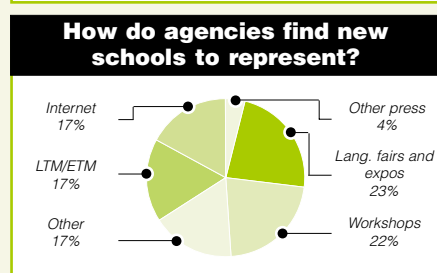
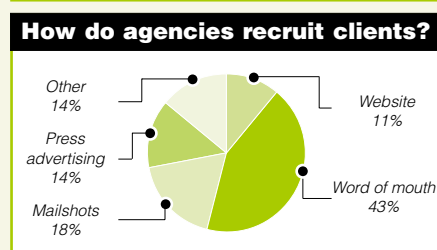
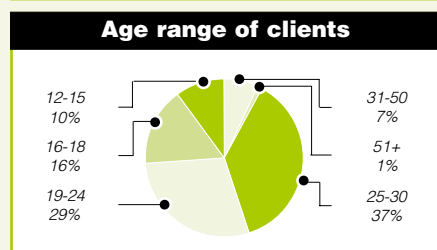
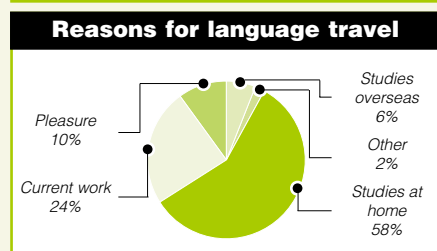
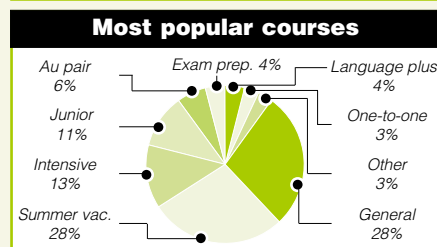
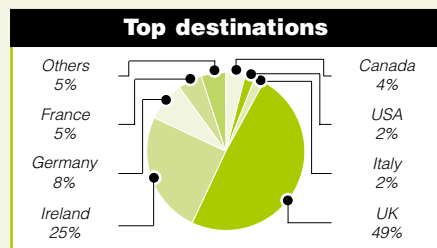


Spain's standstill

Spain's language travel market experienced a rather slow year in 2001, according to the agents who took part in this issue's survey. Many are now pinning their hopes for increasing business in 2002 on the widening of their portfolios and increased marketing.



Key points

- The nine agencies that took part in our survey placed a total of 1,128 students in 2001
- Individual agencies placed between 60 and 400 students on language courses per year
- Average growth of combined agency business in 2001 was just under six per cent
- Average length of stay was 4.1 weeks
- Average commission offered by language schools was 17.5 per cent
- 66 per cent of Spanish students studied in July and August
- 72 per cent of Spanish students stayed with host families
- The number of countries represented by agencies ranged from one to 20
- The average cost of a week's language course with accommodation was €350 (US\$330)
- Agents found 17 per cent of new schools via *Language Travel Mag./Education Travel Mag.*

Market growth

Demand in Spain for language travel programmes slowed in 2001 with only 63 per cent of the nine agents who took part in this issue's survey reporting a modest increase in bookings of between five and 20 per cent. This is in contrast to 2000 when 70 per cent of agents experienced up to 50 per cent growth (see *Language Travel Magazine*, August 2001, pages 18-19). Any business growth in 2001 was put down to individual agency efforts such as increasing their product range and stepping up marketing.

Student trends

The average age of language travel students from Spain is relatively high, with 66 per cent of bookings accounted for by students aged between 19 and 30 years old. No agents in this year's survey placed students under the age of 11, although the 12-to-15 year old age group, which accounted for 10 per cent of bookings this year, was highlighted as a growth area by two agents. Three further agents said the 19-to-24 year old age bracket

would be the one to watch in the future.

Language and destination trends

English was by far the most popular language, accounting for around 80 per cent of Spanish agency bookings. German was the second most popular, with a 10 per cent share of the market, followed by French, with eight per cent. Although the UK still led the pack in terms of favoured language travel

destination, two agents noted a surge in demand for Ireland. The USA, which accounted for only two per cent of bookings in this survey, lost favour after September 11, although demand has picked up again in 2002.

Agency business

Agents estimated that around 80 per cent of students knew which country they wanted to study in before seeking agency advice, while 41 per cent had decided on a city or town and 14 per cent knew of a school. After consultation, 19 per cent changed their mind about the country, 39 per cent about the city or town and 41 per cent about the school.

Forecast for 2002

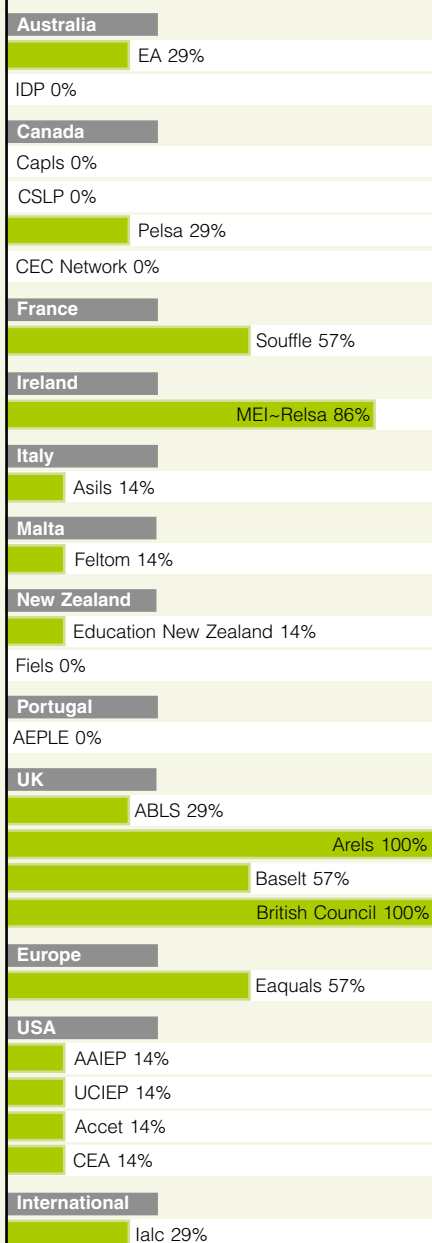
In such a competitive market, which is currently undergoing a period of stagnation, it is not surprising that a number of Spanish agents reported that they would continue to concentrate on expanding their range of courses and countries in order to attract more students, while others also mentioned that they would focus on marketing activities.

Economic overview

- The Spanish economy grew by 2.8% in 2001 after increasing by 4% for four consecutive years. This economic deceleration was mainly owing to a contraction in domestic spending and weakening exports, as well as the general global economic slowdown, but buoyant consumer spending prevented a more severe deceleration.
- Spain's GDP growth was 1.3 percentage points higher than the European Monetary Union (EMU) average.
- Household consumption grew by 2.7% in 2001, although this was down from 4% in 2000.
- The unemployment rate continued to fall, from 13.6% in 2000 to 13% in 2001.
- Inflation also fell to 2.7% in the second half of 2001, 1.3 percentage points lower than 2000.
- Forecasts for GDP growth in 2002 predict that Spain will again outperform the EMU average.

Sources: Spanish Ministry of Economy; Axa Investment Managers

Percentage of agents who recognised each of the following organisations



Thank you to the following agencies for taking part in our survey: Amitour-Club; Easy Languages Abroad; Global Education; Globus; Il Centro Italiano; Meeting People, Languages; Orbe Asesores Linguísticos; Red Central; Silc

Spanish agents named a range of language programmes they work with, including, in France: Institut de Touraine, Tours; in Germany: Did Deutsch Institut, various; HSF Heidelberg Sprachinstitut, Heidelberg; in Ireland: Emerald Cultural Institute, Dublin; Geos Language Academy, Dublin; Language Centre of Ireland, Dublin; Limerick Language Centre, Limerick; Linguaviva, Dublin; University College Dublin, Dublin; in Italy: Babilonia, Iacornina; Cultura Italiana, Bologna; Machiavelli, Florence; Torre di Babelle, Rome; in the UK: Angloschool, London; Lydbury English Centre, Lydbury; MLS International College, Bournemouth; New School of English, Cambridge; Oxford House, London; St Peter's School of English, Canterbury; Shane English School, various; Suzanne Sparrow Plymouth Language School, Plymouth; Twin School of English, London; in the USA: Embassy CES, New York, NY; International: St Giles Colleges.