledge of the vocabulary in order to get the right attitude to attend demand requirements.

Nevertheless, it is not that easy. Sometimes, the acquisition of knowledge is insufficient because of the size of the hotel. For example, small hotels are not usually divided in departments or those are just a few, so the specialization in oral, written, reading and listening skills becomes difficult. When the guest come to the front-desk, the receptionist must be ready for any kind of request: from doubts about location to refunds or complaints, topics that need professional skills. On the other hand, if the hotel is big, the receptionist will be well qualified to respond to guests' needs in relation with reception tasks, but at the time of give an answer to questions as refunds or quantities of money, would have to contact with the Account department which will know better keywords and other language skills for its area.

To avoid misunderstandings, the following point will be dedicated to the different areas inside hotels, as well as the dimensions of these and the required skills of the language will be detailed.

2.2. HOTEL DEPARTMENTS

As noted in the previous section, misunderstandings in hotel industry can be very common if the oral skills are not consolidated. Each department needs their specific ones and it depends on the task that is carried out.

When the lodging has few units of accommodation, the departments divisions are usually diffused or non-existents, so the specialization is almost impossible. In these cases, the typical tasks of the front-office are managed from the reception, as well as reservations, invoicing and permanent disposition to attend to the guest. Consequently, the knowledge of language must be much wider since the guest may ask about anything and they need fast answers.

On the other hand, large hotels do not have these problems. The structure is supervised by the boss or manager who presides the flow chart. There is more and precise control, which prevent from making mistakes. Each department has established functions which almost never interfere among them.

In the front-desk, the direct contact with the customer is carried out all the time in order to attend their requests: checking-in, checking-out, placing the location in the map and the pertinent explanations are also included in this range. The Booking department is in charge of managing phone calls and gathering reservations done by the different ways of arrival: by email or other programs; the Accounting department keeps the accounts and might need English to keep in touch with branches of the Company abroad.

Each area requires its own professional skills and specific vocabulary. It is not very likely having to use words from general vocabulary to begin a communication with the guest. But sometimes, it is necessary.

It is recommended to use the «Mirror Technique», a confidence building exercise to help the staff to raise the complete fulfilment of their self-confidence while they are

talking to a guest. Observing the guest's behaviour is convenient to know how to act during the process of receiving them.

In any case, there is a consolidated know-how in hotel industry. The required skills—which will be explained in the next point—are well delimited to the point of many managers train their employees in order to handle the issue wisely and consequently rather than ignoring it and committing possible errors.

2.2.1. Required skills

It is appropriate to make difference between the required skills in the front-desk and in the back-office.

Being face to face with guests requires an effort to communicate: fluent speech, responsiveness and capacity for decision-making oral skills. Some examples are: formal presentations, giving instructions, describing and showing the facilities, as well as understanding the given information from the customer.

On the other hand, employees working in the back-office also need oral skills, for instance: taking part in meetings, interviewing potential employees or important people from the sector, negotiating and talking by telephone.

For both front desk and back-office, written skills are similar: clarifying the purpose, identifying the key points, composing good introductions and endings, using short paragraphs, using specific terms, writing in a formal or informal way, structuring, revising the style and content, and searching for relevant information.

2.3. HOTEL INDUSTRY IN SEVILLE

According to the INE³, Hotel establishments in Andalucía have started the year 2017 welcoming 880 thousand visitors, with 2 million overnight stays. Britons predominate after Spanish citizens in terms of visits to this Autonomous Community.

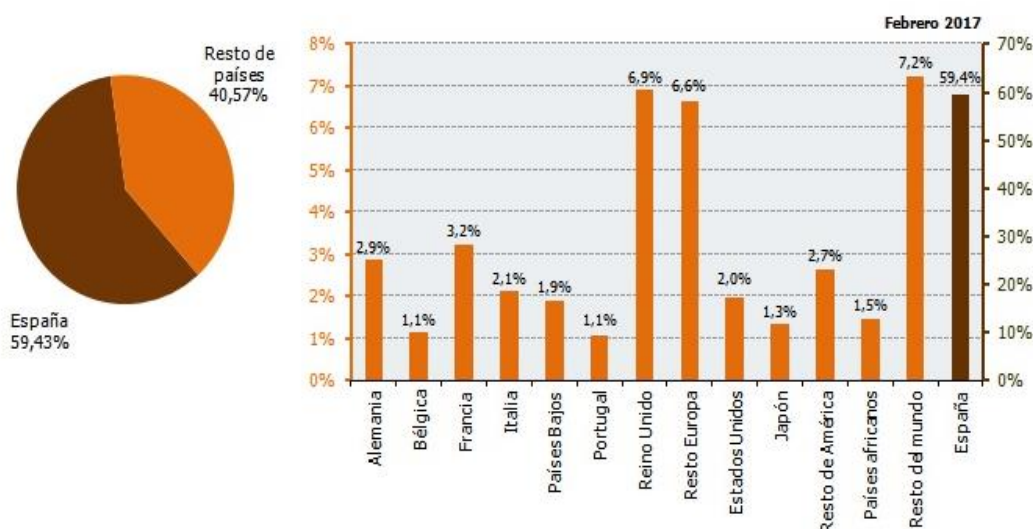


Figure 2.5. Andalucía travellers according to their residence countries in %, 2017

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE) and Andalucía mapping

The city received 221,038 visitors and 433,171 overnight stays (figure 2.6) in the first two months of the current year.

³ INE: National Institute of Statistics in Spain.

	Viajeros		Pernoctaciones	
	Residentes en el Extranjero		Residentes en el Extranjero	
	2017M02	2017M01	2017M02	2017M01
41 Sevilla	108.799	112.239	215.640	217.531

Figure 2.6. Visitors and overnight stays in Seville, January and February 2017

Source: Encuesta de Ocupación Hotelera (EOH)

Seville thanks to being the capital of Andalucía, is one of the most visited provinces. Is as well the third province in number of hotels, after Málaga and Granada, but the second in number of accommodation places (figure 2.7).

Territorio	Personal empleado	Establecimientos abiertos estimados	Plazas estimadas
Almería	1.883	168	20.203
Cádiz	2.869	318	25.034
Córdoba	1.253	195	11.057
Granada	3.237	375	29.238
Huelva	1.322	130	16.095
Jaén	870	165	7.974
Málaga	8.898	442	64.996
Sevilla	4.109	366	29.861

Figure 2.7. Employees, open establishments and approximate accommodation places, 2017

Source: Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas (INE) and Andalucía mapping

According to TripAdvisor⁴, Spain square, the Alcazar, the Cathedral, Santa Cruz neighbourhood and Giralda tower are the most attractive attractions for tourists and so the areas where most hotels focused on leisure tourism are located. On the other hand, Nervión and Viapol are areas full of business hotels.

To understand the English-speaking skills in tourism in Seville, three interviews have been made to hotel employees in the city: Laura —from Hotel Boutique Elvira Plaza—, Manuel —from Hotel Meliá Lebreros— and Sara —from NH Collection Sevilla— (see Annexes I, II and III).

All of them agree with the need of knowing English in order to attend the requests and demands from guests. They find it essential in their daily work to establish regular communication. Only in one of the three hotels in Seville that have been analysed, some kind of English training is given to employees, but in all of them is required as second language. Two of them have a medium level of English; the third person has a high level and they all consider that, in general, in hotel industry there is a good knowledge of the language. English is practised day by day, most of the time, but the staff also have sometimes difficulties with communication: “when tourist whose mother tongue is different from English and they do not have enough knowledge of the language it is difficult to establish a conversation or solve problems like, for example, overbookings”, says Laura. Inbound tourists come from United Kingdom, USA and France —this information is common in the three hotels—, and in addition the Netherlands, Italy and China. Of the total amount of non-anglophone people who arrive at these hotels, more than 90% choose English as favourite language to communicate —in both Hotel Meliá Lebreros and Hotel NH Collection Sevilla— but in Hotel Boutique Elvira Plaza, it is around 50%. However, the average of level in their English is medium in all cases.

⁴ TripAdvisor: an American website company which provides reviews of travel-related content.

In order to verify if these questions are common with other cities in countries of different characteristics, an interview has been made to José Ortiz, the CEO of Hotel Iberostar Ensenachos, in Cuba. He kindly answered that in his job as manager, English is absolutely necessary to work attending to the guest and also in formal statements in the back-office. In the hotel that he manages, English is required as second language. Personnel is also trained and the knowledge of this language is high in each employee. José uses English every single day. Inbound tourists come from Canada, United Kingdom, France and USA and between 80% and 60% of the non-anglophones choose English rather than other language to communicate, with a medium level.

The results are similar and the conclusion is clear: English is basic to communicate; without it would be impossible to talk with tourist and it is the most important task to work in a hotel.

2.4. CONCLUSIONS

Accommodation is fundamental in the tourist industry. It provides ancillary services to people away from their habitual location. The tangible components of hotels are prepared to make tourist feel like if they were at home, but intangible components as well as staff ability to communicate are also essential for guests.

If the receptionist is not able to communicate with foreign tourists and establish a fluent conversation to solve doubts and problems, they will not be pleased with the given services and neither recommend it. Thus, English is indispensable to contact with inbound tourists and make their experience absolutely comfortable.

Hotel staff must have the required oral and written skills to do their work with success, but it also depends on the size of hotels and its departments. In conclusion, by the union of small hotels' skills and the specialization of large ones, the perfect balance for a fluid communication would be easily reached and the probability of misunderstandings would decrease.

CHAPTER 3

ENGLISH IN TRANSPORTS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism and transportation are intimately linked. To travel, the use of transports is essential, either by air, road or sea. Consequently, the language gets important to communicate with the personnel in order to set out doubts or problems or just to do the current processes to travel in the different facilities integrated in airports, train stations, etc.: ground handling, baggage handling, check-in, passport control, customs clearance, security screening, shops, car parking and other technical services.

The EF EPI —EF English Proficiency Index— rank countries by the level of English language skills between those adults who took the EF test. The index is based on data from a survey, not on a representative sampling model. It is "not a statistically controlled study", as *The Economist* states "the subjects took a free test online and of their own accord. They were by definition connected to the internet and interested in testing their English; they will also be younger and more urban than the population at large."

According to the EF EPI, the level of English in north-European countries and central-European countries is higher than other non-Anglophone countries in Europe and, in general, in the rest of the world (figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1. Map of results of EF English Proficiency Index, 2016.

Source: EF EPI

These results must be kept in mind in order to analyse the language skills in each tourist: people from countries as France, Italy or Spain would find more problems at the time of establish communication with locals from other nations. But it also depends on the means of transport.

The car as a private mean of transport offers considerable flexibility in the way people can travel and access tourism resources and sites outside urban areas where, maybe, the use of English is not that important.

Otherwise, air transport need the knowledge of English in order to communicate technical services that are provided on the ground to assist and control aircrafts and pilots at the time of landing or taking off, which role is a key in the operation of aviation services. These pilots can have different nationalities and some of them do not speak the language, so learning it is also part of the training for air transport employees fluently.

3.2. AIR TRANSPORT

The history of aviation has extended more than two thousand years, but was in the middle of 1920s and early 1930s when the transport of passengers was developed as a kind of transportation. Since then, airplanes have become the main means of transport for long distances, facilitating the movement of persons and goods from any point of the world air network to any other by combination of routes. Holloway (2009:350) agree with the fact that development of air transport in the second half of the twentieth century contributed to the increase of tourism, whether for business or pleasure.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) —also known as Chicago Convention— is the global forum for civil aviation. The organization was established in 1944 and signed by 52 states. ICAO works to achieve its vision of safe, secure and sustainable development of civil aviation through cooperation of its member states.

According to ICAO, the air transport industry is not only a vital engine of global socio-economic growth, but is also of vital importance for economic development: creating direct and indirect employment, supporting tourist and local business and generating international trade. There is a continuous international growth of air traffic (figure 3.2).

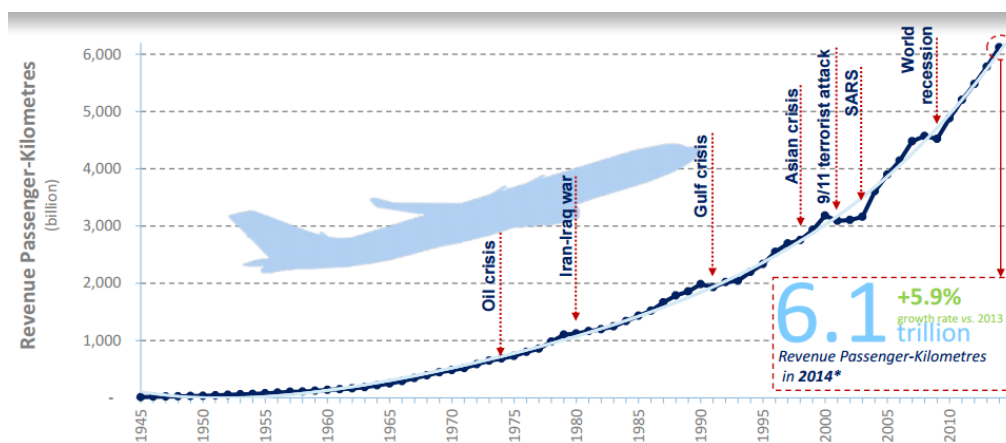


Figure 3.2. Continuous international growth of air traffic.

Source: International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

The Chicago Convention was written in three languages: English, Spanish and French, but English was established as general language in aviation, also for the internal communication between these states. The organization launched in 2010 the TRAINAIR PLUS Programme, which mission is to improve safety and efficiency of air transport and stablish, maintain and monitor high standards of training and competency of aviation personnel on a worldwide basis and in a cost-effective manner. This process is made using English as the vehicle of communication, reaching the unification of the language at the time of the training: the candidates will speak, listen, write and read all content in English in order to be ready for their future work position where will be necessary to be fluent in this language.

Although plenty of countries have a high or very high level of English, passengers from different nationalities usually have misunderstandings with air transport employees. Thus, the relevance of this language in aviation is extremely important, especially in long distances when tourists frequently complain or need more attention.

3.2.1. International Radiotelephony Spelling Alphabet

ICAO also created an Alphabet which today still being essential in the worldwide communication. It is the NATO Phonetic Alphabet (figure 3.3 and figure 3.4), developed in order to provide correct information between people who speak different languages. Every letter and number is associated to a word, for example: A for Alfa, B for Bravo, and so on.

It is used in aviation to communicate pilots with control towers and in International Maritime Organization (IMO) to contact to other harbours and between ships.

CHARACTER	MORSE CODE	TELEPHONY	PHONIC (PRONUNCIATION)
A	• —	Alfa	(AL-FAH)
B	— •••	Bravo	(BRAH-VOH)
C	— • — •	Charlie	(CHAR-LEE) or (SHAR-LEE)
D	— ••	Delta	(DELL-TAH)
E	•	Echo	(ECK-OH)
F	•• — •	Foxtrot	(FOKS-TROT)
G	— — •	Golf	(GOLF)
H	••••	Hotel	(HOH-TEL)
I	••	India	(IN-DEE-AH)
J	• — — —	Juliett	(JEW-LEE-ETT)
K	— • —	Kilo	(KEY-LOH)
L	• — ••	Lima	(LEE-MAH)
M	— —	Mike	(MIKE)
N	— •	November	(NO-VEM-BER)
O	— — —	Oscar	(OSS-CAH)
P	• — — •	Papa	(PAH-PAH)
Q	— — • —	Quebec	(KEH-BECK)
R	• — •	Romeo	(ROW-ME-OH)
S	•••	Sierra	(SEE-AIR-RAH)
T	—	Tango	(TANG-GO)
U	•• —	Uniform	(YOU-NEE-FORM) or (OO-NEE-FORM)
V	••• —	Victor	(VIK-TAH)
W	• — —	Whiskey	(WISS-KEY)
X	— •• —	Xray	(ECKS-RAY)
Y	— • — —	Yankee	(YANG-KEY)
Z	— — ••	Zulu	(ZOO-LOO)

Figure 3.3. NATO Phonetic Alphabet, letters.
Source: International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

1	• - - - -	One	(WUN)
2	•• - - -	Two	(TOO)
3	••• - -	Three	(TREE)
4	•••• -	Four	(FOW-ER)
5	•••••	Five	(FIFE)
6	- ••••	Six	(SIX)
7	- - •••	Seven	(SEV-EN)
8	- - - ••	Eight	(AIT)
9	- - - - •	Nine	(NIN-ER)
0	- - - - -	Zero	(ZEE-RO)

Figure 3.4. NATO Phonetic Alphabet, digits.

Source: International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

This international alphabet is used during the communication between different airports in all over the world and air connections. Air communication channels include technology and sometimes the understanding gets complicated for the distances and connection problems: the microphones or speakers do not transmit very well and sounds can be confused. Using the NATO Phonetic Alphabet with words in English with international meaning, help to avoid misunderstandings.

3.2.2. IATA codes

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is the global organization for almost all the international air carriers. It permits the linking of many individual international airline routes into a single public service system. It is a valuable information source on the world airline industry.

With the purpose of standardise the way of denominating all airports in the world, IATA created different codes composed by three initials which resume the full name of the airport (table 3.1). These initials must be read in English in order to achieve best communication as possible.

Code	Airport	Country
CDG	Paris-Charles de Gaulle	Paris
JFK	John F. Kennedy	USA
MAD	Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas	Spain
LTN	London-Luton	United Kingdom

Table 3.1. IATA codes, 2017.

Source: Own making, with information from IATA Airline and Airport Code Search

3.2.3. Air traffic in Seville

Seville have the second most important airport in Andalusia in number of destinations. After Málaga's airport —with 130 destinations—, Seville's' airport has forty-five destination where different airlines fly. Of them, twenty-nine are to foreign countries: United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Belgium, France, Portugal and Marrakech.

On the other hand, statistics put Sevilla on a second place in terms of inbound tourism: only a 15,7% of international tourists arrive to its airport (figure 3.5).

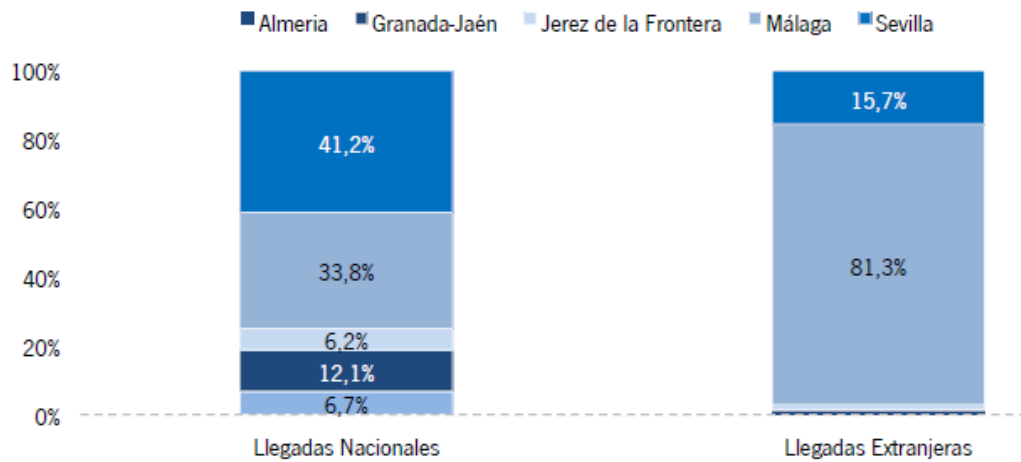


Figure 3.5. Inbound tourism arrivals to Andalusian airports, February 2017

Source: Aeropuertos Españoles y Navegación Aérea (AENA)

Fernando de Pablos is an expert in traffic air control. He works on the approximations of Adolfo Suárez Madrid-Barajas Airport and did not hesitate in answer some questions about his job.

According to the given answers, in his position it is absolutely necessary the knowledge of English, the most important request to be an air traffic controller. For employees who need it, trainings are offered but those are not imposed. Once a year the personnel have to make test to re-evaluate their English aptitudes in the different skills. If the result is under four of the six points, the mark is negative and the employee cannot continue working in its position. Fernando affirm that he and his colleagues are always using English; they only speak Spanish when the aircraft is from Spain. "In my job, there is no time for misunderstandings, the answer must be fast and precise and an error could suppose important problems", he says. The NATO Phonetic Alphabet is daily used to communicate with pilots, as well as other calling codes.

3.3. WATER-BASED TRANSPORT

Water-borne transport is frequently overlooked in many studies of tourism since air travel dominates the world patterns of travel. Many people like travelling using recreational vehicles as private ships and boats. Then, these tourists practise land-based tourism.

Over the years, tourist transport by water has become in a very important way of traveling. Plenty of people reject about flying and choose this mean of transportation to travel. Thanks to this evolution, English is also very used in ships.

As noted in the previous section, the NATO Phonetic Alphabet is also used in International Maritime Organization (IMO) to contact between harbours in a professional way but, as well as in aviation, passengers need more attention, especially in long distances.

3.3.1. Cruising

It is the main form of water-based transport.

The cruises can take many forms: small-scale, specific to take niche market or ocean liners, but those which takes long distances are the most knowns This product comprises both transport and accommodation. As an activity, cruising has grown at a dramatic rate and large cruising companies dominate the market.

USA dominates the world cruising market, followed by UK and Europe, with more than 10 million passengers a year. The main cruising routes are:

- Florida, the Caribbean, Bahamas and coastal towns of North, Central and South America.
- West coast of México, the USA and Canada.
- The Pacific Islands.
- The Baltic Sea: northern European capitals.
- South of Europe: Mediterranean.

A survey has been made to Spanish people who has travelled to one of these cruises (see Annexes V and VI) and the results are clear: although cruises are an international mean of transport with English as the official language for the staff to communicate with their superiors, people do not find indispensable the knowledge of this language during their travels: the major part of the employees are Latin American, so they can communicate with tourists in Spanish. Passengers only found difficulty in countries where the cruise landed at the time to order food or buy in shops, not inside the cruiser.

3.4. RAIL TRAVEL

Traditionally, it was Europe's rail network which provided the best means of travelling to tourism destinations both near and far. It combines leisure and business; the comfort of flying and the independence of the private car. It is a very good option for those who want to go from one point to another inside of the same country and with a medium-large distance.

Nevertheless, rail transportation is also used for long travels, especially to move in Europe. There are more than thirty rail routes in the continent (figure 3.6) and around sixteen trains between TGV, Thalys, Eurostar, TGV/ICE, TGV Lyria, Renfe-SNCF, Italo, RZD, RENFE Lusitania, Berlin-Warsaw Express, AVE, Avant, Alitalia, Alvia, Euromed and Regional Renfe trains.

Nowadays, the Interrail is also changing the way of travelling, especially in young people. This boarding pass permits to people under 26 years old buy a rail ticket for a low price and free travelling in the European rail network during one month.

According to EUROSTAT⁵, France was the country with the highest number of passengers —with more than 90k— followed by the United Kingdom —around 65k— (figure 3.7). After Italy —with 51k—, Spain is the fourth with 26k.

⁵ EUROSTAT: European Office of Statistics.

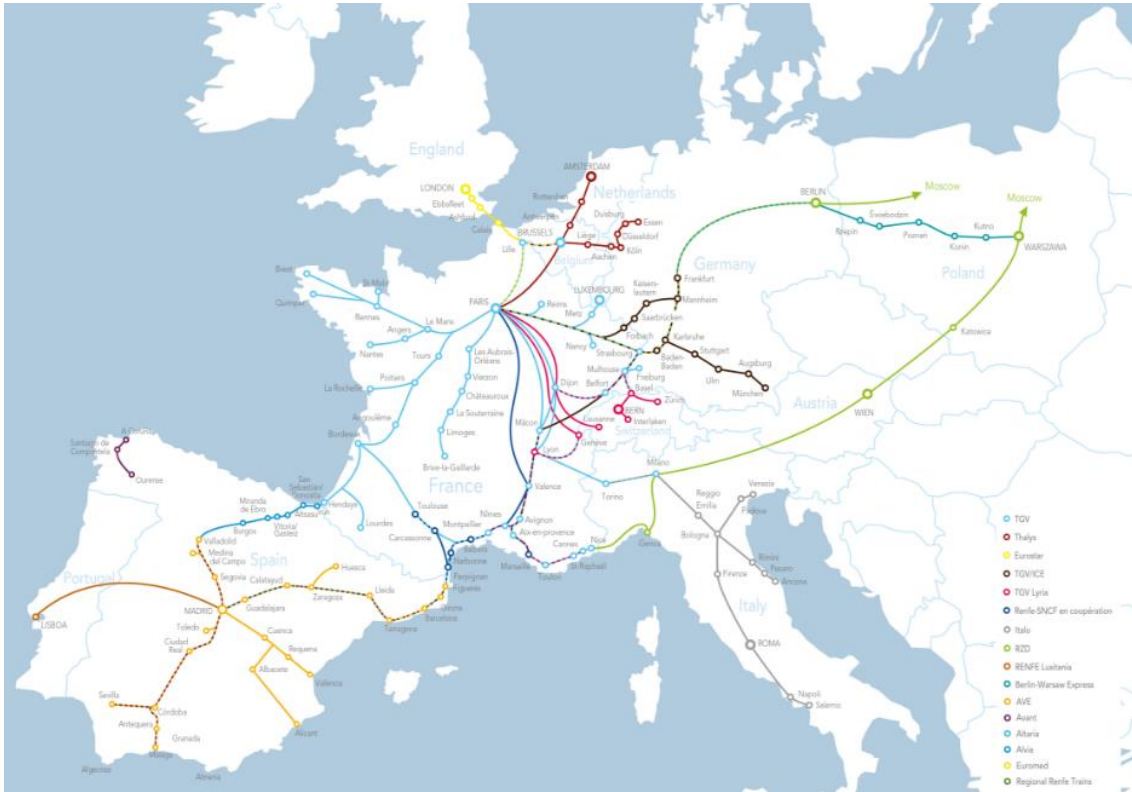


Figure 3.6. Rail routes in Europe
Source: Voyages-sncf.es

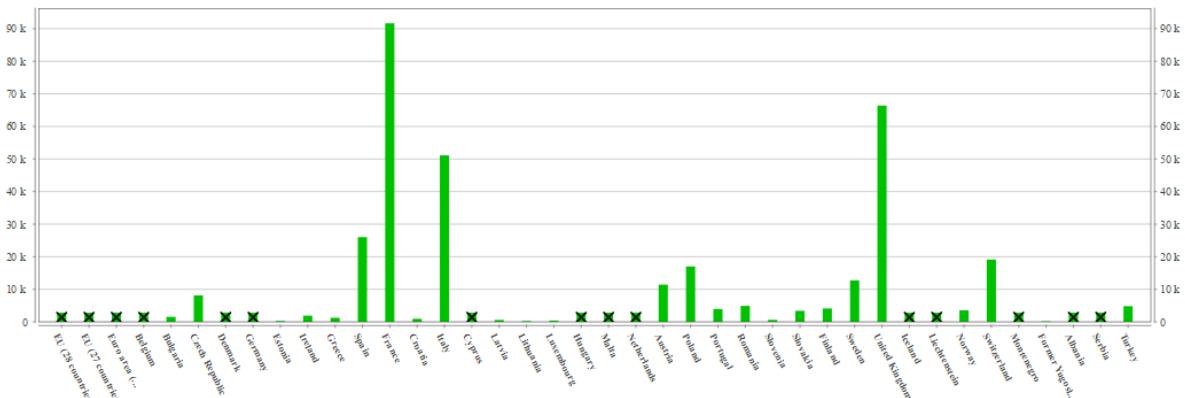


Figure 3.7. Rail transport of passengers by country, 2016
Source: EUROSTAT

Then, passengers who choose travelling inside Europe from one country to another probably have to resort to English to communicate, not that much while traveling but at the time of buy tickets or complaint. In the case of Interrail travellers, the language can be crucial in the transportation during the trip. With the purpose of verify if it is like that, some questions have been made to Manuel Ignacio, who have used the Interrail to travel by Europe (see Annexe VII).

According to his experience, the knowledge of English is indispensable to travel with the Interrail pass. Passengers have to communicate in non-anglophone countries and, when local people welcome tourists —except in some parts of France or Italy— they always use English. “When Germans recognise a tourist, they immediately speak in English”, he says. Only one difficult related to the language was found: in France, locals refused to speak other language different from their own and it did not make easy the contact with residents. “If someone is interested in the Interrail Pass, it would be nice to have at least a medium level of English. It is important”, add. Nevertheless, he is thinking about the next Interrail that he is going to do.

3.5. CONCLUSIONS

Transport is a fundamental component of the tourist industry. It facilitates mobility and the movement of tourists from their place of origin to their destination and back. Without it, access to tourism would be limited.

As well as in hotel industry, means of transport need qualified personnel who can attend the demand, independently of its mother tongue. English was established as the main vehicle of communication in travelling; airlines have their own communication codes called NATO Phonetic Alphabet, to put in contact control towers and aircrafts and IATA Codes, to identify Airports.

Although inside of these means of transportation English could not be frequently used by passengers —only when they have request or complains—, it is important to use in the destination country.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Keep on learning is never an extra and it always contributes to the knowledge.

The knowledge of English is absolutely necessary in the tourist industry due to the big number of people who moves every day from one point of the globe to another. They all have different mother tongues and establishing a language to easily communicate is essential to avoid misunderstandings, independently of where they come from.

In hotel industry, the professional oral, listening, reading and written skills in both front-desk and back-office are indispensable in order to offer a good service to the tourist. If the guest is comfortable and pleasant, the probability of recommending the hotel or repeat the experience would be higher and this turn into benefits and better reputation.

Seville is a secondary city in terms of inbound tourism. That is the reason why English is not as relevant as in other cities of Spain, but thanks to the weather, thousands of visitors are attracted by the capital of Andalusia and plenty of them overstay, using English to communicate. Nevertheless, the knowledge of this language is important to attend to the tourists who choose other option as their main destination, for example Málaga, but decide to visit Seville in a trip.

In transportation industry, there is not much difference. Employees must have at least a medium English level to understand guest's requirements and solve problems as soon as possible. In air transport, there are some specific codes to communicate air traffic control towers with aircrafts: NATO Phonetic Alphabet and IATA Codes. The specific use of English is for employees more than for passengers, who do not use it very much inside means of transport —just to ask or complain—, but in the destination country in a place far from home.

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Annexes

THE RELEVANCE OF ENGLISH IN HOTELS IN SEVILLE.

ANNEXE I: Hotel Meliá Lebreros.

Nombre del entrevistado: Manuel Lobo Piña

Puesto de trabajo: Recepcionista

1. ¿En qué medida cree usted que es necesario el conocimiento del inglés en la industria hotelera en Sevilla?

Es fundamental para trabajar, pues se utiliza diariamente con los huéspedes que vienen a alojarse.

2. Hoy por hoy, en el hotel donde trabaja, ¿se exige el inglés como segundo idioma?

Sí No

3. ¿Se forma en su empresa al personal de recepción mediante cursos u otras herramientas de aprendizaje?

Sí No

4. ¿Considera que, en general, existe en la industria hotelera un dominio hablado del idioma?

Sí No

5. ¿Cuál es actualmente su nivel de inglés?

Alto Medio Bajo

6. ¿Con qué frecuencia hace uso del inglés en su trabajo?

Diariamente, casi todo el tiempo me veo obligado a utilizar el inglés para poder entenderme con los clientes.

7. ¿En qué aspectos de su tarea diaria, como recepcionista, encuentra más dificultad a la hora de comunicarse?

A la hora de solucionar problemas con clientes extranjeros, resolver negocios o discutir acerca de otras cuestiones que les surjan.

8. ¿A qué nacionalidad pertenecen la mayoría de huéspedes del hotel donde trabaja?

Reino Unido, EE.UU y Francia en menor medida.

9. Del total de turistas no anglohablantes que llegan de media al día, ¿qué porcentaje escogen el inglés para comunicarse?

Más del 90% Entre el 80% y el 60% Aproximadamente el 50%

Menos del 50%

10. ¿Qué nivel de inglés tienen de media?

Alto Medio Bajo

ANNEXE II: Hotel Boutique Elvira Plaza.

Nombre del entrevistado: Laura López González

Puesto de trabajo: Recepcionista

1. ¿En qué medida cree usted que es necesario el conocimiento del inglés en la industria hotelera en Sevilla?

Es un factor muy importante a considerar dado el gran número de visitantes extranjeros y por ser uno de los idiomas con mayor porcentaje de hablantes mundial. Es de suma importancia conocer, no solo los conocimientos básicos, sino un uso cotidiano del mismo.

2. Hoy por hoy, en el hotel donde trabaja, ¿se exige el inglés como segundo idioma?

Sí No

3. ¿Se forma en su empresa al personal de recepción mediante cursos u otras herramientas de aprendizaje?

Sí No

4. ¿Considera que, en general, existe en la industria hotelera un dominio hablado del idioma?

Sí No

5. ¿Cuál es actualmente su nivel de inglés?

Alto Medio Bajo

6. ¿Con qué frecuencia hace uso del inglés en su trabajo?

La mayoría del tiempo.

7. ¿En qué aspectos de su tarea diaria, como recepcionista, encuentra más dificultad a la hora de comunicarse?

Cuando el cliente no posee conocimientos suficientes para situaciones de problemas externos o básicos que pueden darse en nuestro establecimiento, por ejemplo, una situación de overbooking cuando se tiene que desviar al cliente, o problemas de mantenimiento como puede ser un problema de suministro eléctrico.

8. ¿A qué nacionalidad pertenecen la mayoría de huéspedes del hotel donde trabaja?

Reino Unido, Estados Unidos, Países Bajos y Corea del Sur.

9. Del total de turistas no anglohablantes que llegan de media al día, ¿qué porcentaje escogen el inglés para comunicarse?

Más del 90% Entre el 80% y el 60% Aproximadamente el 50%
 Menos del 50%

10. ¿Qué nivel de inglés tienen de media?

Alto Medio Bajo

ANNEXE III: Hotel NH Collection Sevilla**Nombre del entrevistado:** Sara Morcillo**Puesto de trabajo:** Recepcionista

1. ¿En qué medida cree usted que es necesario el conocimiento del inglés en la industria hotelera en Sevilla?

Imprescindible, sin ello no podrían darse ni la mitad de las comunicaciones que se dan hoy día.

2. Hoy por hoy, en el hotel donde trabaja, ¿se exige el inglés como segundo idioma?

Sí No

3. ¿Se forma en su empresa al personal de recepción mediante cursos u otras herramientas de aprendizaje?

Sí No

4. ¿Considera que, en general, existe en la industria hotelera un dominio hablado del idioma?

Sí No

5. ¿Cuál es actualmente su nivel de inglés?

Alto Medio Bajo

6. ¿Con qué frecuencia hace uso del inglés en su trabajo?

Muy frecuentemente, cada día.

7. ¿En qué aspectos de su tarea diaria, como recepcionista, encuentra más dificultad a la hora de comunicarse?

Para resolver quejas y reclamaciones.

8. ¿A qué nacionalidad pertenecen la mayoría de huéspedes del hotel donde trabaja?

Gran Bretaña, Francia, EE.UU, Italia.

9. Del total de turistas no anglohablantes que llegan de media al día, ¿qué porcentaje escogen el inglés para comunicarse?

Más del 90% Entre el 80% y el 60% Aproximadamente el 50%
 Menos del 50%

10. ¿Qué nivel de inglés tienen de media?

Alto Medio Bajo

THE RELEVANCE OF ENGLISH IN HOTELS IN CUBA.

ANNEXE IV: Hotel Iberostar Cuba Ensenachos

Nombre del entrevistado: José Ortiz

Puesto de trabajo: Director General

1. ¿En qué medida cree usted que es necesario el conocimiento del inglés en la industria hotelera en Cuba?

Es indispensable para poder trabajar en un hotel, para el desarrollo del servicio y atención eficiente al cliente. Como director, lo exijo en todas las entrevistas que realizo.

2. Hoy por hoy, en el hotel donde trabaja, ¿se exige el inglés como segundo idioma?

Sí No

3. ¿Se forma en su empresa al personal de recepción mediante cursos u otras herramientas de aprendizaje?

Sí No

4. ¿Considera que, en general, existe en la industria hotelera un dominio hablado del idioma?

Sí No

5. ¿Cuál es actualmente su nivel de inglés?

Alto Medio Bajo

6. ¿Con qué frecuencia hace uso del inglés en su trabajo?

A diario.

7. ¿En qué aspectos de su tarea diaria, como director general, encuentra más dificultad a la hora de comunicarse?

Principalmente es importante un buen dominio para las comunicaciones formales por escrito.

8. ¿A qué nacionalidad pertenecen la mayoría de huéspedes del hotel donde trabaja?

Canadá, Reino Unido, Francia y EE.UU

9. Del total de turistas no anglohablantes que llegan de media al día, ¿qué porcentaje escogen el inglés para comunicarse?

Más del 90% Entre el 80% y el 60% Aproximadamente el 50%

Menos del 50%

10. ¿Qué nivel de inglés tienen de media?

Alto Medio Bajo

ANNEXE V: THE RELEVANCE OF ENGLISH IN AIR TRAFFIC

Nombre del entrevistado: Fernando de Pablos

Puesto de trabajo: Controlador Aéreo en la aproximación de Madrid-Barajas.

1. ¿En qué medida cree usted que es necesario el conocimiento del inglés en la aviación en España?

Es totalmente necesario e indispensable. Todos los controladores han de dominar el inglés.

2. Hoy por hoy, en su puesto de trabajo, ¿se exige el conocimiento de inglés?

Sí No

3. ¿Se forma en su empresa al personal de recepción mediante cursos u otras herramientas de aprendizaje de inglés?

Para aquellos controladores que lo necesiten, existen a su disposición cursos de apoyo.

4. ¿Considera que, en general, existe en el control de tráfico aéreo un dominio hablado del idioma?

Sí No

5. ¿Cuál es actualmente su nivel de inglés?

Nos evalúan cada determinado tiempo. Mi nivel es de 5 sobre 6 y para aprobar hay que sacar como mínimo un 4.

6. ¿Con qué frecuencia hace uso del inglés en su trabajo?

A todas horas. Únicamente usamos el español cuando en ese momento controlo aviones españoles. Si hay uno solo extranjero se usa por norma el inglés.

7. ¿En qué aspectos de su tarea diaria encuentra más dificultad a la hora de comunicarse?

No tenemos tiempo para dificultades, la comunicación debe ser rápida y directa, sin titubeos. Por ello tenemos que tener muy claro el idioma y no equivocarnos. Un simple error podría suponer serios problemas.

8. ¿Utiliza alguna herramienta que le sea imprescindible para establecer la comunicación en inglés? Si es así, indique cual/es.

Códigos indicativos de llamada. El alfabeto radiofónico también, sobre todo para la identificación de aeronaves.

THE RELEVANCE OF ENGLISH IN CRUISES

ANNEXE VI: Baltic cruise

Nombre del entrevistado: Juan Antonio García Blanco

Crucero realizado: Capitales Bálticas

1. Durante su viaje, ¿tuvo que recurrir en algún momento al inglés para comunicarse?

Dentro del barco no, ya que la mayoría de empleados eran hispanos y hablaban perfectamente el español. Únicamente tuve que usar el inglés cuando visité los distintos países nórdicos, a la hora de comprar y pedir taxis.

2. ¿Hubo algún miembro de la tripulación que se dirigiera a usted en inglés en algún momento?

Sí No

3. Si su respuesta es afirmativa, indique cuál era su puesto de trabajo.

El capitán del barco en la cena de gala, saludó a todo el mundo en inglés. Era griego y no hablaba español.

4. Durante las excursiones realizadas a los lugares de destino, ¿tuvo que comunicarse en inglés?

Sí No

5. Si su respuesta es afirmativa, ¿encontró algún tipo de dificultad?

Sí, sobre todo a la hora de pedir la cuenta en algunos establecimientos tradicionales del norte de Europa donde no me entendían demasiado bien.

6. ¿De dónde procedían la mayoría de turistas a bordo del crucero?

Había muchos franceses, pero también españoles e italianos.

7. ¿Repetiría el crucero, teniendo en cuenta los aspectos relativos al idioma desempeñado en éste?

Absolutamente. Como he dicho antes, dentro del barco pude comunicarme en todo momento en español y no encontré dificultades.

ANNEXE VII: Mediterranean cruise

Nombre del entrevistado: Rafael Roldán Begines

Crucero realizado: Mediterráneo

1. Durante su viaje, ¿tuvo que recurrir en algún momento al inglés para comunicarse?

Solamente con otros turistas extranjeros, la tripulación hablaba español.

2. ¿Hubo algún miembro de la tripulación que se dirigiera a usted en inglés en algún momento?

Sí No

3. Si su respuesta es afirmativa, indique cuál era su puesto de trabajo.

4. Durante las excursiones realizadas a los lugares de destino, ¿tuvo que comunicarse en inglés?

Sí No

5. Si su respuesta es afirmativa, ¿encontró algún tipo de dificultad?

6. ¿De dónde procedían la mayoría de turistas a bordo del crucero?

Italia, Reino Unido, Francia, España, Grecia, Alemania.

7. ¿Repetiría el crucero, teniendo en cuenta los aspectos relativos al idioma desempeñado en éste?

Sí, el idioma no supuso problema alguno.

ANNEXE VIII: ENGLISH IN AN INTERRAIL TRIP

Nombre del entrevistado: Manuel Ignacio Cerrillo López

Recorrido del Interrail: España-Francia-Bélgica-Países Bajos-Alemania-Suiza-Austria-Eslovenia-Italia (en 27 días)

1. Durante su viaje, ¿tuvo que recurrir en algún momento al inglés para comunicarse?

Muchas veces. Salvo en Francia e Italia, en el resto de los países se usa el inglés a pesar de no ser su idioma.

2. Si su respuesta es afirmativa, ¿en qué ocasiones?

Ninguno de los países de este recorrido es de habla inglesa, sin embargo, el inglés se impone si no conoces el idioma del país. Curioso como en Alemania directamente se dirigen a uno en inglés si ven que eres extranjero.

3. En los países no anglohablantes que visitó, ¿encontró alguna dificultad a la hora de utilizar el inglés como vehículo de comunicación?

Sí No

4. Si su respuesta es afirmativa, indique cual/es.

Ninguno de los países era angloparlante y el inglés es el idioma al que se recurre, pero admito que Francia no es tan accesible a este idioma como el resto de países desde mi experiencia.

5. Según su experiencia, ¿recomendaría usted tener conocimiento del inglés para realizar el Interrail?

Sí No

6. Si su respuesta es afirmativa, indique el nivel que recomienda saber.

Alto Medio Bajo

Cuanto más mejor, pero con un nivel medio es suficiente. Yo tengo B1 y con un poco de esfuerzo pude comunicarme perfectamente.

7. ¿Repetiría el Interrail teniendo en cuenta los aspectos relativos al idioma desempeñado en éste?

Sin dudar. De hecho, estoy en ello. Interrail Pass es el medio más económico que conozco para conocer Europa sin límites.