



*ugr*

Universidad  
de Granada

**TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO**  
**GRADO EN TRADUCCIÓN E INTERPRETACIÓN**

**The socio-educational aspects of the AEL programme  
(2012-2018): academic training and career prospects**

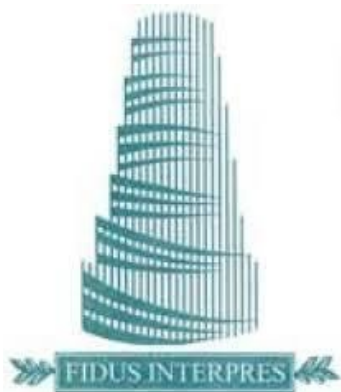
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## Abbreviations used

AEL	Applied European Languages
AMU	Aix-Marseille Université
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
FTI	Faculty of Translation and Interpreting
LAE	Applied Languages Europe
Language A	First language
Language B	Second language
Language C	Third language
LJMU	Liverpool John Moores University
NVA	New Flemish Alliance
THK	Technische Hochschule Köln
UFR ALLSH	Faculté des arts, lettres, langues et sciences humaines
UG	University of Ghent
UGR	University of Granada
UniOvi	University of Oviedo
UNN	University of Northumbria Newcastle
UP	University of Passau
UT2J	University of Toulouse-Jean Jaurès

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1. Origin and description of the study**

This research is born from my own experience as a participant in the AEL programme. After living abroad for two years, studying law and economics in Ireland and Germany and moving back to the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting (FTI) in Granada, I began to wonder what the real potential of the AEL programme really is. To answer this question, I decided to carry out an exhaustive evaluation; not only to know the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, but also to highlight the academic and professional advantages that AEL offers to its students.

In 2009, María de los Ángeles Morón Martín, one of the former participants of LAE, the forerunner of the present AEL programme, carried out a similar study. In her thesis, she researched perceptions of the impact of mobility on the training of translators through the experience of LAE programme participants. The aim of her study was to describe the impact of international mobility on the training of translators through the experience of former LAE programme participants. However, this research does not focus on this topic, but on the quality of the current AEL programme.

Coinciding with the 30th anniversary of UGR's participation in the LAE programme, this evaluation was carried out with students from the first four promotions of the remodelled AEL programme (2012-2018) at the University of Granada (UGR). Through a questionnaire, the main instrument of this research, the former participants evaluated the programme by exposing their experiences during their participation in order to detect the strengths and weaknesses of the programme and to improve its quality.

### **1.2. Objectives and structure of the study**

According to the data published by the newspaper *El Mundo* (2019), the FTI is the best university centre in Spain to study this Bachelor's degree, mainly due to its varied offer of

languages and its research work. However, the FTI also stands out for its dual degree programmes, which consist of:

- Double Integrated Degree between Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna and University of Granada
- Double Degree with Moscow Linguistic University
- Applied European Languages Programme (AEL)
- Dual Degree Programme in Translation and Interpretation and Tourism

Bearing in mind the variety of dual degrees offered by the FTI (2019) and the difficulty of ensuring quality teaching in each and every one of its programmes, the general objective of this study is to improve the quality standards of the AEL programme for future generations. However, this study does not pursue a single goal, but has other more specific objectives:

- To delve into the nature of the programme, its history and its member universities
- To detect the strengths and weaknesses of the programme in the socio-educational field
- To get to know AEL graduates' professional opportunities as well as for Master's degrees or other higher studies
- To determine the prestige and visibility of the programme in the international context
- To orient future generations on the nature and benefits of the programme

To do this, the following structure will be used. First, I will explain in chapter 2 the history of the AEL programme, from its origins to the present day. Later, I will explain the main characteristics of the programme at UGR and the other partner universities. Chapter 3 will focus on the methodology used to prepare a questionnaire that aims to resolve all the unknown factors surrounding the programme. In Chapter 4 I will reach the most important part of this work; through the questionnaire distributed among all the former participants I will try to achieve the objectives after the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained.



## **2. The AEL programme**

The following information has been extracted from Morón Martín (2009), "APPLIED EUROPEAN LANGUAGES | European Bachelor" (2019) and "Grado en Traducción e Interpretación > Programa AEL | Universidad de Granada" (2019). The latter is the official website of the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting.

AEL is a four-year university programme that trains its participants in the fields of languages and translation (English, French, German and Arabic) economics, law and business. The main feature of this degree is the possibility to study two years (120 ECTS) at the home university and another two years (120 ECTS) at two European universities. This programme is based on an agreement between the following member universities:

- Technische Hochschule Köln, Germany (THK)
- University of Granada, Spain (UGR)
- University of Oviedo, Spain (UniOvi)
- Aix-Marseille Université, France (AMU)
- University of Ghent, Belgium (UG)

Although UL is one of the destinations offered by the programme, it is not currently considered an official member of the programme, since its students do not participate in the exchange.

At each of the member universities, students can be supported and advised by a coordinator. In fact, an international coordination meeting is held every year at one of the member centers in order to facilitate the management of the programme as well as consider future plans such as, for example, the admission of new members.

### **2.1. History**

The AEL programme derives from the former LAE (Applied Languages Europe) programme. The latter was created in 1987 on the initiative of AMU, and coincided with the beginning of

the Erasmus programme. The programme was founded by the Fachhochschule Köln (Germany), Thames Valley University (United Kingdom) and the University of AMU (France). In 1989 UGR joined the programme, becoming the first university in the programme to offer Spanish as a mother tongue. Since then, some member universities have joined the programme while others have dropped out over the years.

Between 1995 and 1997 the University of Passau (UP), the University of Limerick (UL), the University of Northumbria Newcastle (UNN) and Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) joined the programme. However, the participation of these universities (with the exception of UL) became problematic due to the following reasons.

The University of Passau introduced a set of reforms to university legislation. As a result, the UP was legally unable to continue in the consortium because it could not extend the duration of the degree to four years. In the Anglo-Saxon axis, the restructuring of LJMU led to a single centre called Liverpool Business School. The university partners were required to ensure a minimum of 20 candidates annually in order to continue in the LAE programme. Since it was impossible to offer such a number of students, the LJMU was forced to leave the programme. As for the UNN, the coordinator reported a restructuring of their degrees into a common curriculum incapable of offering courses in translation, economics or business administration prevented LAE students from taking these courses abroad.

After the drop-outs from Anglo-Saxon universities, the lack of English language representation in the programme became one of the greatest problems. At the same time, with the entry into force of the Bologna plan, the LAE programme had to meet the new administrative requirements. In 2009, after the approval of the NVA, the Dutch-Flemish accreditation organisation, the University of Ghent joined the programme. All member universities came together to ratify a new project for a restructuring of the programme in accordance with the new curriculum. Particularly in Spain and at UGR, the change from a 4-year undergraduate degree to Bachelor's degree meant a standardization of credits. To this aim, the elective courses were affected, as the wide range of these courses was reduced and a new design for the curriculum was developed.

This is how the new version of the programme was born under the name of AEL, with UG, AMU, THK, UGR and UL as exchange centres. After the end of the outdated LAE programme in 2010, the new AEL programme came into force from the 2011-2012 academic year. As a result, the programme was held on standby during the promotion of the 2011-2012 academic year at UGR. In order to guarantee the permanence of the languages in the programme, it was decided to have two member universities representing each language, except Germany. This is how UniOvi in Spain was incorporated. The Kaunas University of Technology in Lithuania as well as the UT2J in France are currently set to join in the near future.

The AEL programme is subject to student mobility regulations at each of the universities. International Mobility Regulations are subject to the conditions and rules of the centre where the student is currently studying (Reglamento de la Universidad de Granada sobre Movilidad Internacional de Estudiantes, 2012).

## **2.2. Objectives**

The main objective of the AEL programme is to train students who intend to apply their linguistic and cultural knowledge and skills to the fields of law, economics and business in order to increase their opportunities in the European labour market or to access a Master's degree or other higher education that allows them to specialise in an area related to the languages and fields mentioned.

According to the Agreement on the Bachelor of Arts Project in Applied European Languages (article 4), the AEL student should achieve the following learning objectives:

- An excellent command of the mother tongue and two other languages, to level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.
- An excellent knowledge of the culture and institutions of the main countries where the two foreign languages are spoken and in particular of the countries where the languages have been studied.
- A good knowledge of applied subjects.

- Academic and research skills as required for admission to postgraduate study.
- For students that do not have English in their language combination, it is necessary to reach a minimum level B2 at the end of their studies.

To achieve these objectives, the curricula of the member universities have to undergo a set of modifications to ensure the training of students in all the areas mentioned. According to Article 6 of the agreement (AEL, 2011), the curriculum of the AEL programme consists of three components:

- Component 1: Study of foreign language 1, including linguistic study, language practice and area studies.
- Component 2: Study of foreign language 2, including linguistic study, language practice and area studies.
- Component 3: Applied Subjects (Business Administration, Economics and Law).
- Component 4: Complementary Subjects as required.

### **2.3. Certification**

According to the Agreement on the Bachelor of Arts Project in Applied European Languages (article 2), member universities that allow a Multiple Degree agreement with other partners will award their own Bachelor's degree as well as a Bachelor's degree from their host universities to the students once they have successfully completed the programme. However, those member universities whose regulations do not allow for a multiple degree system will issue an exchange certificate.

### **2.4. The AEL programme at UGR**

The UGR is prepared to send students from the FTI with English/French, French/English, English/German and German/English language combinations. It also receives students from the universities AMU, UG and THK. The programme is coordinated by George Julian Bourne, lecturer in Spanish-English translation at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting in UGR.

### **2.4.1. Places and examination procedure**

The University usually offers 10 places every year with their corresponding itineraries and language combinations for new programme participants. These places are distributed as follows:

Students with the language combination English/French and French/English	
Itinerary A (2 places)	UGR - AMU - UL - UGR
Itinerary B (4 places)	UGR - AMU - UGR - UGR
Students with the language combination English/German and German/English	
Itinerary C (2 places)	UGR - UL - THK - UGR
Itinerary D (2 places)	UGR - UG - THK - UGR

**Table 1. Distribution of places for the AEL programme at the UGR**

As already mentioned, one of the requirements to access the programme is to pass an admission examination, which consists of one written test in language B and another in language C of each candidate. This test is held in early October and is only open to students matriculated in the first year at the FTI. Each test assesses grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension and written expression through an essay on some general cultural aspect. This test is eliminatory.

The candidates selected in the first test participate in an oral interview. The examiners can get to know the candidates personally and continue to evaluate their language skills, especially their oral expression. Until the 2017-2018 academic year, this test consisted of a series of questions about the contents of the essays from the written texts. This year, however, a novelty was included. The selected candidates received two topics related to European current affairs (one for each B and C language) to prepare on their own and to discuss in an interview of approximately 10 minutes.

### 2.4.2. Curriculum

Once selected, participants in the programme follow an adapted curriculum during their two years at UGR. The changes in the first year are intended to ensure the success of the students during their stay abroad. To this purpose, selected students attend B language courses for their two foreign languages. When they return to UGR in the fourth year, they also have to take some courses corresponding to the third year due to the impossibility of recognising these credits abroad. However, the workload never exceeds 60 ECTS as students will have already taken some fourth grade courses abroad. The curriculum looks as follows<sup>1</sup>:

Year 1 at the University of UGR

Term 1		Term 2	
Language A Level 1 (Spanish)	6 ECTS	Language A Level 2 (Spanish)	6 ECTS
Language B Level 1 (English/ French/ German)	12 ECTS	Language B Level 2 (English/ French/ German)	6 ECTS
Language B Level 1 (English/ French/ German)	12 ECTS	Language B Level 2 (English/ French/ German)	6 ECTS
		Culture of Language A Spanish	6 ECTS
		Documentation Applied to Translation	6 ECTS
Total	30 ECTS	Total	30 ECTS

**Table 2. Curriculum of UGR (Year 1)**

<sup>1</sup> The official terminology for the courses at UGR was extracted from "Term – UGRTerm" (2019)

Year 4 at the University of UGR

Term 1		Term 2	
Interpreting 2 English / French / German	6 ECTS	Undergraduate Dissertation	6 ECTS
The Translation and Interpreting Profession	6 ECTS	Translation 3 C English / French / German	6 ECTS
Translation 2 C-A English / French / German	6 ECTS	Multimedia Translation English / French / German	6 ECTS
Specialised Translation A-B English / French / German	6 ECTS	Elective course	6 ECTS
Translation Studies / Terminology	6 ECTS	Elective course	6 ECTS
Total	30 ECTS	Total	30 ECTS

**Table 3. Curriculum of UGR (Year 4)**

At the end of the programme, FTI students receive the degree in Translation and Interpreting from UGR in addition to the following degrees or certificates issued by member universities:

→ University of Aix-Marseille: Maîtrise de Langues Étrangères Appliquées

- Technische Hochschule Köln: BA in Mehrsprachige Kommunikation
- University of Ghent: Certificate of Exchange
- University of Limerick: Certificate of Exchange

## 2.5. The AEL programme at the host universities

As explained above, the AEL programme is the result of an agreement between different European universities. Each of them has its own idiosyncrasy, as it offers different certificates and has its own curriculum. This section focuses on describing strictly those universities that host students from UGR. Therefore, universities such as the UT2J or UniOvi are not covered.

### 2.5.1. Aix-Marseille Université (AMU)

According to the Faculté des arts, lettres, langues, sciences humaines (UFR ALLSH) - Aix Marseille Université (2019), this university offers the Bachelor's degree Maîtrise de Langues Étrangères Appliquées, which offers courses in foreign languages and cultures, translation, economics and law. The main characteristic of the curriculum at this university is that the courses are grouped in blocks. Students are subject to the local French law, which states that it is only necessary for the average grade of all courses to reach 10 out of 20 in order to pass the block.

According to the curriculum ratified by the Faculty of Translation and Interpretation (2019), the courses that UGR students take at AMU are as follows:

Term 1	ECTS	Term 2	ECTS
Anglais langue 3 - Langue appliquée - Phonétique	6	Anglais: langue 4 - Langue appliquée - Phonétique	6



Anglais: Choix d'1 UE en Culture 3	3	Anglais: Choix d'1 UE en Culture 4	3
Traduction français-espagnol 3	3	Traduction français-espagnol 4	3
Civilisation et langue françaises 1 - Expression française 1 - Phonétique française - Thème - Civilisation française 1	9	Civilisation et langue françaises 2 - Expression française 2 - Version - Civilisation française 2	9
Domaine d'application: Principes d'Economie	3	Domaine d'application: Macroéconomie	3
Domaine d'application: Introduction au Droit	3	Domaine d'application: Grands systèmes de Droit	3
Total	31	Total	29

**Table 4. Curriculum of AMU**

### **2.5.2. University of Ghent (UG)**

According to the Bachelor of Arts in Applied Language Studies - Faculty of Arts and Philosophy - Ghent University (2019), UG offers a Bachelor's degree in Applied Linguistics. Its curriculum not only enhances the varied offer of translation courses (especially due to its interpretation and multimedia translation courses), but UG takes a more international approach to its curriculum, with applied subjects on the European Union and human rights issues.

According to the curriculum ratified by the FTI (2019), the courses that UGR students take at UG are as follows:

Students with German/English language combination (Second Year):

Term 1	ECTS	Term 2	ECTS
German: Language Practice A	4	English Grammar B	4
German Area Studies	4	German Grammar B	4
English: Language Practice C	5	German Language Practice B	4
Translation English-Spanish	5	Audiovisual Translation German-English	5
Introduction to Translation Technology	3	English Cultural History	4
EU Law, Institutions and Languages	5	International and cross-cultural marketing	5
Creating Value Using Social Media	3	European Economic Integration	5
Total	29	Total	31

**Table 5. Curriculum of UG (Students with German / English language combination)**

Students with French/English language combination (Third Year):

Term 1	ECTS	Term 2	ECTS
Translation English-French / German	5	French Language Practice D	5
Screen Translation English-Spanish	5	French Oral Skills	4
Translation English-Spanish	5	English Advanced Writing Skills	3
Interpreting: French-Spanish	3	English Grammar B	4
Terminology and Translation Technology	5	English Language Practice: B	5
Creating Value With Websites/Applied Economics Welfare	3	Introduction to Language and Culture: English	3
EU Law, Institutions and Languages	5	Human Rights in Developing Countries	5
Total	31	Total	29

**Table 6. Curriculum of UG (Students with French / English language combination)**

### 2.5.3. Technische Hochschule Köln (THK)

According to the Institute of Translation and Multilingual Communication - TH Köln (2019), the Bachelor's degree taught at THK is Multilingual Communication. However, the AEL students of the University of Cologne take the degree Sprachen und Wirtschaft. Both degrees are part of the third THK faculty, Informations- und Kommunikationswissenschaft (Communication and Information Sciences in English). In the Bachelor's degree in Multilingual Communication, students at the University of Cologne have to choose between translation, economics or culture and the media. From these specializations arises a broad curriculum that allows AEL students to take a wide range of courses in all fields (translation, law, economics, language technology, foreign language and culture courses, etc.).

According to the curriculum ratified by the FTI (2019), the courses that UGR students take at THK are as follows:

Annual	ECTS
Englisch 1: International Business Studies; Liason Interpreting; Principles of Specialized translation: Engineering/Technology OR: Principles of Specialized translation Law/Business	7.5
Englisch 2: Translation 1 in German/English	5
Deutsch Landeskunde: Area Studies Germany	4
Deutsch 1: Advanced Language Practice German; Presentation skills and Public Speaking Skills	6

Deutsch 2: Information Technology; Translation technology; and terminology Proseminar translation		12	
Deutsch 3: Translation 1 from Spanish; Translation 1 from German		10	
Recht: Law and Media Law		5.5	
Term 1		Term 2	
Betriebswirtschaftslehre: Business Administration	2.5	Englisch 3: Economic Cultural Issues	5
		Volkswirtschaftslehre: Micro-Economics or International Macroeconomics	3
Total		60.5	

**Table 7. Curriculum of THK**

#### **2.5.4. University of Limerick (UL)**

According to the Welcome page of the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences | Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (2019), the University of Limerick has four main faculties: Kemmy Business School, Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, Faculty of Science and Engineering and Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. However, UGR students who come to UL have a more varied curriculum *a priori*, since they take subjects from different Bachelor's degrees and faculties, in contrast to other universities in the programme that offer a curriculum corresponding to one Bachelor only. UL focuses on business and marketing, but also offers language courses focused on business.

According to the curriculum ratified by the FTI (2019), the courses that UGR students take at UG are as follows:

Students with German/English language combination (Second Year):

Term 1	ECTS	Term 2	ECTS
German for Business 3	6	English as we speak it in Ireland	6
Principles of Law	6	German Language Culture and Society 4	6
Introduction to Information Technology	6	German for Business 4	6
Linguistics 1	6	European Studies Workshop	6
Spanish Language, Culture and Society 5	6	Spanish Language, culture and society 6	6
Total	30	Total	30

**Table 8. Curriculum of UL (Students with German / English language combination)**

Students with French/English language combination (Third Year):

Term 1	ECTS	Term 2	ECTS
New Media, Language and Globalisation	6	French for Business 8	6
Introduction to Information Technology	6	English as a foreign language 2	6

French for Business 7	6	French Language, Culture and Society 6	6
Spanish Language, Culture and Society 5	6	Spanish Language, Culture and Society 5	6
Principles of International Business	6	Strategic Management	6
Total	30	Total	30

**Table 9. Curriculum of UL (Students with French / English language combination)**

After the description of the programme, the following chapter presents the methodology used in the elaboration, evaluation and distribution of the questionnaire, the main instrument of this research.

### **3. Methodology**

How can the AEL programme be improved? From this general question, a series of questions arise leading to an evaluation of the programme with the aim of detecting those aspects that can be further improved through the impressions of its former members in a research process which will be defined in this chapter.

The methodological approach has been based on the model proposed by Cohen and Manion (quoted by Morón Martín, 2009: 367), which comprises the following structure:

#### Operationalization

- Setting research objectives
- Turning objectives into research questions

#### Questionnaire design

- Selection of data gathering instruments
- Research design: content planning and question formulation

➤ Sample selection

Questionnaire assessment

➤ Instrument validation

➤ Piloting

Data gathering

➤ Population size and sampling system

➤ Application of the instrument

### **3.1. Operationalization**

Concerning the methodology, it is highly important to reflect on what it is truly needed to study. To do so, research objectives need to be established so that they can be converted into actual questions covered in research instruments. This is what is known as a hidden agenda, defined as “a flexible list of topics to be covered in an exploratory interview” (Morón Martín, 2009: 368), although in this case it is a questionnaire. The objectives of the research instrument have been divided into three different categories described below:

Educational dimension: perhaps the most extensive field of study. The main objective is to define the AEL student’s profile within the academic environment, that is, to determine their motivations to participate in the programme and their background, as well as to describe their strengths, their difficulties and their ability to adapt to host universities and readapt to their university of origin. However, it was also considered essential to describe the AEL level of demand and to introduce the subjects taught during the programme. The purpose of studying these aspects is to compare the academic training of the AEL student with the academic training of the Translation and Interpreting student UGR. This can be determined through the following research questions:

- Which innovations could be implemented relative to future career?
- How do students see the programme's level of demand?
- How did they find the adaptation to the host universities? And the readaptation to UGR after two years abroad?



- What is the background that the students brought with them when they entered the programme? And when they studied abroad? And when they returned in the last year?
- What difficulties did they have throughout the Bachelor's degree (in the entrance examination, during their years abroad and at UGR)?
- What kind of subjects do AEL students take? What are the differences in the AEL study plan and the Bachelor of Translation and Interpreting?

Socio-professional dimension: as with the educational approach, I also try to describe the difficulties and strengths of the candidates from the cultural and social point of view. However, the main aim is to go deeper into the professional field: to reflect on the design and structure of the programme, to know the opportunities and advantages when it comes to finding a job as well as the professional opportunities through the employment situation of its former participants and the options that the participants have when it comes to continuing their studies with a Master's degree. This can be determined through the following research questions:

- What innovations could be implemented relative to future career?
- To what extent are students engaged in the programme after returning to UGR?
- What are the advantages and opportunities offered by the programme when it comes to accessing the labour market?
- What are the professional prospects for AEL participants? Which Master's degree courses are best suited to the profile of the AEL student?

Evaluation dimension: the aim here is to obtain other information that may help in evaluating the programme. Through the socio-educational impact of its participants studied in the previous points, I will try to detect which aspects can still be improved in the programme and if the students recommend the programme after their experience. Other aspects intended to be studied are the identity and visibility of the programme according to its publicity, the degree of involvement of its members as well as the possibility of including other languages and university partners. In addition to all this, it is crucial to know the prestige of the programme in the international context in order to make the programme better known in the future. This can be determined through the following research questions:

- Is the programme sufficiently publicised?
- Do participants know the nature and conditions of the programme?
- Do students think their experience in the programme could have been better in years 1-4?  
How?
- Do students recommend the programme?
- How is the AEL programme recognised internationally? How important is double certification outside Spain?
- Should a wider range of languages be included?
- Should new members join the programme?

### **3.2. Questionnaire design**

#### ***3.2.1. Selection of data gathering instruments***

In order to describe the whole design of the study in a reasoned and orderly manner, it is extremely important to take into account all the instruments which can be used when carrying out this research. Specifically, four tools are mentioned by Fink (2003: 22): questionnaires, interviews, structured record reviews and structured observation. Although they all have advantages and disadvantages, it was finally decided that the most convenient way to conduct this experiment was through online questionnaires since these are the best way of gathering structured information on a large scale in a short period of time (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014: 152), not to mention that they are the most practical way to reach the total sample. Questionnaires are defined by Fink as “a system for collecting information from or about people to describe, compare, or explain their knowledge, attitudes and behaviour” (2003: 1), which is in line with the purpose of the research: to reflect the perceptions of former AEL students in the academic and professional fields.

### ***3.2.2. Research design: content planning and question formulation***

Before beginning to compile the questionnaire, it is necessary to ask what series of questions can be included and what sort of information they provide. To answer this question, Fink (2003: 15-18) proposes the following classification:

- Purposeful question
- Concrete questions
- Open and closed questions

In purposeful questions, the relationship between the question and its objective can be easily identified. In the case of concrete questions, the respondent will find precise and unambiguous questions. However, I will focus on describing open and closed questions, as they will predominate in the questionnaire.

Open questions allow respondents to develop their answers, justify, add or highlight additional information. These answers provide qualitative information and can "compensate, to a small extent, for the restricted nature of the questions" (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014: 157). However, respondents tend to skip these types of questions, thus the response rate is lower (Fink, 2003: 17).

In addition to this, there are several types of closed questions: dichotomous (yes/no) answer questions, multiple-choice questions, and questions about sex and age. In the event that none of the options corresponds to the answer that the respondent needs to give, it is important to give them the opportunity to mention another option (other: specify), so that they can provide new solutions that the creator of the questionnaire had not considered. (Oppenheim, 2000: 130). Their data can be analyzed quantitatively and they usually have a higher response rate. In addition to this, there is another type of closed answer, the so-called Likert scales described by Haro Soler (2018: 119-121) and Saldanha and O'Brien (2014: 157) as a scale ordering "multiple-choice answers in descending degrees with the highest degree placed at the top". The objective of these scales is to approach reality without having to use a single item that would prevent valid or reliable measures from being obtained and thus adopt a

central and objective position in the study of the research avoiding an implicit assumption that may not correspond to the opinion of the respondent.

Moreover, it is necessary to take into account the qualities of a good questionnaire. For this reason, the questionnaire has been based on a series of characteristics defined by Fink (2003: 24). Among them, it is convenient to highlight the simplicity and clarity of the language when formulating the questions. It is also highly recommended to avoid specialized terminology and words with ambiguous meanings that may create a certain lack of clarity in the sample. In terms of content, it is important to ensure that each question must address a single aspect, i.e., one of the research questions.

Another recommendation mentioned by Haro Soler (2018: 118) to make a valid questionnaire is to choose the order of the questions, i.e. to clearly define the structure. To do so, I have opted for dividing the questionnaire into six different blocks that deal with different topics:

1. Personal details
2. Admission procedure and Year 1
3. International Mobility (Year 2 and Year 3)
4. Senior Year
5. Further education and career prospects
6. Identity and visibility of the AEL programme

Except for the first block, all of them aim to answer the research questions. However, it was decided to include a first block on personal information. Rasinger (quoted by Haro Soler, 2018: 118) highlights the importance of starting with simple questions, but in addition to this, I also considered this type of information necessary when comparing answers between people of different gender, age or nationality. In this manner, I would be able to observe different patterns of response in certain groups during the analysis of the results. However, it was finally decided to do a descriptive rather than a comparative study (see section 3.3.1.), the idea of including gender, age and nationality was rejected.

### ***3.2.3. Sample selection***

In relation to the sample selection, Fink (2003: 36) distinguishes two different methods: probability sampling or non-probability sampling. Using the former method, the members of the sample are selected randomly, while using the latter method the sample is chosen according to a judgement, taking into account the characteristics of the population and the needs of the research. In this case, the aim of this project is decisive when selecting the limited sample that can be counted on and for this reason I opted for the non-probability method. After considering the different promotions of the AEL programme it was decided to include all former participants of the programme from the academic year 2012-2013 up to the promotion graduating in this academic year 2018-2019. This amounts to a total of 23 students who could be accessed. However, at this point in the research it was difficult to know if it would be possible to survey 100% of the sample. In section 3.4. further details about the sample will be explained.

The tool chosen to elaborate this questionnaire was the Google Forms platform (see 3.4.2. for justification).

## **3.3. Questionnaire assessment**

### ***3.3.1. Instrument validation***

According to Haro Soler (2018: 148), the assessment of the questionnaire is based on measuring its validity and reliability. Validity refers to the accuracy of the tool used for the research while reliability measures consistency (i.e. always obtaining the same results with the same sample).

Among the different types of validity that Fink distinguishes (2003: 50-53), this evaluation focuses on the content validity; that is, determining whether all the questions in the questionnaire are appropriate for the research. Following Fink's recommendations, which also suggest checking the completion time of the questionnaire as well as the clarity of its

questions, it was decided to use two methods: an evaluation by a group of experts and a pilot test.

Thus, the draft questionnaire (see annex) was subjected to the judgements of two experts in the AEL programme, questionnaire design and training in the field of translation. The two experts were:

- Dr. María del Mar Haro Soler, lecturer in the field of translation and expert in questionnaire design. María del Mar already had some basic notions about the programme since for her doctoral research on the self-efficacy beliefs of translation students she used María de los Ángeles Morón Martín's thesis on the perceptions of the former students of the LAE programme. Both doctoral theses have been the main sources of information for this project.
- Dr. George Julian Bourne, lecturer in the field of translation and coordinator of the AEL programme at UGR.

After assessment by the above-mentioned experts, the adequacy of the questionnaire was confirmed and a number of suggestions for possible improvement were made:

- To eliminate questions on sex, age and nationality, since the objective of the project is to carry out a descriptive study, not a comparative one. Another reason was to keep the questionnaire as short as possible and thus cut out any unnecessary questions.
- To add an introduction to the questionnaire to give it authenticity and professionalism. According to Van Peet et al. (2012: 119), questionnaires should start with an introduction to present the object of study in a general way, encourage respondents to complete the questionnaire and thank them for their collaboration.
- To correct the use of language (grammatical, lexical or orthographic errors). Julian Bourne was especially helpful here, as his mother tongue is English.
- To remove two questions from the first block, as the contents of the admission procedure as well as the performance of its participants did not provide relevant information to the research.

- To configure the web page where the questionnaire is carried out. The questions were written in English, but the language of the page was Spanish. This meant that some instructions appeared directly in Spanish, which made it rather inconsistent.
- To modify the nature of some questions. The evaluators determined that certain dichotomous multiple-choice questions should be changed to Likert scales, as they provide more information to the research. This is the case of questions 16, 25, 27, 31 and 41 of the final version of the questionnaire (see annex).
- To change the gradation on the Likert scales. According to María del Mar Haro Soler, Likert scales with odd numbers should be avoided, as respondents tend to choose the option that is right in the middle (in this case, it would be number 3), which provides less information for this research.
- To divide questions correctly. Some of the dichotomous option questions included a justification or nuance. However, it was recommended to separate the question itself and the justification into two different questions, the former providing quantitative information and the latter, which is a free question, providing qualitative information.
- To add questions for a pilot version. These questions are based on the length of time needed to complete the questionnaire and the correct formulation of the questions and options.

### ***3.3.2. Piloting***

Once the corresponding modifications were made, a pilot test was carried out. Five participants were used. According to Fink (2003: 108), the subjects of the pilot test should have similar characteristics to those who will constitute the sample of the study. In this case, among the five pilots were former participants of the LAE programme and participants of the AEL programme at the UniOvi. However, as Vigier Moreno (2010: 411) indicates, it is also possible to have subjects who will later form part of the sample. However, in this case, only one of the final respondents was selected to participate in the pilot. The questionnaire was finally piloted during the last week of March (from 25 March to 31 March 2019).

The main objective of the pilot questionnaire was to determine the exact duration of the completion of the questionnaire as well as the clarity of both questions and answers. For this

purpose, it was decided to add a new section called 'pilot questions', which included questions about these unknown factors. It took all the pilots 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire and most of them understood all the questions. However, there were some participants who stated that they had had difficulties with some questions and that these could be reformulated in a simpler way. Some questions regarding the experience of the students in UGR and abroad were, according to the pilots, somewhat confusing, as they were asking for an assessment, but did not know on which criteria to base it (academically, socially, professionally, etc.) Therefore, it was finally decided to include the expression 'overall' at the beginning of each question in order to avoid misunderstandings.

### **3.4. Data gathering**

#### ***3.4.1. Population size and sampling system***

After the design and validation of the questionnaire, the final version of the questionnaire was distributed, which can be consulted in the annex.

The questionnaire was distributed during the week between 5 April and 12 April 2019. As indicated in 3.2.3., the entire accessible sample would be comprised of the first four promotions of the AEL programme in Granada, a total of 23 students..

#### ***3.4.2. Application of the instrument***

The questionnaire was created using the Google Forms platform and a link was generated that led directly to it. For its distribution, different means were used to access the sample. Some of the former students of the programme were contacted personally; however, e-mails or telephone messages were also sent for those who were out of reach. In any case, all received the link leading to the Google Forms questionnaire.

The literature of Bourque and Fielder (2003: 9-25) on the advantages and disadvantages of online questionnaires has been considered when it came to determining whether the questionnaire would be distributed online or offline.



Regarding the advantages, the following can be highlighted:

- Online questionnaires cost less (50% cost savings compared to offline questionnaires).
- The questionnaire can be filled in from anywhere in the world, while the sample in the offline questionnaires is geographically restricted.
- It is possible to get a larger sample, as subjects can fill in the questionnaire at their convenience.
- All members of the sample receive their questionnaire at the same time. Data is also collected faster with offline questionnaires.
- The analysis of the data is easier, as there is now software that calculates the results directly.

However, there are also a number of disadvantages, although in this case they did not cause any problems, as explained below. The disadvantages include the following:

- The sample must be perfectly defined. However, the sample may be incomplete or inaccurate and the data may not represent the target population. As explained in Bourque and Fielder (2003: 19), "unless the sample is composed of the target universe and access to participation is tightly controlled, the results are likely to be non-representative". In the case of the AEL questionnaire, the sample is so small that it is perfectly defined by its nature and requirements (i.e., to be or to have been part of the AEL programme). It is the only sample that can actually represent the data expected from the questionnaire.
- Another major disadvantage of online questionnaire is the low response rate. However, "higher ranges were accomplished in professional membership organizations, where respondents would be expected to be highly motivated to participate." This is a similar case, since AEL participants are a group of students who are always motivated and willing to help each other.
- Illiterate people have problems understanding the questions and are unable to answer them. In this case, the sample is comprised of university students with sufficient training to understand and answer the questions.

- All the information necessary for the completion of the questionnaire (instructions, formulation of questions and answer options) must be perfectly clarified in the questionnaire, as the surveyor will not be present when the questionnaire is completed.

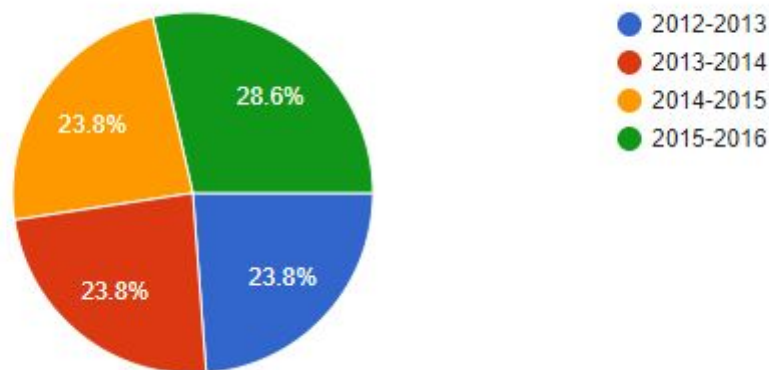
After analysing all the advantages and disadvantages, it was finally decided that the best way to distribute the questionnaire was online.

#### 4. Analysis of the results

Once the two-week period for completion of the questionnaire had expired and all the results had been obtained, the data were analysed. In the end, 21 students answered the questionnaire, which represents 91% of the total possible sample. In this chapter, each question will be analysed in the order listed in the questionnaire for easier comprehension.

##### 4.1. Sample data

Question 1: In which academic year were you selected for the AEL programme?

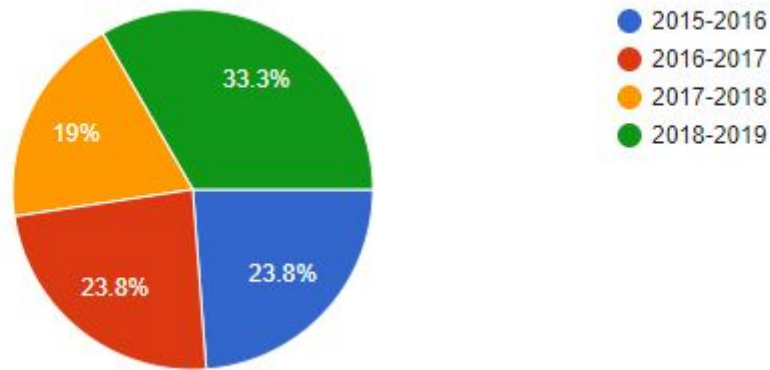


**Figure 1. Year of admission to the programme**

As can be seen in the figure, the promotion with the most students started in 2015 (28.6%), while the rest of the promotions are equally represented (23.8%).

Question 2: In which academic year did you complete the AEL programme?

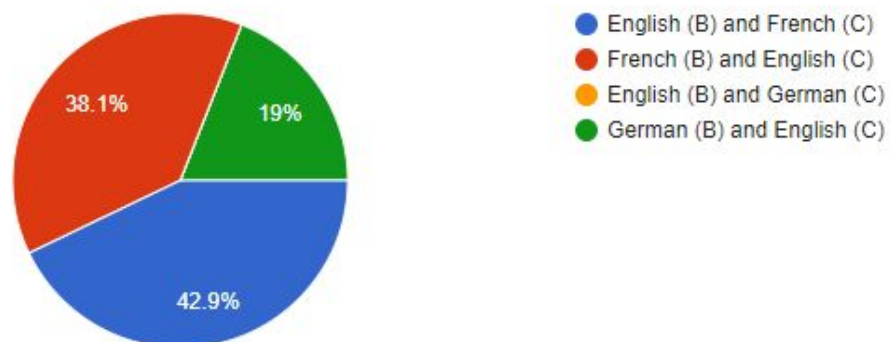
A third of respondents have completed their studies in the current academic year (33.3%) while 19% of former participants graduated last year. The fourth promotion of students (2015-2019) were expected to skip the questions from block 5 relating to further education and career prospects. However, 2 out of the 6 students who had not graduated were able to answer these questions due to having carried out an internship during the fourth year.



**Figure 2. Year of completion of studies**

Question 3: What was your language combination?

As for the language combination, English-French is the most popular (42.9%). The French-English combination follows closely (38.1%), while combinations with German are the least popular: German-English (19%) and English-German (0%). This fact will be discussed in more detail in the following section on the interpretation of the results.



**Figure 3. Language combinations**

Question 4: What was your AEL itinerary?

Among the itineraries offered by the programme, it is important to mention that AMU is the most visited by students from UGR, as it is one of the most popular itineraries: AMU-UG (42.9%) and AMU-UL (38.1%). This is directly related to the language combination, as if English-French and French-English combinations are the most popular and AMU is the only destination available for students studying French, 81% of students will have studied at AMU.

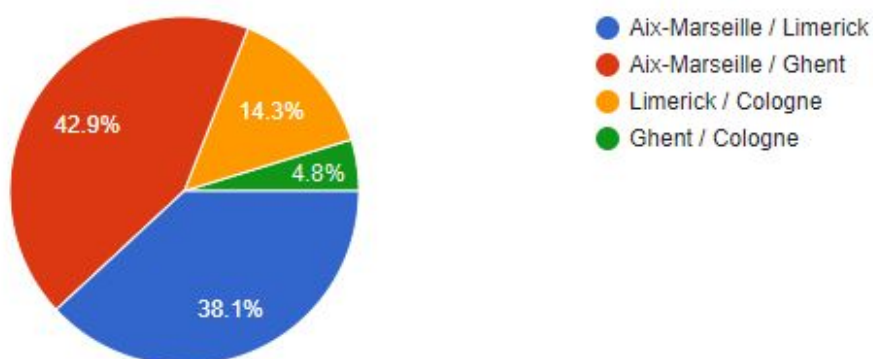
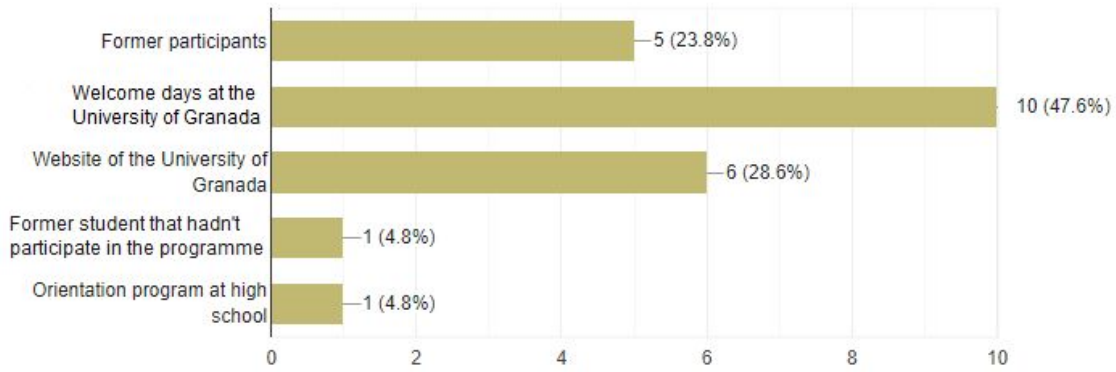


Figure 4. AEL itineraries

#### 4.2. Admission procedure and Year 1

Question 5: How did you hear about the AEL programme?

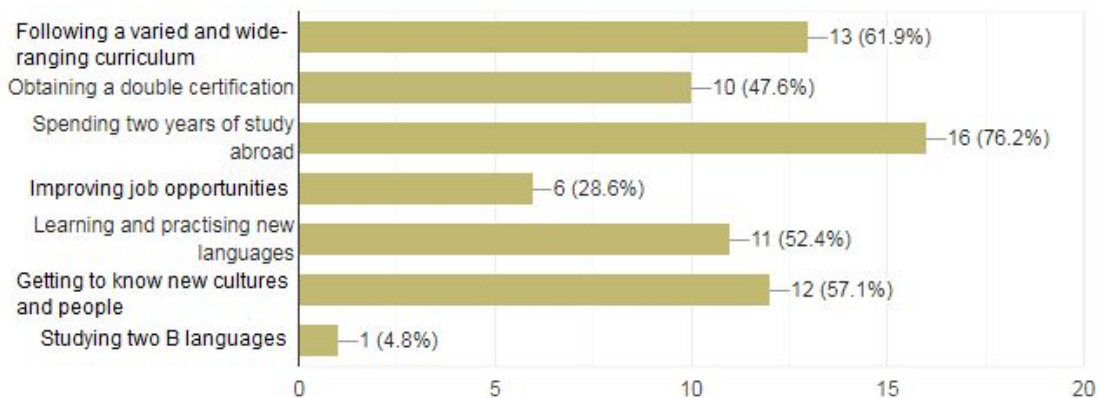
Nearly half of those surveyed state they heard about the programme during the welcome days at the university (47.6%). Other students were informed about the programme through the website (28.6%), former participants (23.8%) or secondary schools (4.8%).



**Figure 5. Sources of information on the programme**

Question 6: What were your main motivations to enter the AEL programme?

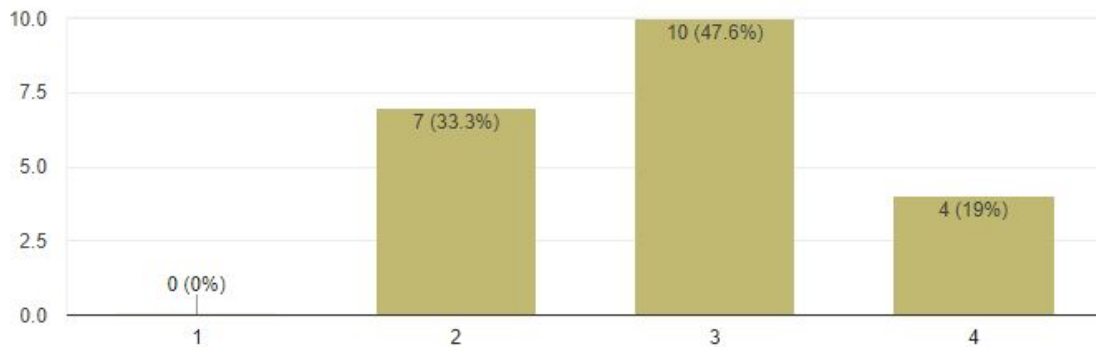
The two main motivations that led students to join the programme are the two-year stay abroad (76.2%) and the broad curriculum with applied subjects (61.9%). However, there are a number of other motivations which do not derive directly from the nature of the programme and which are related to the disposition of the students: the opportunity to come into contact with new cultures and practise languages.



**Figure 6. Main motivations to enter the AEL programme**

Question 7: To what extent were you informed about the examination dates and the contents of the entrance examination?

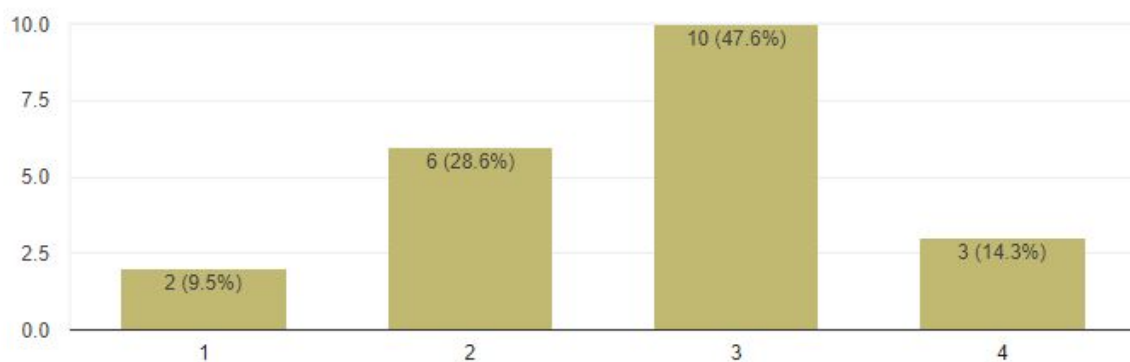
Bearing in mind that 1 means “not at all” and 4 means “absolutely”, a total of 67% of respondents (combining the results of options 3 and 4) state that they were sufficiently informed about the dates and contents of the entrance examination, while 33% do not fully agree with this statement.



**Figure 7. Students' awareness of dates and contents of the entrance examination**

Question 8: To what extent do you think that the aspects in which you were examined correspond to the AEL student profile?

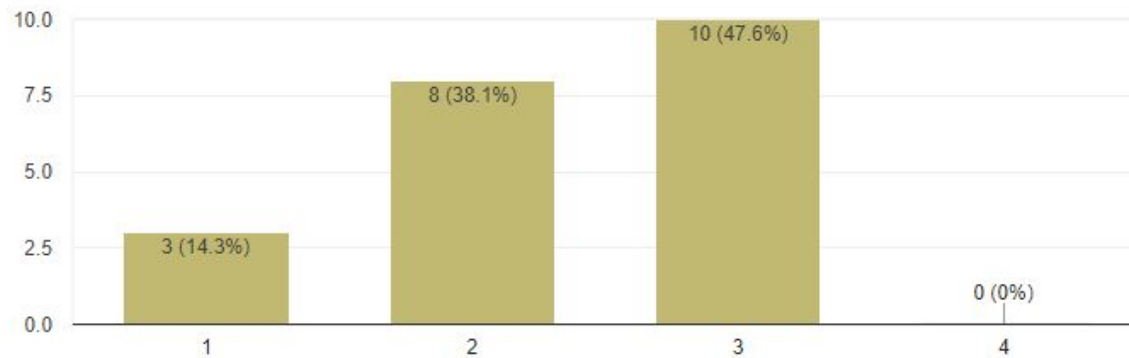
As for this question referring strictly to the admission procedure, the majority of respondents were satisfied with the contents of the test (61.9%), while 38.1% were discontented in this respect.



**Figure 8. Correspondence between the AEL student's profile and examination contents**

Question 9: How did you find the level of demand in this examination?

Bearing in mind that 1 means “very easy” and 4 means “very difficult”, 47.6 % of the respondents consider that the access test was difficult, while 52.4 % think that it was easy or very easy.



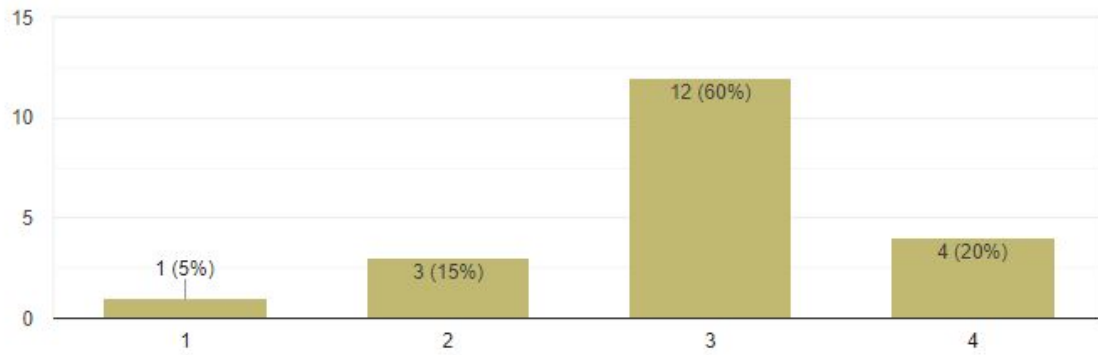
**Figure 9. Level of demand in the examination**

Question 10: Do you have any suggestions for improvement related to the examination procedure?

Half of the answers (2 out of the 4 who answered this open question) suggest the inclusion of more questions about law, economics, business administration and translation.

Question 11: To what extent did you feel prepared for your experience abroad after taking two language B courses?

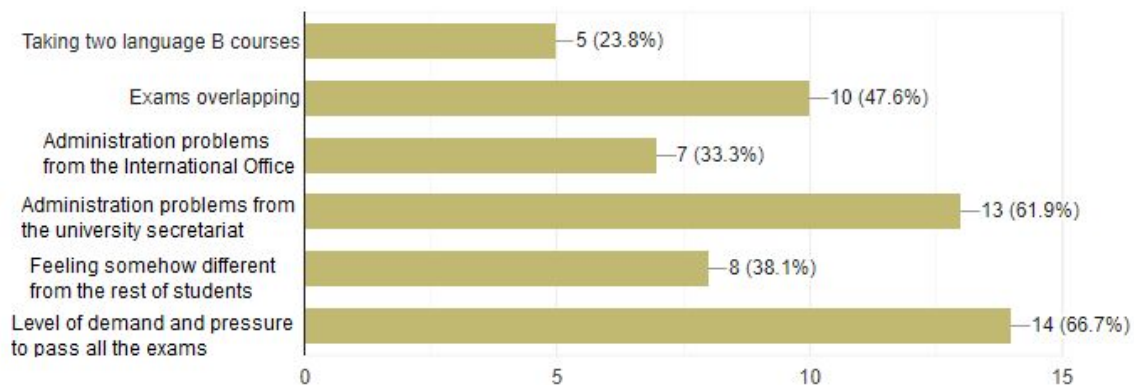
Bearing in mind that 1 means “not at all prepared” and 4 means “highly prepared”, 80% of respondents claim to have felt prepared for their stay abroad with two B languages. Only 5% believe that the preparation was not sufficient at all, while 15% consider that this aspect could be improved.



**Figure 10. Preparation for the experience abroad after two language B courses**

Question 12: Did any of these situations cause you any difficulty?

Among the possible difficulties, the former participants claim to have had problems from the FTI: level of demand and pressure to pass all the exams (66.7%), administration problems from the faculty secretariat such as not appearing in the course lists (61.9%) and overlapping exams (47.6%). The least of their problems was taking two B languages (23.8%) because, as seen in the previous question, this is regarded more as an advantage than as a disadvantage.



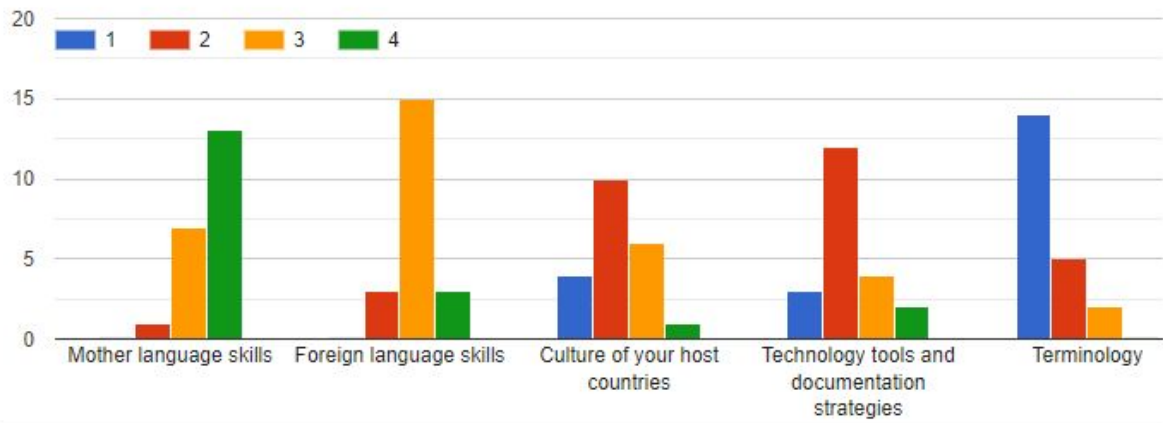
**Figure 11. Difficulties during the first year in UGR**

Question 13: Please evaluate your knowledge in the following subjects after your first year in Granada taking into account that 1 means “non-existent” and 4 “excellent”

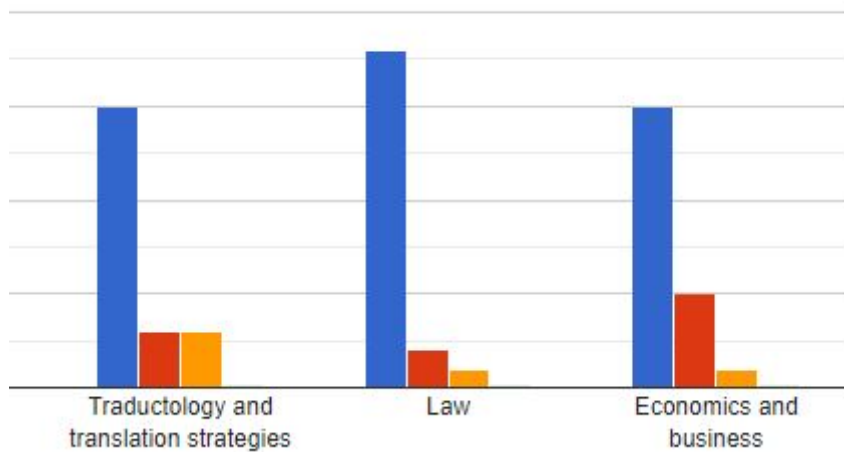
After asking former students to self-assess their skills, it was discovered that both language A and languages B and C were the most positively valued. However, other skills such as the use



of computer tools, terminology, translation and especially knowledge in applied subjects were the least acquired by the students during their first year in the programme.



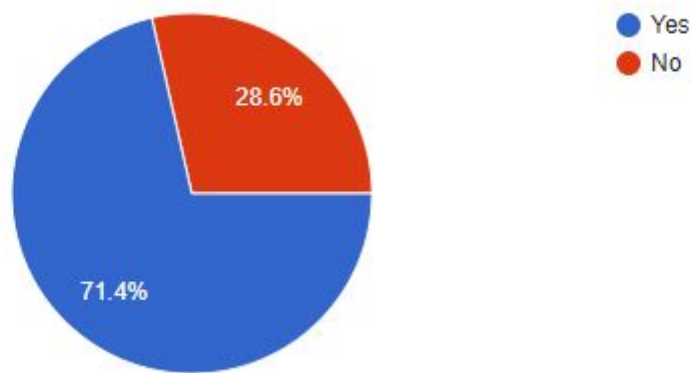
**Figure 12.1. Self-evaluation of the students after the first year at the University**



**Figure 12.2. Self-evaluation of the students after the first year at the University (Cont.)**

Question 14: Overall, do you think your first year in Granada could have been better?

A total of 71.4% of respondents felt that their first year in Granada could have been better, compared to 28.6% of respondents who were satisfied with their experience.



**Figure 13. Satisfaction of the students after their first year at the University**

Question 15: If so, how?

The main suggestion is the necessity to implement applied subjects courses (14 out of the 14 students who answered this open question gave this idea), as well as basic notions of translation (4 out of 14). One of the students indicate the improvement of methodology and class level, especially in English B language classes, as they do not differ much from secondary education.

Suggestions for improvement	Number of respondents supporting these proposals	Comments
Implementing applied subjects	14	“Having some kind of basis in law and economics would have been useful for better understanding the courses in our host universities.”
Implementing translation courses	4	“I think we were not prepared to face translation courses abroad.”

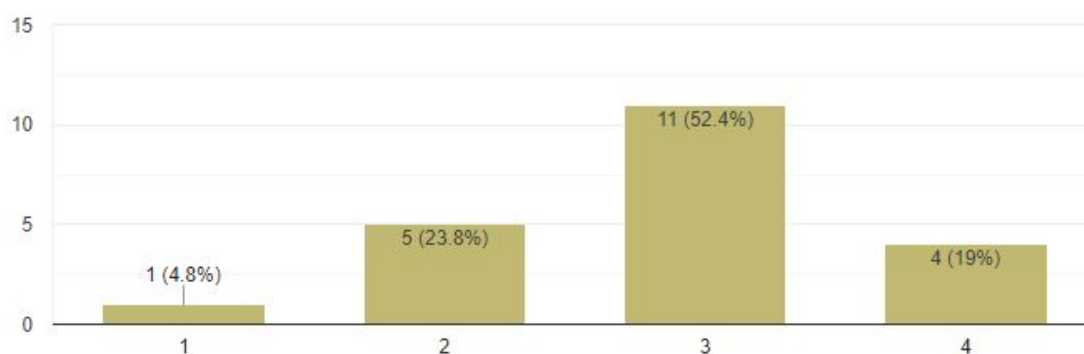
Improving languages B acquisition	1	“More speaking exercises, better methodology and higher language level.”
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**Table 10. Reflections on the experience during the first year at UGR**

### 4.3. International Mobility (Years 2 and 3)

Question 16: To what extent do you consider that you had a good background in order to face your stay abroad?

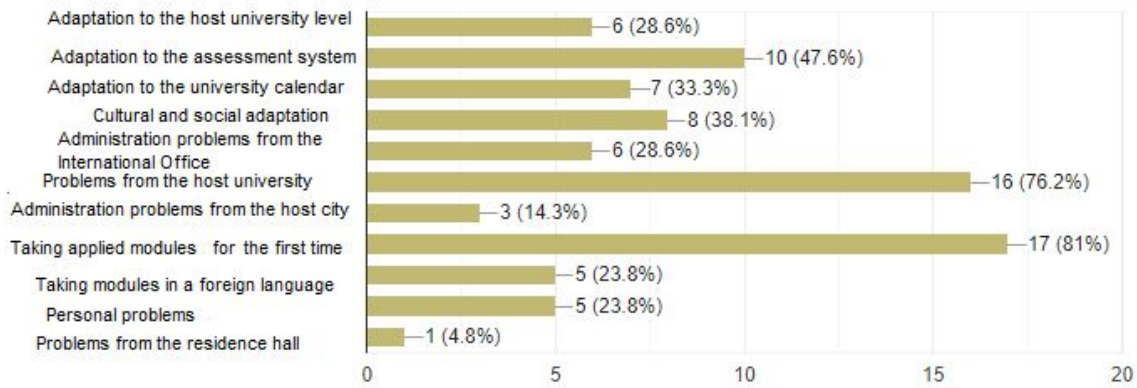
A total of 71.4% of respondents consider that they had an acceptable or very good level of ability to cope with their stay abroad, while 28.6% of respondents felt unprepared for this.



**Figure 14. UGR students' background to face their stay abroad**

Question 17: Did any of these situations cause you any difficulty during your first year abroad?

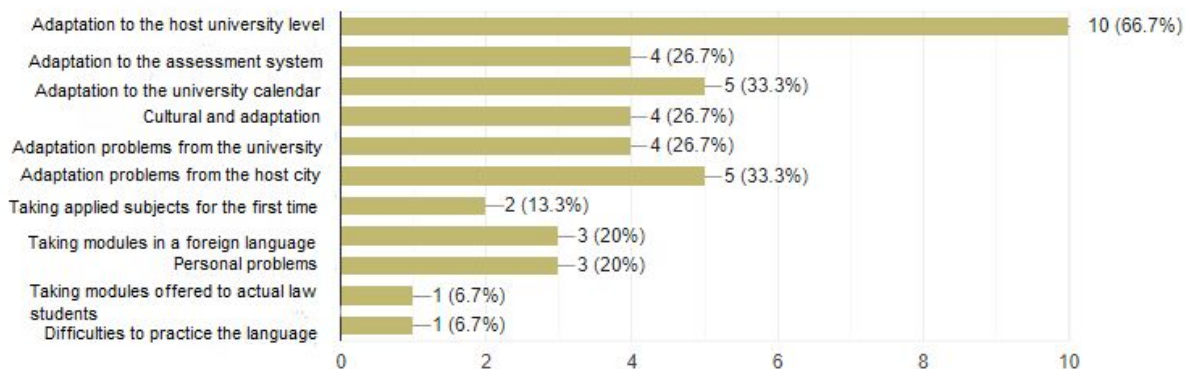
During the first year, the greatest problems of the former participants were undoubtedly the fact of taking applied modules for the first time abroad (81%), the bureaucracy (76.2%) on the part of the host university as well as the evaluation system of other universities (47.6%). Other aspects such as bureaucracy in the host city have not been so problematic. In addition, one respondent mentioned the option of problems with the residence as one of their difficulties.



**Figure 15. Main difficulties during the first year abroad**

Question 18: Did any of these situations cause you any difficulty during your second year abroad?

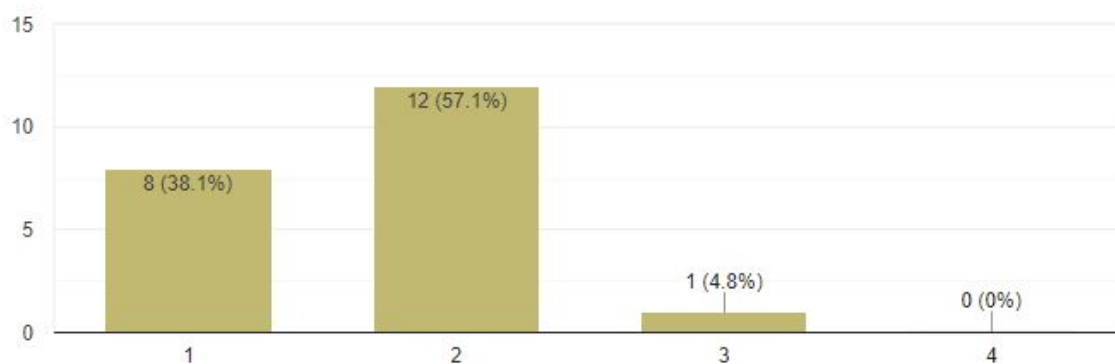
In this case, the most important problem during the second year abroad has certainly been the level of difficulty of the host university (66.7%). Other aspects such as the academic calendar (33%) or the bureaucracy of the host city (33%) made it difficult for participants. In addition, one student (6.7%) highlights the difficulty of practising the language with other host university students who also have a great command of English and Spanish and who only communicate with AEL students in such languages. Other student (6.7%) also reports on a misunderstanding that led them to take a law course intended for law students rather than language students.



**Figure 16. Main difficulties during the second year abroad**

Question 19: How would you compare your previous knowledge in the applied subjects (law, economics and business) with that of the rest of your AEL partners from other universities?

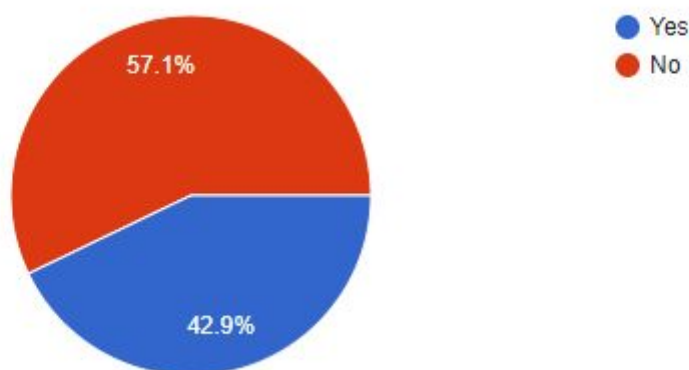
As for the academic level in the applied subjects, respondents state that their level and background is considerably lower compared to the rest of AEL companions from other universities (38.1%) or simply lower (57.1%). Only one student (4.8%) claims to have had a background at the same level as the other AEL students.



**Figure 17. Background comparison between AEL students regarding level of applied subjects**

Question 20: Did you work during your stay abroad?

A total of 57.1% of former participants claim they had not worked abroad during the two years, while 42.9% obtained a job or an internship.



**Figure 18. Employment status of students during their stay abroad**

Question 21: If so, in which sector?

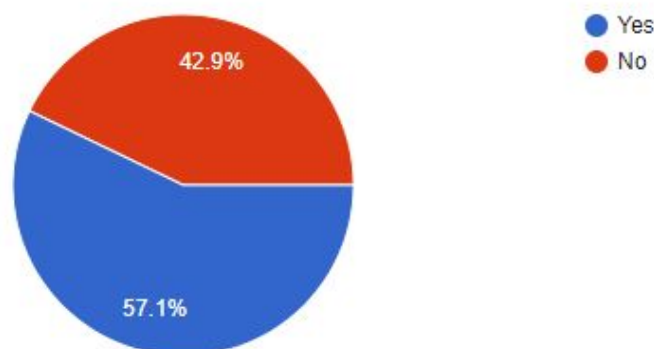
A total of 4 out of 9 who answered this open question worked in the service sector, especially in university restaurants. Other sectors were education (3) and marketing (1). Only one person worked as a translator during their years abroad.

Sector	Number of students
Service	4
Children care and teaching	3
Marketing	1
Translation	1

**Table 11. Student jobs during their stay abroad**

Question 22: Overall, do you think your stay abroad could have been better?

A total of 57.1% of respondents felt that their stay abroad could have been better, compared with 42.9% who were satisfied with their experience.



**Figure 19. Satisfaction of the students after their stay abroad**

Question 23: If so, how?

Suggestions include the need to improve the bureaucracy (6 out of 12 respondents), implement introductory courses in applied subjects during their first year at UGR (4), improving the academic training in translation and language courses (3), timetable management (3) as well as implementing internships abroad (1).

Suggestions for improvement	Number of respondents supporting these proposals	Comments
Dealing with administrative problems	6	“The administrative side of things in Aix-en-Provence was truly challenging and both the structure and management of the programme left a lot to be desired.”
Having some preparation in applied subjects beforehand	4	“I think a better preparation in the applied subjects would have helped us to better adapt to our new courses in the host universities.”
Improving timetable management	3	“We found ourselves constantly struggling to get our timetables work.”
Including some preparation in language and translation courses	3	“During my year at AMU, I would have appreciated learning some basic

		concepts of translation theory and actual translation strategies.”
Implementing internships	1	“Both UL and THK students had to do an internship during their course (...). I think this would be very helpful for UGR students too.”

Table 12. Reflections on the experience during the stay abroad

#### 4.4. Year 4 (Senior Year)

Question 24: Please evaluate your knowledge in the following subjects after your two-year stay abroad taking into account that 1 means “non-existent” and 4 “excellent”

As can be seen in the following figure, the former students of the programme had a good level in text analysis and multimedia translation (17 out of 21 respondents). However, in the field of interpreting they were not as well prepared (13 for interpreting practice and 10 for note-taking) as in other areas such as the use of computer tools or different translation approaches (e.g. ad verbum translation and sensum translation).

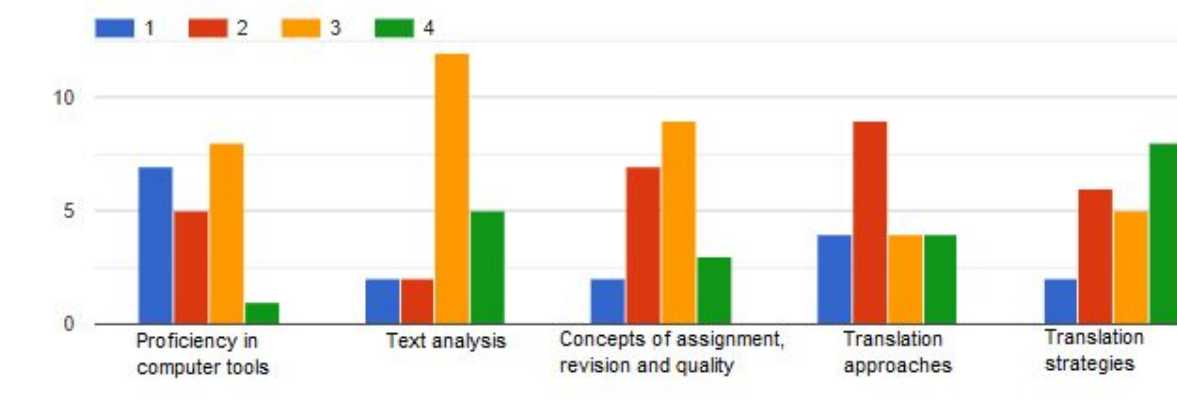
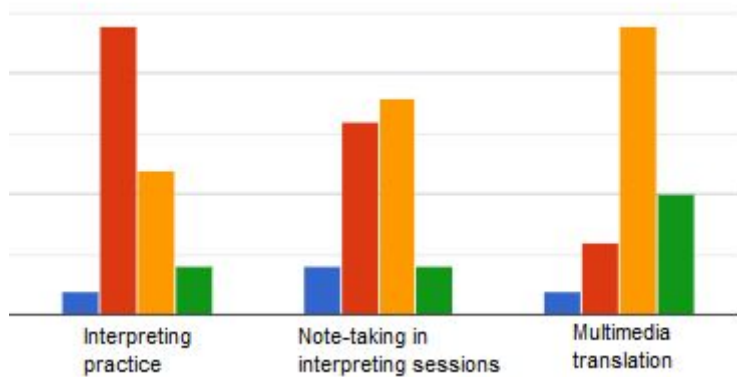


Figure 20.1. Self-evaluation of the students after their experience abroad

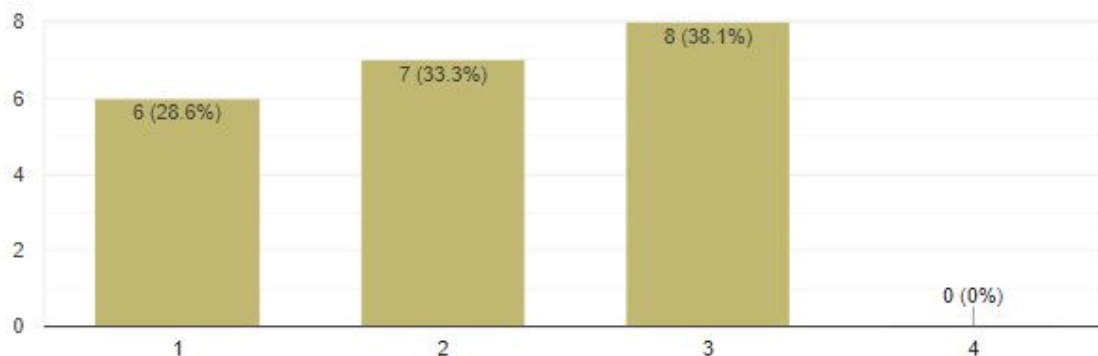




**Figure 20.2. Self-evaluation of the students after their experience abroad (Cont.)**

Question 25: To what extent did you feel it difficult to readapt to your home university during the fourth year?

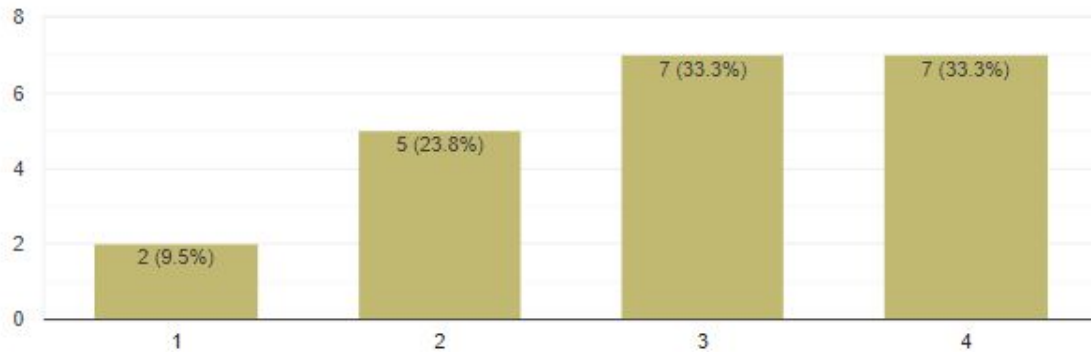
Bearing in mind that 1 means "very easy" and means 4 "very difficult", more than half of the participants (62.9%) did not have great difficulties in returning to university life after their experience abroad. However, 38.1% of the students found re-adaptation difficult.



**Figure 21. Difficulties in readaptation to the home university**

Question 26: After completing your two-year stay abroad, to what extent did you still feel engaged in the programme by helping other participants, new promotions or partners from other AEL universities?

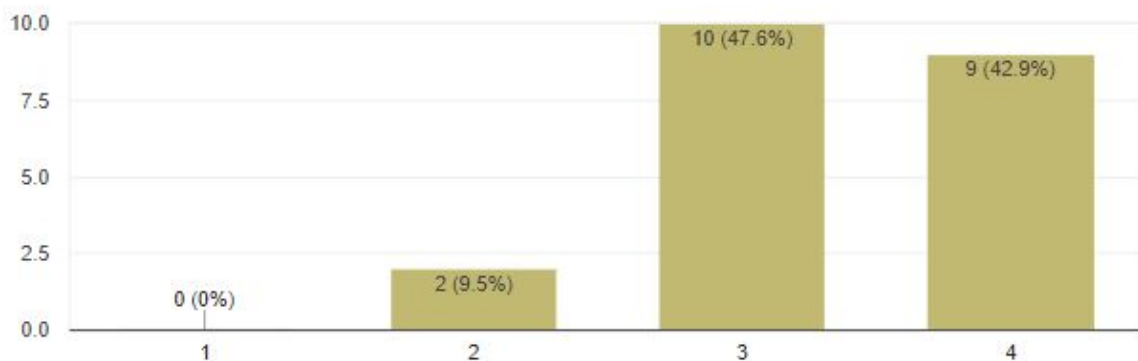
Bearing in mind that 1 means "not at all engaged" and 4 "highly engaged", 66.7% of participants are still engaged in the programme after their experience abroad, while 33.3% have totally or partially disengaged from the programme.



**Figure 22. Degree of involvement of students with the programme after staying abroad**

Question 27: To what extent do you consider that being a member of the AEL programme gave you a wider range of possibilities when it came to considering your future plans?

Bearing in mind that 1 means "not at all" and 4 means "to a high extent", 90.5% of students say that the programme offers a wide range of possibilities when deciding their professional future in their last year of university, while 9.5% only partially agree with this statement.



**Figure 23. Reflections on the benefits of the programme in the professional field**

Question 28: Overall, do you think your last year in Granada could have been better?

A total of 57.1% of the students seem to be satisfied with their experience in the last year at the UGR, while 42.9% of the respondents did not agree with this statement.

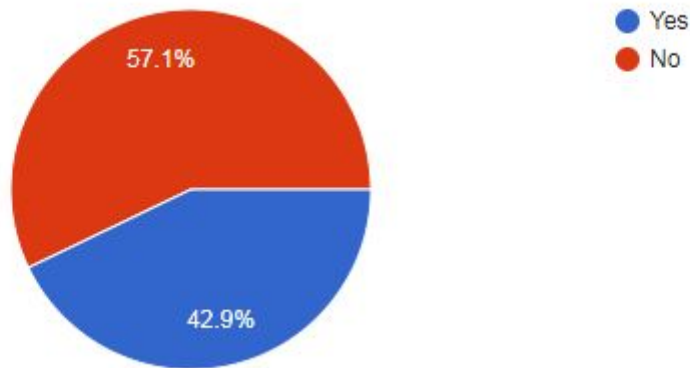


Figure 24. Satisfaction of the students after their last year at University

Question 29: If, how?

In general, students consider that they did not receive sufficient training abroad to cope with interpretation and translation courses. Other comments point to the need to keep both languages as languages B, applied subject courses and even the possibility of implementing curricular internships in the degree. Finally, they also mention the possibility of being able to alter the curriculum and be able to choose subjects such as Translation Studies or Computer Tools for Translators and Interpreters instead of Terminology as an improvement.

Suggestions for improvement	Number of respondents supporting these proposals	Comments
Maintaining both B languages	2	“I would have liked to maintain English and French as my second language.”
Better preparation for the	2	“My interpreting course at

interpreting courses		UG was completely useless, then when I got to Granada at the beginning it was difficult for me to adapt the level of Interpreting 2.”
Improving timetable management	1	“A sensible timetable would allow us to find a job or a practicum while studying.”
Maintaining applied subjects	1	“I would have like to continue taking law and economic courses.”
Implementing internships	1	“Most of all with an internship period included in our curriculum.”
Better preparation for translation courses	1	“I also did not have any strategies for translating, because in each destination they taught us to do it differently.”
A more flexible curriculum	1	“During the first semester, it was compulsory to take the module ‘Terminología’. However, I believe it would have been more convenient to take ‘Herramientas Informáticas’ or even ‘Traductología’ instead.”

**Table 13. Reflections on their experience last year at the University**

Question 30: To what extent would you recommend the programme to other students?

A total of 15 students (71.4%) strongly recommend the programme while 6 students (28.6%) recommend it, but to a lesser extent. The quality of the programme is unquestionable, since no respondent is dissatisfied with the programme.

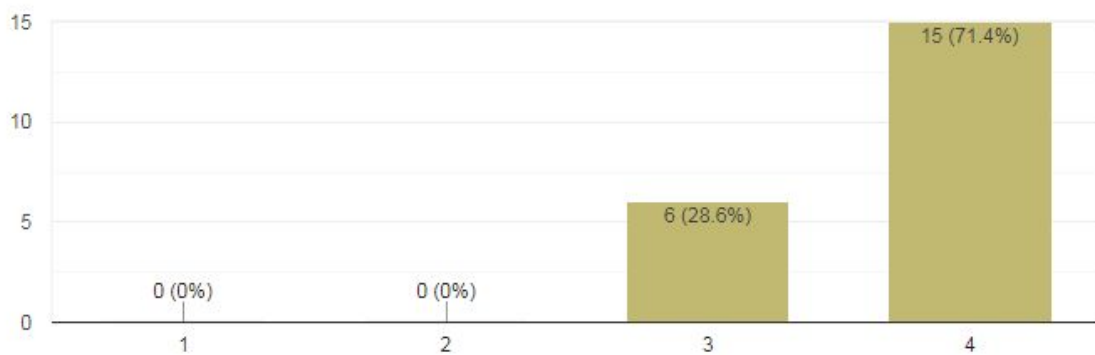


Figure 25. Recommendation of the programme

#### 4.5. Further education and career prospects

Question 31: Did you study / are you currently studying a Master's degree?

In the following figure, it can be observed that 66.7% of participants have studied or are studying a Master's degree, while 33.3% have not continued studying.

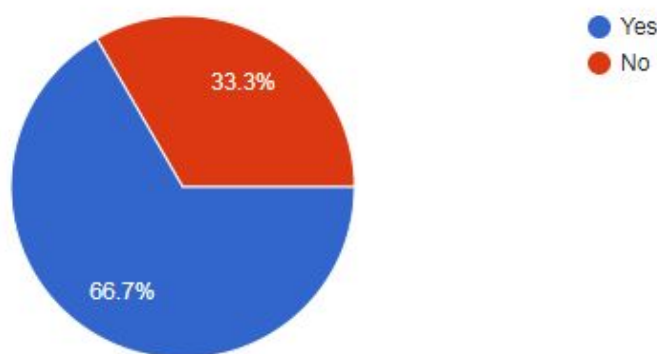
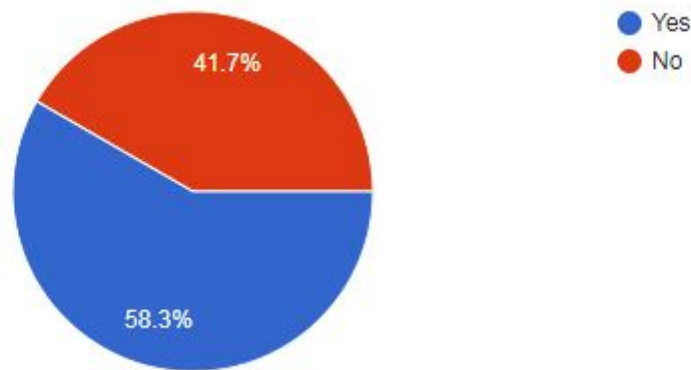


Figure 26. Students continuing their education with a Master's degree

Question 32: Did you study / are you currently studying a Master's degree in Spain?

Among the participants in the programme, 58.3% have studied or are currently studying the Master's in Spain, while 41.7% have done so in other countries.



**Figure 27. Participants studying a Master's in Spain**

Question 33: If not, in which country?

The destinations chosen by participants to study a Master's degree abroad are mostly English-speaking countries: Ireland (2), United States (2), but also China (1).

Question 34: Which of the following areas does your Master's degree relate to?

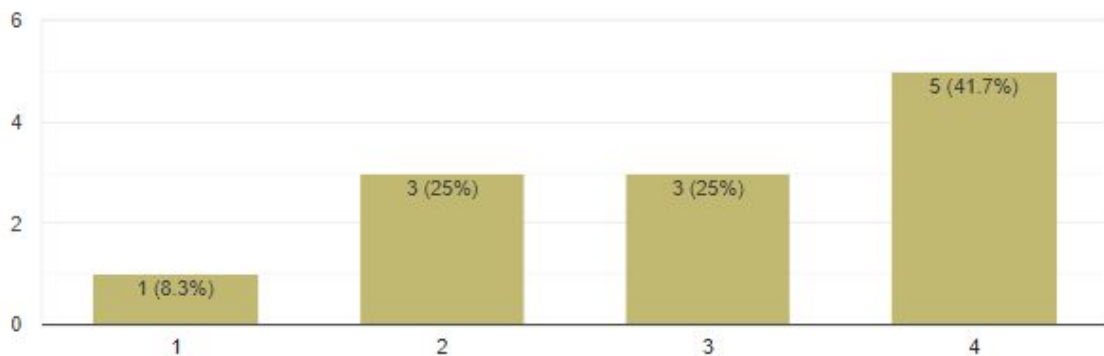
Among the different specialities offered by both the degree in Translation and Interpreting and the AEL programme, language teaching is the most popular option (41.7%). However, business and marketing (16.7%) and conference interpreting (16.7%) do not lag far behind. Other fields such as law, foreign trade and terminology or language technology are not represented, as none of the students are being trained in these areas.



**Figure 28. Areas of study of Master's degrees taken by AEL participants**

Question 35: To what extent do you think your participation in the programme helped you to enter a Master's degree programme?

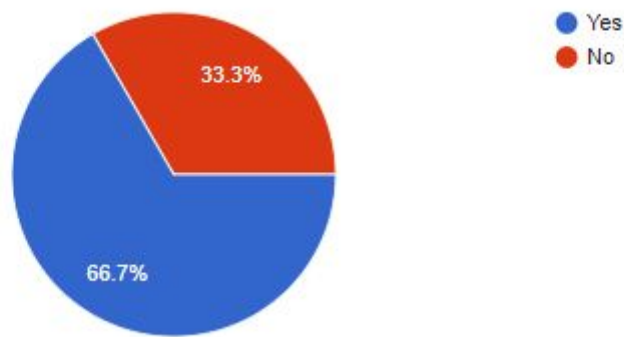
Bearing in mind that 1 means "not at all advantageous" and 4 means "highly advantageous", a total of 66.7% consider that having participated in the programme has been an advantage for them when it comes to entering a Master's degree, while 33.3% do not agree with this.



**Figure 29. Advantages when entering a Master's programme**

Question 36: Are you working currently?

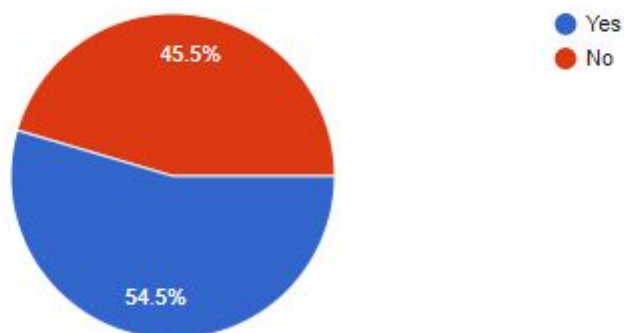
A total of 66.7% of students are currently working, while 33.3% of them are not working.



**Figure 30. Current employment status of AEL participants**

Question 37: Are you working in Spain currently?

Among the students who are currently working, 54.5% are doing so in Spain while 45.5% are working abroad.



**Figure 31. Participants working in Spain**

Question 38: If not, in which country?

The destinations chosen by participants to work abroad are English and French-speaking countries: United States (2), United Kingdom (1), France (1) and Belgium (1).



Question 39: Which of the following areas does your job relate to?

Among the wide range of possibilities offered by the AEL programme to enter the professional world, the most popular areas among participants are the teaching of foreign languages (33.3%) and the service sector along with tourism<sup>2</sup> (25%). Other career opportunities have been conference interpreting, community interpreting, marketing, foreign trade and professional proofreading (all represented with 8.3%). None of the students chose the fields of terminology or law as a professional career.

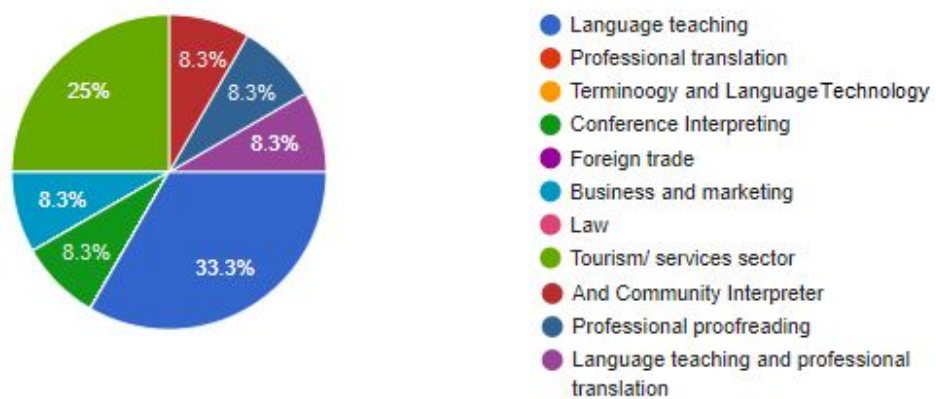


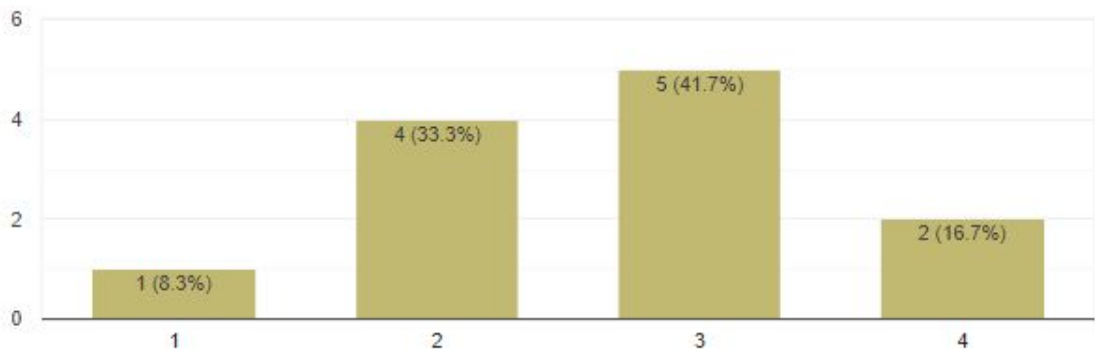
Figure 32. Areas of work of AEL participants

Question 40: To what extent do you think your participation in the programme helped you to find your job?

Bearing in mind that 1 means "not at all" and 4 means "absolutely", 58.4% of respondents consider that the programme definitely helped them to find a job, while 41.6% only partially agreed or did not agree with this statement.

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<sup>2</sup> Some students have considered their internship at the Granada Tourist Office during their last year as professional experience, which explains this high percentage.

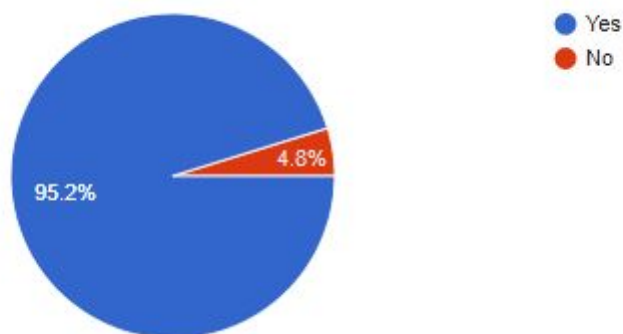


**Figure 33. Advantages offered by the AEL programme when finding a job**

#### **4.6. Identity and visibility of the AEL programme**

Question 41: Do you maintain contact with other former AEL participants?

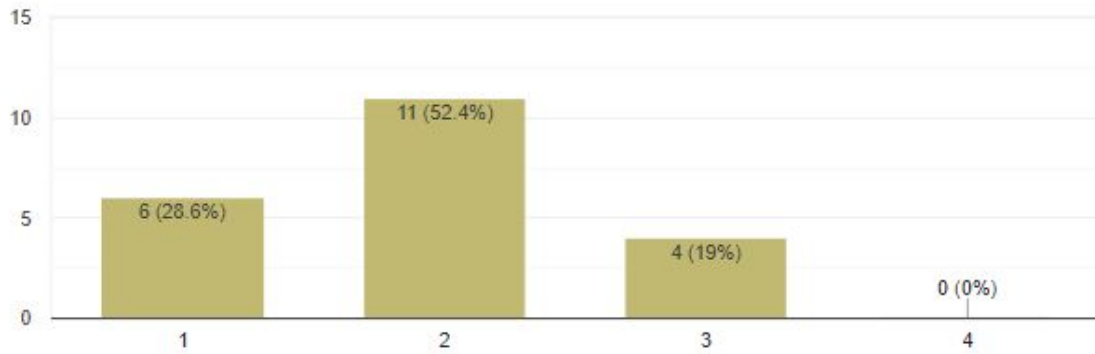
With regard to relations between programme participants after completing their studies, 95.2% of respondents state that they are still in contact with other programme members, while 4.8% had lost such contact.



**Figure 34. Contact between AEL participants**

Question 42: To what extent do you think the programme is well-known in an international context?

According to the students, the AEL programme has little (52.4%) or very little (28.6%) visibility within the international context. However, 19% consider that the programme is well-known in this sphere, but no one states that it is very well-known.

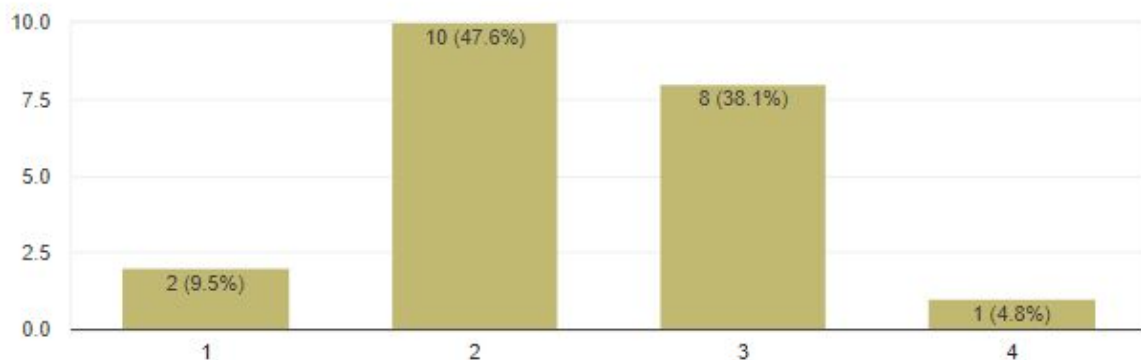


**Figure 35. Visibility of the programme in the international context**

Question 43: How far do you think the programme is valued outside the sphere of its members?

Although this question seems to be similar to the previous one, it should be noted that while the previous one sought to know the visibility of the programme in the international context, the objective of this question is to determine the reputation of the programme.

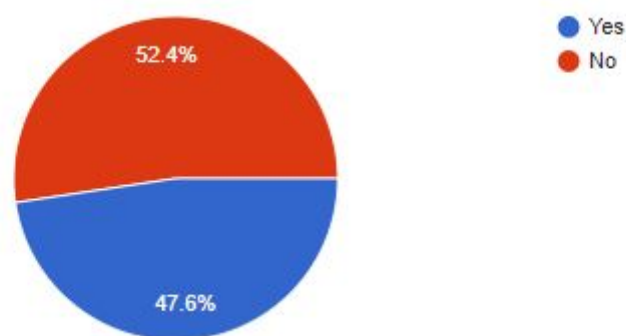
Bearing in mind that 1 means "indifferently" and 4 means "prestigiously", 57.1% of respondents consider that the programme does not have sufficient reputation, while 42.9% do consider that the programme is prestigious. However, it is important to note that most of the answers are located between options 2 and 3, which means that the disparity of opinions is not very high.



**Figure 36. Reputation of the programme outside the sphere of its members**

Question 44: Do you think that people outside the programme regard double certification as two Bachelor degrees?

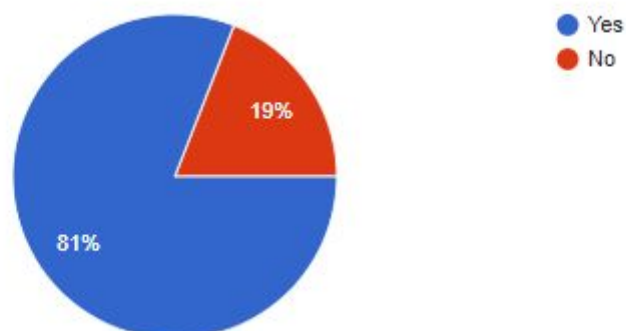
More than half of the respondents (52.4%) believe that double certification is not regarded as two Bachelor degrees. This means that (according to these students) the people outside the programme consider that the AEL programme member has one university degree when, in fact, one of the benefits of the programme is double certification. However, 47.6% of respondents do not fully agree with this statement.



**Figure 37. Recognition of double certification**

Question 45: Do you think that more countries should join the programme?

With regard to innovations in the programme, 81% of respondents consider that other countries should join the AEL programme, while 19% do not agree with this statement.



**Figure 38. New members to the programme**

Question 46: If so, which countries would you like to join?

Respondents consider that countries such as Italy (10), United Kingdom (6) and Portugal (5) should become new members. Other countries such as Austria (3), Canada (2), Switzerland (1) and Greece (1) have also been considered, although to a lesser extent.

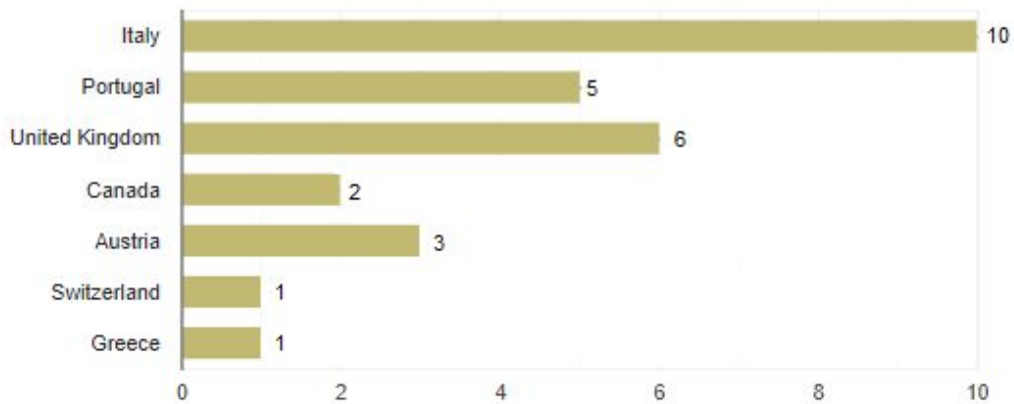
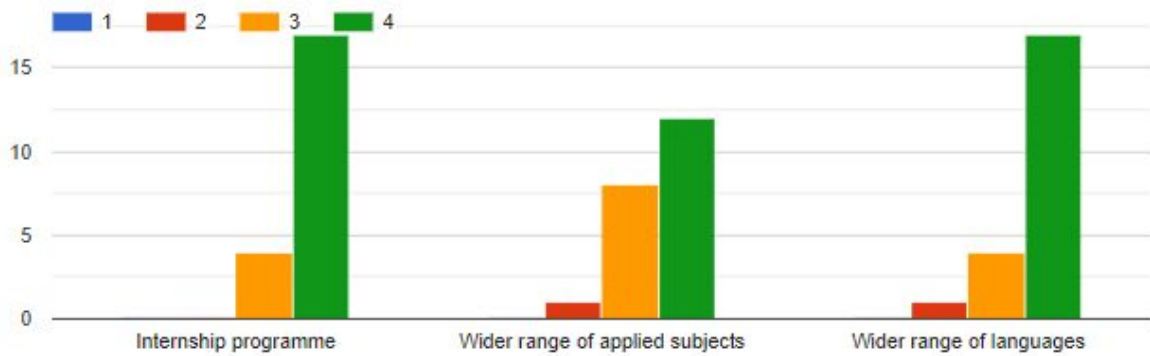


Figure 39. Suggestions for new members

Question 47: To what extent do you think the programme could benefit from the following innovations?

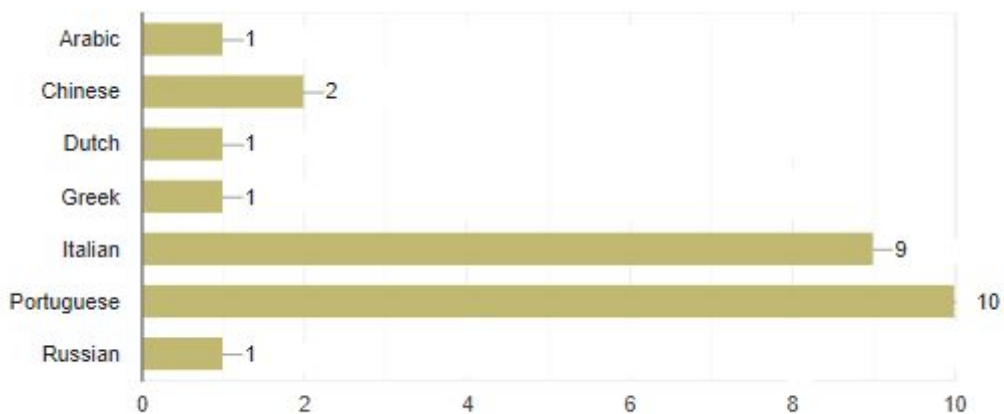
Considering that 1 means "not at all recommended" and 4 means "highly recommended", the two most popular innovations were the implementation of internships within the programme (supported by 17 respondents) and the widening of the range of languages (also 17). Although the option of expanding the offer of applied subjects was not as popular as the others, it was also supported by 12 respondents. None of the respondents considered any of the innovations as "not at all recommended".



**Figure 40. Proposals for innovations**

Question 48: If you consider that more languages should be introduced, which language(s) would you include?

Portuguese (10) and Italian (9) stand out among the proposed languages. Other languages were mentioned such as Arabic (1), Chinese (2), Dutch (1), Greek (1) and Russian (1), although they did not have the same interest.



**Figure 41. Proposals for new languages in the programme**

After this exhaustive analysis of the data, the following chapter will proceed to the interpretation of the data obtained.

## **5. Interpretation of results**

This chapter proceeds to discuss the results analysed in the previous chapter. To this end, it was decided to return to the hidden agenda of the research methodology (described in 3.1.). In order to structure the interpretation, the classification of research objectives into educational, socio-professional and evaluation dimensions will be considered. However, in order to follow a logical order, some specific improvements to the programme will also be discussed in the sections referring to the educational and socio-professional dimensions, while other more general improvements will be discussed in the section referring to the evaluation dimension.

### **5.1. Educational dimension**

Beginning with the language combination (referred to in question 3), the under-representation of German among programme participants was surprising. However, there may be a reason behind this fact. It should be noted that German as a second foreign language is taught in the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting from the beginning and students may either not feel sufficiently prepared to participate, or they simply take the AEL entrance examination and do not pass it successfully.

Considering all the different itineraries, question 4 reveals that it may be necessary for the UGR to send its students to the Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès (UTJ2) in order to improve the programme. In this way, students could enjoy a wider range of itineraries and courses, and language exchange between students would be more varied and enriching.

It can also be deduced from questions 6 and 7 that the students knew quite well the nature and conditions of the programme, since many of them specified these conditions as their motivations. The advantages that the programme can offer when it comes to finding employment is the least popular of the motivations (28.6%), perhaps because first-year students have not yet considered what to do for their professional future and it is not as important a concern as training in the academic field. It is also important to highlight that one

of the respondents indicated another motivation, the possibility of studying two languages as B languages.

According to the results of question 11, it seems that having studied two B languages during the first year of studies is a clear strength for the programme. Due to the administrative structure of the degree in Translation and Interpreting at the UGR, the university allows its AEL students to study two B languages at the same level and this in fact is one of the strengths most noted by the students in the questionnaire. This degree of satisfaction could even be improved if one of the requests coming from the participants (specifically in question 29) about the possibility of continuing with the two B languages during the fourth year of studies was implemented.

It can also be observed in question 12 that many of the problems derive from the programme at UGR rather than from the nature of the programme. It should be noted that these problems include level of demand and pressure to pass all the exams, administration problems and exams overlapping. Perhaps the bureaucracy and demands of the programme within the University of Granada should be more flexible. The pressure to pass all subjects could be reduced by the possibility of retrieving some of the subjects during the stay abroad or once back in year 4, which would imply a curriculum more open to change. It would also be desirable to solve all the administrative problems, as some lecturers are not aware that they have AEL students in their classes and that some of them have changed groups (it should be recalled that by becoming a participant in the programme, the student's curriculum is altered, as we have seen in section 2.4.2). The respondents consider that exams overlapping was one of the problems they had to face during the first year. However, this difficulty has disappeared during the current academic year, as the Decanato now ensures that English B1 y B2 exams are held on different days from German and French B1 and B2 exams, which effectively solves the problem of exam conflict.

According to the results obtained in question 13 on student self-evaluation after the first year in UGR, the lack of knowledge that students claim to have after completing their first year in Granada reveals that it would be advisable to modify the curriculum in order to avoid future students having to face applied subjects for the first time abroad with a language that they do



not yet manage perfectly. Studying applied subjects abroad for the first time could be counterproductive as students may not be able to assimilate the knowledge correctly, as they acquire it in another language and from scratch. In fact, in question 16, the respondents again state that they did not have a good enough background to be able to undertake studies and to relate to other students in the host country. For this reason, in questions 14 and 15 the former students of the programme suggest implementing applied subject courses, as well as basic notions of translation during the first year of university.

Regarding the main problems during their first year abroad, there is no doubt that learning applied subjects for the first time has been the greatest difficulty among AEL students. Again, in order to improve the quality of the programme, more introductory courses in these subjects should be included so that students are better prepared to face these problems and thus ensure their academic success. Problems with the administration by the host university should also be highlighted. Given the large percentage of students studying in AMU in their first year (81% as mentioned in question 4), perhaps this university should consider facilitating this bureaucratic process. However, as this is a problem that does not directly concern the University of Granada, it should be discussed with the coordinators of the French university.

In contrast, it seems that the problems were considerably reduced during the second year abroad, perhaps because the students are already accustomed to the demands of the programme. However, the level of demand from the host universities proved to be the greatest difficulty for the participants. Taking into account the percentage of students studying at UG in their second year abroad (42.9% as mentioned in question 4), this is perhaps a problem on the part of the Belgian university. A good solution would be to discuss with the coordinators the inclusion of more courses focused on Erasmus students, to reformulate the curriculum between the UGR and the UG and to change the evaluation system, since this is precisely another of the great difficulties that the students highlighted during their second year abroad.

The students continue to be dissatisfied with their level in the applied subjects, since this is much lower compared to the rest of their partners from other universities, as seen in question 19. This may be due to the fact that AMU, UG and THK students take introductory subjects

during their first year of study. There is no doubt that this fact reinforces once again the need to implement these subjects also during the first year in UGR and thus change the curriculum.

In terms of work experience during the stay abroad, more than half of the participants claim not to have worked. However, the reasons behind this fact are not known, e.g. whether the financial situation of the students was good enough not to have to work, whether they wanted to get a job but eventually could not find one or if they simply did not have time for it. However, one could consider the possibility of implementing internships during the years abroad, since this would train students more in the socio-educational field. In addition, as noted in question 22, most of the students worked in the service sector. On the basis of these facts, it is worth reflecting on the possibility for students to carry out internships or any type of work in the field of translation, law or economics.

Improving the quality of the teaching of translation and interpreting seems to be a task for the rest of the member universities, since most of them focus the teaching of translation on mere comprehension and written expression, without taking into account other concepts such as the translation brief, revision or different translation approaches. The same is applicable to interpretation, as the quality of note-taking teaching should be improved and practice increased. With these proposals for improvement, it would also be possible to facilitate the readaptation of students to the University of Granada, an aspect dealt with in question 25. However, many students are quite satisfied with the training received in multimedia translation. Taking into account the curricula mentioned in Chapter 2, perhaps this is due to UG, which offers such courses.

## **5.2. Socio-professional dimension**

There is no doubt that participation in the programme encourages students to study a Master's degree, as they have a wider range of options as seen in the wide range of Master's degrees in questions 27 and 34. In addition, it also increases the chances of success when it comes to entering the Master's degree they want or finding a job, as seen in the results of question 36. It is possible that the two years of international mobility may have motivated participants to study a Master's degree or work abroad, as although it is still the minority of participants, the

percentage of students who go on to work or study abroad is quite high. In fact, some students had chosen destinations such as Ireland, France and Belgium, some of the programme's destination countries. From this information, it can be inferred that the AEL programme motivates its participants to work and study abroad, especially considering the wide range of Master's degrees and professional opportunities that it offers, listed as follows:

#### Masters chosen by AEL participants

- Language teaching
- Professional translation
- Conference interpreting
- Business or marketing
- Audiovisual translation
- Spanish literature, culture and language

#### Work sectors preferred by AEL participants

- Language teaching
- Foreign trade
- Conference interpreting
- Business or marketing
- Tourism
- Community interpreting
- Professional proofreading
- Professional translation

Based on this information, it is important to note that, according to the results of the questionnaire, participants prefer Master's degrees and jobs focused on the field of languages or teaching, while, although business is an option for AEL students, it does not have the popularity that was expected. It is also important to mention the significant presence of tourism, while, surprisingly, neither economics nor law is represented in the Master's degrees chosen by the participants or in the professional opportunities.

### 5.3. Evaluation dimension

Returning to the results of question 41, it can be confirmed that students continue to maintain contact after completing their studies. This result shows that there is a great spirit of unity among the participants after facing the same situations (achievements and difficulties) and that they will surely always be willing to help each other in the future and to help future promotions as reflected in question 26, where it is stated that the participants are still involved in the programme with the new promotions after finishing their stay abroad.

Questions 42 and 43, concerning the visibility and prestige of the programme indicate a lack of knowledge of the programme in the international context. This may be due to the fact that, as shown in the questions concerning career opportunities, very few participants are working in the field of law, economics or trade, and therefore, once they start working, they can no longer be distinguished from conventional students of the degree in Translation and Interpreting. The same applies to double certification, since, as seen in question 44, respondents feel that the two university degrees obtained in only four years are not recognised. It should be noted that, for example, the Faculty of Translation has a dual degree in Tourism and Translation and Interpreting, which lasts five years (Doble Grado en Traducción e Interpretación y Turismo > Plan de Estudios | Universidad de Granada", 2019).

The fact that the programme is considered less prestigious as one might expect may be due to the low publicity of the programme in the international context, and perhaps also to the need to recruit more members from other universities or other countries with the inclusion of their corresponding languages such as Italy, Portugal or the United Kingdom (as shown in questions 45, 46 and 48). The need to include the first two countries may be due to their proximity to the Spanish culture and language, as these languages ensure greater ease of learning and a higher level in less time. The desire to resume relations with the United Kingdom within the programme may be related to the desire to study in a country where standard English is spoken. However, it is not known to what extent this would be feasible in view of the UK's delicate position with the European Union over Brexit. Perhaps implementing the innovations mentioned in question 47 (more internships, languages and

applied subjects) could help not only to improve the quality of the programme but also to give it the prestige and visibility it deserves.

Despite the above-mentioned weaknesses, according to the results obtained in the questionnaire, the students recommend the programme and value it positively, probably because of its strengths such as the two years of international mobility, the double certification and its curriculum based on applied subjects. However, this project has highlighted the need to improve the programme so that future generations have an easier path and so that the programme can receive a higher degree of recognition.

## **6. Conclusions**

This last chapter will present the main conclusions reached for each of the objectives pursued by this research. In addition, it will include a list of lines of research for the future. Given the extent of the project, the following conclusions will be presented schematically.

### **6.1. Objectives achieved**

In order to better structure this chapter, it was decided to return to the objectives in the introduction. For each of the general and specific objectives, a brief conclusion will be given. A structure from the particular to the general will be used, addressing first the specific objectives and later the general objectives.

#### ***Specific objective: Delving into the nature of AEL, history and members***

The main features of the programme were defined: two years of international mobility, double certification and a curriculum with applied subjects (economics, law and business) and translation courses. The history of the programme and its background were also described: the predecessor LAE, which began in 1978, and the evolution of the programme with the entry and exit of its members. Finally the programme currently has the following member universities: AMU, UL, UGR, UniOvi, THK, UG and UT2J. Kaunas University (Lithuania) will soon join the programme.

***Specific objective: Detecting strengths and weaknesses***

Apart from the characteristics of the programme discussed in 6.1.1., one of the strengths of the programme at UGR is that students have the opportunity to study two B languages. In addition, it is important to note that despite the weaknesses discussed below, the programme at UGR is constantly improving, as the coordination team has already solved some of the problems that students identified during their participation in the programme such as administrative problems of the faculty secretariat or exams overlapping.

However, there are other aspects that need to be improved such as bureaucracy, curricula or applied subjects. The solutions to these problems will be discussed in 6.1.6.

***Specific objective: Defining professional opportunities and Master's degrees***

After analysing the data collected in the questionnaire, the different fields in which AEL students specialise are:

- Language teaching
- Professional translation
- Conference interpreting
- Business or marketing
- Audiovisual translation
- Spanish literature, culture and language

The sectors chosen by AEL students to work are as follows:

- Language teaching
- Foreign trade
- Conference interpreting
- Business or marketing
- Tourism
- Community interpreting

- Professional proofreading
- Professional translation

It is important to mention that many of the participants are working or studying abroad. Perhaps the years of international mobility offered by the programme may be, among other factors, one of the main reasons for this.

***Specific objective: Determining the prestige and visibility of the programme***

After analysing the data collected with the questionnaire, it was observed that the visibility and prestige of the programme should be improved, as the programme is not known enough in the international context to receive all the prestige it deserves. In addition, double certification is not considered as such since according to the respondents, outsiders do not attribute this advantage to two Bachelor's degrees. All this may be due to its low publicity and the low number of member universities or languages offered.

***Specific objective: Orienting future generations***

Having described the nature and advantages of the AEL programme in the socio-educational field, it is hoped that future promotions will be better oriented and informed so that they will know in greater detail what it means to be a member of the programme.

***General objective: Improving the quality of the AEL programme***

Having identified the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, according to the respondents, a number of measures should be implemented to ensure and improve the quality of the AEL programme, namely the following:

- Maintain the two B languages during the whole university degree
- Revision of curricula and assessment systems to make them more flexible and affordable at all levels

- Solve bureaucratic problems, especially for the language combination English-French in the first year abroad
- Implement applied subjects during the first year of the degree at UGR
- Implement internships (either at UGR or at member universities)
- Increase the focus of translation and interpreting at member universities
- Expand the language offer
- Establish relationships between UGR and other universities in the programme such as UT2J
- Recruit new partner universities from more European countries

## **6.2. Future lines of research**

It is clear that there is still a long way to go when it comes to improving mobility programmes, and that many different lines of research could be followed. However, here two specific actions directly related to the present study are proposed:

- Evaluation of the quality of the AEL programme in the other member universities: AMU, THK, UG, UniOvi and UT2J.
- Evaluation of the quality of other UGR mobility programmes such as those commented on in the introduction of this project: Double Integrated Degree between Alma Mater Studiorum - University of Bologna and University of Granada and Double Degree with Moscow Linguistic University.

Finally, it is hoped that this project will help to improve the AEL programme for the coming academic years. However, it is obvious that this is an on-going and long-term process while some of the measures suggested in this study are easier to implement than others. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this project will motivate the programme coordinators to reflect on the current situation of the programme, discuss the measures recommended and start working, as far as possible, towards its improvement.



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