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# Customer Satisfaction Research: Euro-Lingua Language School

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## **ABSTRACT**

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The subject of the study was to find out the customer satisfaction level of the students at the Euro-Lingua language school in Fuengirola, Spain.

The questionnaire was given out to 48 Spanish language students at the language school in spring 2010. The aim of the questionnaire was to find out basic information about the customers, as well as their opinions of the services offered. They were also asked what extra-services and changes they would like.

The result of the study was positive, although the customers were also open to future changes and additions to the service.

The theoretical part deals with customer satisfaction in general, as well as research methods and gives a review of the history, trends and figures of language travel.

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Keywords: customer satisfaction, language travel, language school, research method

## VASA YRKESHÖGSKOLA

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**ABSTRAKT**

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Målet med detta lärdomsprov var att få fram fakta om kunderna samt deras grad av tillfredsställelse på Euro-Lingua språkskolan i Fuengirola, Spanien.

Ett frågeformulär utdelades till 48 spanska studeranden på språkskolan våren 2010. Frågeformuläret skulle ta reda på basinformation om studerandena, samt hur nöjda dom var med skolans tjänster. De frågades även om möjliga tilläggstjänster till skolan.

Enligt resultatet av studien var kunderna rätt nöjda med språkskolan, men de skulle även välkomna nya tjänster.

Den teoretiska delen tar upp ämnen som kundtillfredsställelse, undersökningsmetoder, samt språkresor, dess bakgrund och framtid.

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Ämnesord	kundtillfredsställelse, språkresa, språkskola, undersökningsmetod
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## **1. Introduction**

The world is becoming smaller. Knowing languages has become more and more important lately. People have always learned languages in order to be able to travel, nowadays people are also travelling in order to learn languages. Language travel is not a subject on which a lot of written information can be found on yet. It is now that people are starting to see the potential of this segment of tourism.

Educational tourism overall is a big trend at the moment. Combining learning with pleasure is something preferred by many when going on holidays instead of just the normal sun and sea holiday. Language travel is one small segment of educational tourism just like eco-tourism or museum visits.

I myself have taken part in two different intensive Spanish courses in Spain and this is how I found the subject for my thesis. I found studying in this way very effective and fun and I now saw the opportunity to help out a language school as well as learning more about the subject myself. Euro-Lingua language school in Fuengirola, Spain, turned out to be my client. Euro-Lingua is a very small language school and has not earlier done any research of its customers. We decided to collect some basic data about the present students of the school and find out what they thought about the different aspects of the school.

I myself found the services offered by Euro-Lingua fairly basic, which in part is understandable as it is a company with only three people. However, I was very interested to find out with the help of a questionnaire if the customers of Euro-Lingua were satisfied or if they were longing for some extra value.

Fuengirola, which is situated in the Sunny Coast area, has a population of almost 70.000 inhabitants. The city is highly populated with Finnish people amongst other nationalities. In 2009 Fuengirola had a 39 % foreign population, with over 3,200 Finnish people alone living there in the spring that year. There is a Finnish school in the city and other services to be found in Finnish and in other Nordic languages. Fuengirola is probably the most Finnish city in Spain. Due to the high amount of residential tourism in the area, many of the foreigners in Fuengirola

and the possible customers of Euro-Lingua are actually residents of the city at least parts of the year. (<http://fi.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fuengirola> 6.3.2010)

### **1.1. Aims of the study**

Euro-Lingua did not have a previous data-base of their customers of any kind, nor had they done any research on their customers before. Therefore the first aim was to find out some basics about the customers, to get in black and white what the typical customer is like.

Another aim was to find out if the customers were satisfied with the services offered at the school. We wanted to find out if the school was lacking in some subject, in order to be able to make some improvements and give more value to the customers.

In the study we also wanted to find out what kind of extra-activities the students could be interested in outside study hours.

The main aim of the study was to give the language school a quick overview of their customers and their opinions of the school. A study like this could be a good basis for further research.

### **1.2. Limitations of the study**

The research was restricted to the 48 customers the school had in March 2010 studying Spanish. This was in part because of a tight time schedule. Euro-Lingua did not have a database of previous customers' contact information either and therefore it was not possible to get more respondents within the time-frame. The questionnaire used was quite basic as there were no earlier databases or researches to build on.

## **2. Customer satisfaction**

A company should always try to keep every customer happy. It is not enough getting the offered product right, there is so much more to customer satisfaction than the actual core product. Loyal customers that keep coming back bring a lot of revenue to a company with their repeat business. Even if you market your company in a way that a lot of new people come to check the business out and spend some money, a lot of work still needs to be put down on the customer service etc to make the customers keep coming back.

A satisfied customer is either a customer that gets what he expected or that gets his expectations exceeded. The more customers a company can send away positively amazed the better. Customers that get their expectations exceeded are usually happy spreading the word about what great service they have received. This also works the other way around, if a customer leaves unhappy, he will not hesitate to voice his negative opinion and this might scare off possible future customers.

Sometimes however it can be enough to keep customers within the zone of tolerance. The zone of tolerance means that the customer gets good enough service to be fairly satisfied. The zone of tolerance lies between what kind of service the customer actually wants and what he is willing to accept. When a customer is within the zone of tolerance he rarely goes out deliberately searching for a new service provider. However, if a customer like this stumbles upon a better offer, he might not be so faithful. (Barnes, 2000, 58.)

### **2.1.1. Maslow's hierarchy of needs**

In the 1940's Abraham Maslow came out with his theory of the Hierarchy of Needs. According to this, the human being first needs to fill their basic needs before they go on to other needs. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is usually pictured as a pyramid as the one seen below. The widest part is for the physiological needs,



these are the basic needs such as food, water and sleep. These are all things that we have to have in order to survive. The second part is made up by the security needs, examples could be that you have a job and money to survive and that you have a house to live in. The third level is for the social needs. We all want to belong somewhere and to be loved. Relationships with family and friends as well as romantic relationships belong to this level. The fourth level is where the esteem needs come into the picture. People have a need to feel that they are worth something and are doing something important. The fifth level is for the self-actualizing needs, a need to have personal growth and to fulfill your potential. There is an illustration of the traditional Maslow's hierarchy of needs beneath.

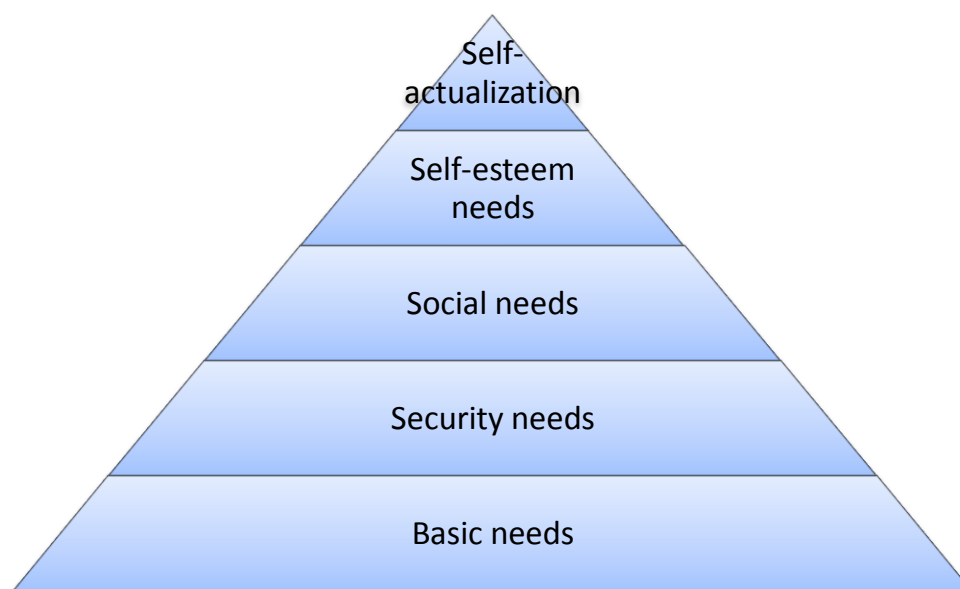


Figure 1: Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Barnes, James 2000)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs can also be used when it comes to achieving customer satisfaction. In this version the first level is the core product. It is the reason for the customer coming to the company, but many times this part is not paid a lot of attention. The second level is the supporting services and support systems, extra services and how problems are handled for example. The third level is the technical service, this mostly comes into use when something in the first or second level fails and you need to be able to fix the problem smoothly and to live up to your word. The fourth level is made up by the elements of customer

interactions, how the employees treat the customer. The fifth level is the emotional elements, this is where the feelings of the customer are considered. (Barnes, 2000, 67.) The figure below shows the customer satisfaction model of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

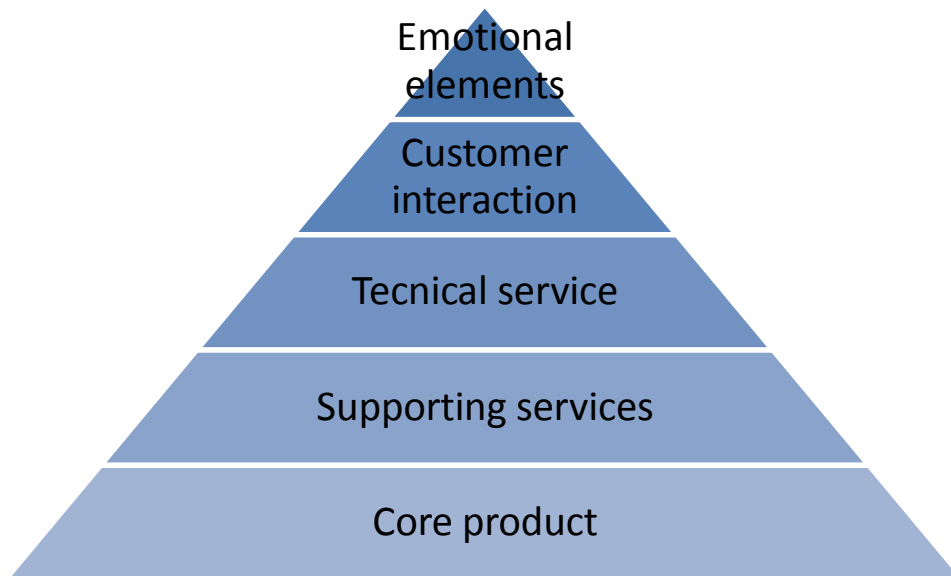


Figure 2: Maslow's hierarchy of needs altered version (Barnes, 2000)

A customer can walk away a lot happier if he is greeted with a smile or is told to have a good weekend when leaving the store. Through improving levels 3, 4 and 5 and working on how you treat your customers you can make your company stand out the most. Core product improvements are necessary as well, but improvements in the core product can be and probably will be copied very easily by competitors. (Barnes, 2000, 67.)

### **2.1.2. The four P's**

The four P's is a well known concept within marketing. It was thought that if getting these four things right, your company would succeed. The classic four p's are: product, price, promotion and place. These are all important, the core product,

the price of it, how you market it and where you sell it. However, times are changing and there are so many competitors in most fields that more is needed in order to stand out and in order to create longer lasting customer relationships. It is not only about the basics anymore. (Barnes, 2000, 25)

Barnes offers a new kind of four P's, consisting of product, processes, people and performance. The product is the core product that is being offered and this is the first thing you need to get right still. The process part is supporting the core product, adding a bit of value through making the product easily accessible and giving the product a bit of an edge. Barnes also realizes the importance of the interaction between the customers and the employees in the people part. It is no longer enough to have an "ok" product and "ok" service. One way to make a company stand out is simply by treating customers very well! If you make the customers feel good, the chances of them returning are so much bigger. The fourth P is performance. By performance Barnes means that this is when you need to stand up to what has been promised. If you have promised that a product will be available a certain day, the product needs to be available then. Performance errors should be avoided as much as possible as it can lead to a lot of frustration for a customer. Errors however do occur at times and this is when you need to know how to handle the problem. (Barnes, 2000, 33.)

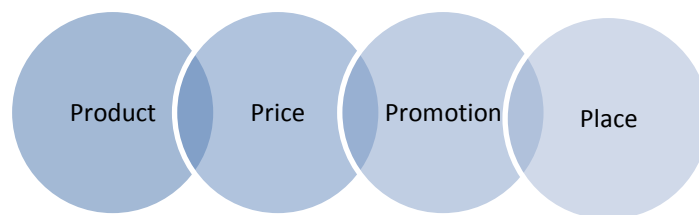


Figure 3: The 4 P's, classic version (Barnes, 2000)

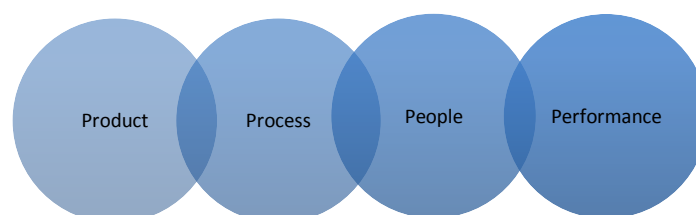


Figure 4: The 4 P's, new version (Barnes, 2000)

Above you can see both the traditional version of the 4 P's as well as the renewed version.

## **2.2. Quality**

Quality is never exactly the same to different people as we all have different expectations and experiences. When dealing with customers one could simply say that quality is whatever the customer says it is and no customer is the same as another. Quality is a big part of customer satisfaction. Quality should always correspond with the price. Usually when it comes to a lower price you do not expect the service necessarily to be that great, everything is a plus. When it comes to a higher price, you expect a bit of luxury, otherwise the money easily seems wasted.

A lot of different factors lead to the perceived quality of a service. The tangible elements like the office and the equipment and the personnel that you can actually see all help people form an opinion about the company and the quality of the service. The way the personnel acts and treats the customers plays a big role as well. Depending on whether the personnel is ready to help the customer with all the problems he might have and unless the customer is treated with respect and compassion and met with professionalism, the customer will not walk away happy.

The reliability and credibility of the company make a great influence on what the customers think. It is important that the customers can trust that they will get what they have been promised by the company. The accessibility is important, whether it be about visiting the company or being able to contact the company through phone or internet. Security is very important as well. (Rey, 2005, 356) An illustration of perceived quality of service can be seen in figure 6 below.



Figure 3: Perceived quality of service (Rey, 2005)

### 2.3. Value

People want to get as much value as they can when it comes to the amount of time, money and effort that they invest. It is the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given. A company can have good perceived quality in the eyes of a customer, but still fail when it comes to the perceived value, if for example the price is not right, as price is strongly linked with value. (Zeithaml & Bitner, 1996, 32, 124)

Zeithaml and Bitner did a survey where they got the consumers to define value themselves. The definition of value was very different from person to person, but they could find four quite clear and common perceptions of value amongst the

consumers. The first one was simply “a low price”, the second “whatever I want in a product or service”, the third “the quality I get for the price I pay” and the fourth “what I get for what I give”. (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000, 441)

The moments of truth (the moments when the customer interacts with the service firm) could also be called moments of potential value. These moments are all opportunities to give extra value to the customers and are a big part of what affects the way the customer will behave in the future when it comes to customer loyalty. (Foss & Stone., 2001, 204)

Foss and Stone apply Maslow’s hierarchy of needs to their customer value analysis. In their version there are only three levels. The base is set up by the basic expectations / basic needs. At a hotel this is for example the actual bed or room. On the middle level are the satisfiers. The satisfiers do not usually affect the buying negatively or positively, nor the customer loyalty. They however can help to improve the customer satisfaction. The top level is made up by the attractors / differentiators. These are the ones that can cause customer loyalty or that can pull a customer away from one company to another. Understanding what services go into what level can help a company focus on the right things in order to give their customers more value. (Foss & Stone, 2001, 204.)

## **2.4. Customer service**

The way a customer is treated should never be underestimated. The product is important, but there are always other similar products to be found elsewhere. Whether a customer comes back or not is often just based on a feeling. This is why small details are very important when it comes to serving a customer. A person suitable for customer service can sometimes even be able to change an unhappy customer with a complaint, into a happy customer that ends up giving an increase in sales. (Gerson, 1993, 88.)

Appropriate schooling should be given to all employees. Although schooling takes time and money, service quality pays off more than it costs! The customer is

always right is an old, worn-out saying. It is still something to keep in mind when dealing with customers. (Gerson, 1993, 18.)

### **3. Measuring customer satisfaction**

A company should always try to keep up with what is going on with their customers and in order to do that, research must be done every now and then. It is easy for a company to assume they know what their customers want, but what the customer wants and what the company thinks that the customers want can be very different at times. Measuring customer satisfaction can help make great improvements in the company. It is good to try to find out both current needs and future needs as these always keep changing.

A company should always remember not to make too big promises. It is always better to under market a bit in order not to fail the customer and to have a great chance to create an actual wow-experience for the customer, instead of making empty promises. (Gerson, 1993, 21)

#### **3.1. Different methods of doing a customer satisfaction research**

There are many ways to measure customer satisfaction. You can study customer satisfaction by gathering either secondary or primary data. Secondary data is information that you can get from e.g. libraries or the government. A company can also have secondary data themselves if they have kept some information about their customers or they have made some previous studies. Primary data is a lot more time-consuming as it is done by collecting new information about a certain field through e.g. conducting interviews, making people fill out questionnaires or through making observations. To best measure customer satisfaction it is good to have both secondary and primary data. (Gerson, 1993, 53.)

When collecting primary data there are two different techniques that can be used. Primary data can be collected by either doing qualitative or quantitative research. When doing qualitative research you do not study a large number of customers, instead you concentrate on getting as much information as possible from a smaller



number of customers. In-depth interviews face to face or by telephone can be used for qualitative research. It is good to have some kind of a structure of what to ask the customer, but here you also have the chance to react to the answers and ask the customer to elaborate on his comments, leading into more insight.

When quantitative research is being carried out it is good to follow at least 50 people in order to get a reliable and realistic result. This kind of research is usually done with the help of a questionnaire that can be left to fill out at a restaurant for example, it can be mailed or e-mailed to customers, you can phone customers and interview them or you can walk up to people asking them the questions and ticking their answers.

### **3.2. Designing a questionnaire**

When designing a questionnaire there are many things to keep in mind. If a questionnaire is too long, too complicated or too boring, the customer might just fill it out without even thinking to get it over and done with. If a question is too long and complicated it might be misunderstood and therefore answered incorrectly. The questions should be easy to follow and in a logical order. A questionnaire should always start with the simplest questions for an easy start. Some questions might also be a bit sensitive for some people and extra-attention should be paid to the forming of these questions so that the respondent does not feel the need to lie just to avoid feeling embarrassed. A poorly done questionnaire can end up just giving wrong information instead of helping the company. (Brace, 2008, 13).

A questionnaire should not be too long, but sometimes asking two or three questions instead of one is better. This is in the case of a complicated or ambiguous question. Confusing the respondents should be avoided as much as possible. A questionnaire should also be done in a way that it does not lead the respondents to give a certain answer. Routing, meaning that depending on an answer you move on to another segment, should be used carefully in

questionnaires as they can easily be confusing. (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006, 181)

Questions can either be open or closed and both types can be used in the same questionnaire. An open question gives the respondent the chance to answer in his own words and a questionnaire like this reminds a bit of a conversation. This method can bring more details, but open questions require more effort from the respondent and can risk being poorly answered or end up simply not answered at all. Open questions should preferably be placed at the end of the questionnaire if there is a use of both open and closed questions. This helps the customer to first warm-up a bit to the subject before moving on to trickier questions. (Brace, 2008, 40)

Questions that can only be answered 'yes', 'no' or 'I don't know' are closed questions. Closed questions are also the kind that have ready-made suggestions and where you simply tick the right answer. Usually you can only tick one answer, but there are also questions where you can choose several options. This has to be clearly indicated in the questionnaire. These are the kind of questions that could not start a real conversation. Closed questions have the advantage of being fairly easy to analyze. (Brace, 2008, 40)

Paper-questionnaires can sometimes have an advantage because of the lack of interviewer. It is easier to be honest with sensitive questions when there is not a person in front of you and the questionnaire is anonymous. A written questionnaire also gives the respondent the chance to take his time thinking about the answers and filling out open-ended questions. There is also the possibility to add pictures if this suits the questionnaire. Disadvantages of a paper-questionnaire might in some cases be that the respondent can read through it before responding and that the respondent has too much time to think about the answers if the questionnaire is actually looking for attitudes and first thoughts. Whether to include an "I don't know" option or not in closed questions should be carefully considered. It makes the option an acceptable alternative and many people might end up ticking this alternative as it is the easiest. However, it might be needed at least in some questions, because the respondent might not actually know the

answer or at all be familiar with what is asked. If this option is not offered the question might be left blank by many respondents. (Brace, 2008, 29, 58.)

The layout of a questionnaire should be neat. It should be written in a font that is easy to read and the paper should never be too crammed as it makes the questionnaire hard to follow. One should avoid too long questionnaires, but using more papers instead of cramming it all onto one page usually gives a better response rate. The questionnaire should include a presentation or a cover letter of who is doing the research and why if the respondents are made to answer it without an interviewer. If an interviewer is present, he should explain the aim of the research. This helps give a sense of purpose to the respondents and can help motivate them. A questionnaire should always also include a thank you to the respondents! (Blaxter, Hughes & Tight, 2006, 183)

It is interesting how small details can influence the outcome of a research. If you ask a question like "How do you feel about the food offered on our lunch menu?" and then provide options from excellent to extremely poor, or from extremely poor to excellent, this will influence the answers. One could think that it is the same question and the same answers, but people for some reason tend to tick some of the first alternatives, meaning that if you start with the positive, you will get a more positive outcome and vice versa! (Brace, 2008, 119)

Once you have the results of a study they need to be analyzed carefully. A well-done questionnaire research can give a lot of insight to a company and shed light on problems a company did not know it had. With the help of open ended questions customers can be able to voice different needs that they have that the company was not aware of. Once the analysis has been done the company can start to think about how to address possible faults and how to be able to wow their customers in the future.

### **3.3. Making the customer satisfaction research for Euro-Lingua**

I was working in Fuengirola when I decided that I wanted to do a customer satisfaction research for a language school. I had myself taken part in language courses in Spain and I found it very interesting to find out a bit more about other people's attitudes and needs within the field.

I decided to e-mail the language schools in Fuengirola asking if anyone of them would like this kind of a research carried out for them. Rocío Hurtado Sánchez from Euro-Lingua was the first one to respond and I visited the language school and we figured out what kind of a research we would do. As the language school had not done any previous research, we found a customer satisfaction survey to be the most suitable to start off with.

We decided that as it was high-season in Euro-Lingua at the time, we would have enough respondents to make a qualitative research and make a questionnaire for the current customers to fill out. The school did not have a database of contact information to previous customers so that they could have been included in the study. If the questionnaire would indicate that the customers wanted some changes in the school, qualitative research could be a good follow-up in order to find out more in detail what the customers want.

A paper questionnaire was seen to be appropriate in this case as everyone we would interview was taking classes at the school at the time. Making the students fill out the questionnaires on location during class would guarantee the most answers. The questionnaire had an English as well as a Spanish version so that everyone would be able to understand the questions correctly as respondents were of many different nationalities and on different study levels.

As the school has both Spanish and English students, we considered whether to just give the questionnaires to the Spanish language students or also to the English language students. Finally we came to the conclusion that we would only include the Spanish language students. The school had 48 Spanish language students and about 15 English students at the moment. The different groups would have

required altered questionnaires and analyzing the answers of only 15 people when it comes to the English language students would not have given a reliable result.

Euro-Lingua did not have any previous collected data or researches done so we wanted to cover as big of an area as possible and try to find out a bit about their customers and what they felt were the good and bad sides of the language school overall. The questionnaire was left at the language school to be filled out by all the customers in the end of March and beginning of April 2010.

## **4. Language travel**

The world is becoming smaller and smaller with globalization and knowing more than one language has become very important in many fields. Language travel is a good way of improving one's use of a second language. When you travel to a destination where the second language surrounds you, you are more likely to learn the language a lot faster than you would do at school.

### **4.1. Defining language travel**

Language travel is a fairly young concept that has not been studied that closely yet. However, language travel can be seen as a part of the branch of educational tourism. An educational tourist is a person who travels somewhere for a minimum of one night, with the goal of learning something. The learning might be the main reason or the secondary reason, but learning is however a big part of the trip. An educational tourist might travel to learn a language, to learn about a culture, to learn about ecotourism, it might be someone visiting a gallery or a museum. The list is endless. (Ritchie, 2003, 18)

Language travel is travelling to a destination because you want to learn the language spoken there. It is a rapidly growing trend. Although it is a fairly new concept, there are millions of language schools across the world giving classes in different languages.

EF (Education First) is one of the best known agencies, also in Finland, when it comes to these kind of services. EF started out with sending high-school students to England to learn English in 1965 when the Swede Bertil Hult founded the company. EF are now one of the giants within the language travel area with 29.000 employees and operating in 50 different countries. ([http://www.ef-uk.co.uk/master/about\\_ef/company/ourhistory.asp](http://www.ef-uk.co.uk/master/about_ef/company/ourhistory.asp) 4.2.2010)

Language travel is a good way of combining studying with pleasure. Some people travel because they really need to or want to learn the language fast, others have chosen language classes as something fun to do on their holiday. You can always find people very hungry for information and then the ones who just want to learn the most necessary things and meet some new people.

#### **4.2. Language school services**

The main product that the language schools sell is the language course. Usually there is the opportunity of private classes, general courses, intensive and extra intensive courses. There can also be specialized courses for example for tourism students or elderly people. Combined Spanish courses with dancing classes or cooking classes for example are becoming popular too.

Many of the language schools also help out with the accommodation, offering shared flats or housing with local families. They also often arrange some kind of outings and activities and maybe some short trips for the students that they can take part in if they want. Many language travel tourists travel on their own and for that reason, as well as for learning about the culture, different activities are usually appreciated. It is a good way to learn in a fun way and get to know people better. (Ritchie, 2003, 152)

The language schools get a big part of their bookings through the internet. A lot of the marketing is done over the internet and apart from the language schools often having their own websites there is also an endless number of agencies that can book the classes and housing for you against a small fee.

Most language schools and booking agencies are fairly small. According to the ALTO (Association of Language Travel Organizations) Global Directions in Language Tourism 2009 study, 46% of the participating language schools only had 1-10 fulltime employees. 11% of the schools had over 50 employees. (Richards, 2009, 15)

### 4.3. Language travel as a growing trend

Most people today travelling to learn a language, travel to destinations where English, French or Spanish is spoken as these are seen as the major languages in the world at the moment. However, people are starting to realize the power of knowing Chinese as it is the language spoken by the biggest amount of people. In the future there is expected to be a significant growth in language travel to China. (Richards, 2009, 3)

The United Kingdom has been the most popular language travel destination for years. Travelling in order to a country to learn English is by far more common than travelling to learn another language. As figure 6 below illustrates, in 2005 and 2006 Spain was the second most popular country to visit to learn a language. However, in 2009, Spain was found at the 6<sup>th</sup> place, having dropped many positions. The United States, Canada, Australia and Malta had all more language students in 2009 than Spain. This still makes Spain the highest listed country when it comes to a country that does not speak English. Canada is the only country with a higher rank than Spain that it is possible to travel to in order to learn another language than English as there are parts in Canada where they speak French. In 2009 Ireland and New Zealand were also on the top 10 list, making Spain, France and Germany the only non-English speaking countries on the list, as Italy was pushed out by the entry of New Zealand. (Richards, 2009, 25)

Rank	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
1	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom	United Kingdom
2	Spain	Spain	United States	United States	United States
3	France	United States	Spain	Canada	Canada
4	United States	Canada	Canada	Australia	Australia
5	Canada	Australia	Australia	Spain	Malta
6	Australia	France	France	France	Spain
7	Ireland	Malta	Malta	Germany	Ireland
8	Malta	New Zealand	Ireland	Malta	France
9	Italy	Italy	Germany	Italy	Germany
10	Germany	Ireland	Italy	Ireland	New Zealand

Figure 4: Main destinations for language travel 2005-2009 (ALTO 2009)



It is difficult to estimate the actual size of the market for language travel. Livemocha, a language company in Seattle, however tried to estimate the potential of the market and came to a figure of 375 million people wanting to learn a foreign language. A study done by the British Council in 2006 (Vision 2020: forecasting international student mobility) forecasts that the 1 million people who travelled in 2003 to main English speaking destinations, will grow into a demand of 2,6 million people by 2020. (Richards, 2009, 3.)

According to the language schools in 2008 the under 2 week courses were the most popular with 2-4 week courses following closely, both with over 30% each. 20 % took part in courses 1-3 months and the remaining 12% stayed even longer. (Richards, 2009, 22.) The average duration of the courses in 2008 and 2007 can be seen in figure 7 below.

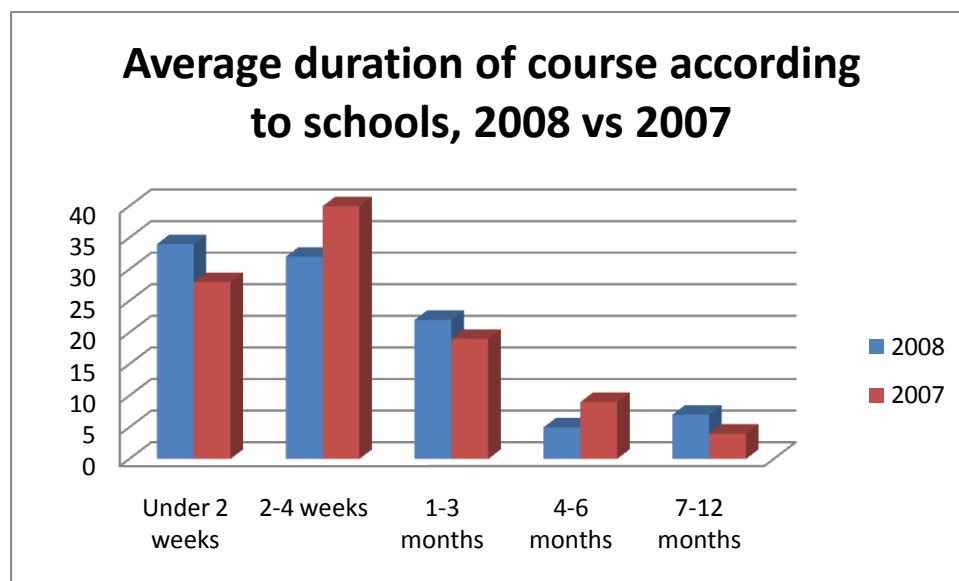


Figure 5: Average duration of language courses 2008 vs 2007 (ALTO 2009)

There is a lot of money to be made within the niche of language travel. Language tourists spend several weeks up to a year abroad and during this time they end up spending a lot of money, not only for the language course, but in all the services the destination has to offer. Often long-time language tourists also get visitors,

resulting in even more money for the destination. According to the ALTO 2009 study on language travel the total value of the market could be estimated to be about 10 billion US dollars in 2009. (Richards, 2009, 6)

#### **4.4. Language travel in Spain**

England, Spain and France are the biggest language travel destinations in Europe as they are the countries with the widely spread languages. Spain is a very popular tourist destination and many people also combine their holiday on the beach with a few classes of Spanish each day.

Central Spain is popular amongst a lot of language tourists. The Castellano spoken in Salamanca and Valladolid is said to be the "official Spanish". Madrid is another good choice when it comes to well-spoken Castellano and is favoured by serious language students. Most other parts of Spain have either another language spoken in the area (i.e. Catalan, Basque, Galician) or a very strong strong spoken accent. Southern Spain is very popular amongst sun and sea loving language students as this part of the country has the sun and the beach and this will always draw people no matter how strong the accent spoken there is. (<http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltm/ltmbackissues/jan10web/jan10marketreport.html> 1.2.2010)

Southern Spain has many elderly foreign people living there several months a year which means that fairly many elderly people also end up studying Spanish in language schools. Some schools even have separate classes for the elderly.

In 2007 Spain had 256,000 language travel students. This is almost the double from the amount in 2000. The language travel sector in Spain has been growing for the past few years at a rate of 8% increase in students each year. However in 2009, with the financial crisis, a 20% drop was expected. (<http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltm/ltmbackissues/nov08web/nov08status.htm>, 1.2.2010)

Spain gets most of its students from Europe. In the status survey that the language travel magazine did about Spain 2007, 16% of the language travel students at the language schools participating were German. Scandinavian and Finnish students made up 14,1 % of the students. USA and England were the origin countries of around 11% each of the students.(<http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltn/ltnbackissues/nov08web/nov08status.htm>, 1.2.2010)

Spanish speaking countries in Latin America are also becoming more popular within the language travel sector, especially North Americans and Brazilians visit these countries instead of Spain. Argentina for example has seen a 50% growth in this market each year lately. (Richards, 2009, 5.)

There is a lot of money in the language travel sector as language tourists often stay for several weeks or months and also might get visitors from home during their stay. The average language travel student ends up spending about 2000 euros during his stay. An estimated 462 million euros was the gain Spain made in 2007 in the language travel sector alone. (Richards, 2009, 5.)

According to the status report study on Spain in 2007 by the language travel magazine the average language travel student studied 20,7 hours of Spanish a week and paid an average of 605 euros for a one month language course, excluding the accommodation. (<http://www.hothousemedia.com/ltn/ltnbackissues/nov08web/nov08status.htm> 1.2.2010)

#### **4.5. Euro-Lingua language school**

Euro-Lingua language school is a small sized language school located in the Los Boliches part of Fuengirola, Malaga, southern Spain. The company was founded in 1999 and has been offering Spanish classes ever since. Since the summer of 2009, the school has also been giving English classes. The school has two classrooms and two Spanish teachers as well as one English teacher.

Euro-Lingua offers Spanish classes on several different levels, one and a half hours at a time, two to four times a week. The classes combine both grammar and discussion, with the emphasis on being able to speak the language. The classes have a maximum of seven students each. There is also a possibility to book a special course together with one's own friends and there are also private classes on offer. In the beginning of 2010 the majority of the students were foreigners studying Spanish. Offering English classes however was still fairly new at the school and Euro-Lingua was hoping to get more English language students in the future.

Euro-Lingua has not had any research done about their company to date and there are no actual statistics on the customers. The director, Rocío Hurtado Sanchez, says that she has noticed that most of the clients taking part in the Spanish classes are from the UK and from Finland and other Scandinavian countries. The English language classes are mixed, they have students from Spain, but also from Latin American countries, as well as some people from non-Spanish speaking countries.

The low-season for Euro-Lingua is the summer. In a lot of other destinations in Spain summer is the high-season when all the tourists come over and take part in language classes. However the area of Fuengirola has so many Finnish and other foreign people that live there during the cold winter months and return to their home countries for the summer, leaving Euro-Lingua short for students during the summer. Euro-Lingua has a base of loyal customers that keep coming back every winter. Sanchez thinks that most of the students are either working or living in Fuengirola during a longer time. The school does not have that many students that are only on holiday in Fuengirola and this is probably the reason that the summer is quiet for Euro-Lingua although Fuengirola has a great deal of tourists during the summer months.

## 5. Analysis of the results

The questionnaire was answered by all customers taking part in the Spanish classes at Euro-Lingua at the end of March 2010. In total there were 48 respondents. The questionnaire contained 20 questions. The questions were designed to find out some basic information about the respondents, to find out what they thought about the services at Euro-Lingua at the moment and what they would want from Euro-Lingua in the future. The English version of the questionnaire can be seen in appendix 1 and the Spanish version in appendix 2.

### 5.1. Background information on respondents

The questionnaire started out by asking about the students of the school. Here the aim was to get some actual figures on who studies at Euro-Lingua.

#### 5.1.1. Gender

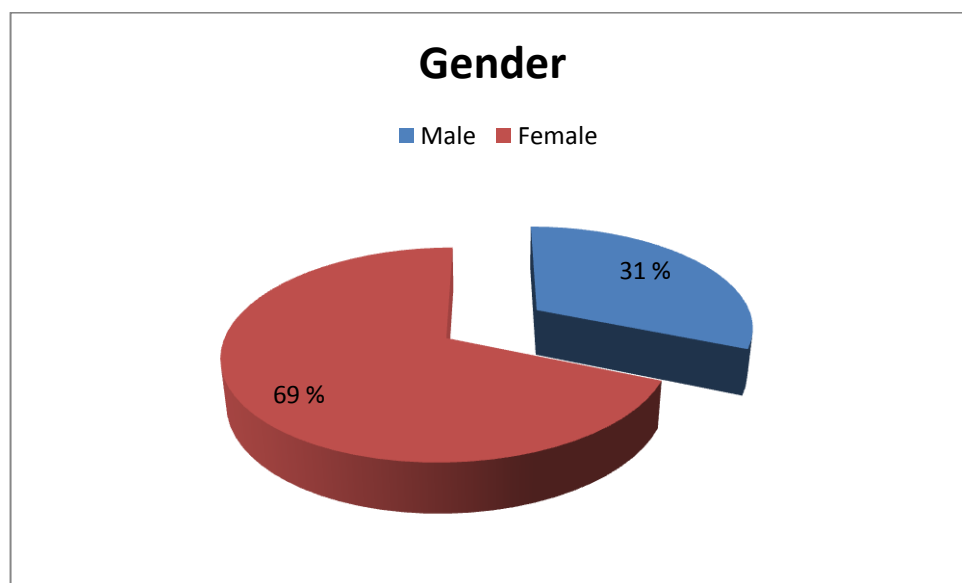


Diagram 1: The gender of the respondents

The first question asked for the gender of the respondents. All 48 respondents answered the question. As can be seen in diagram 1, a bit more than two thirds of the respondents were female, leaving the male to be a bit less than one third.

### 5.1.2. Age

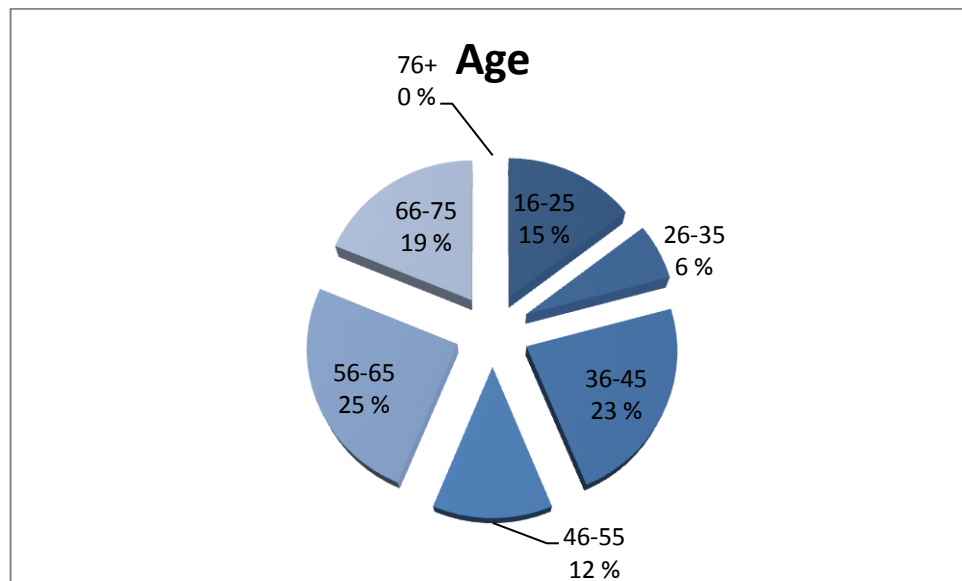


Diagram 2: Age of the respondents

As can be seen in diagram 2 the customer base of Euro-Lingua is dominated by older people. At the moment of the survey only 15% of the respondents were less than 25 years old and there was not a single person below the age of 16. People having turned 46 or more made up 56% of the students and people 66 years old or older almost reached a fourth of the customers. 48 people answered this question.

### 5.1.3. Nationality

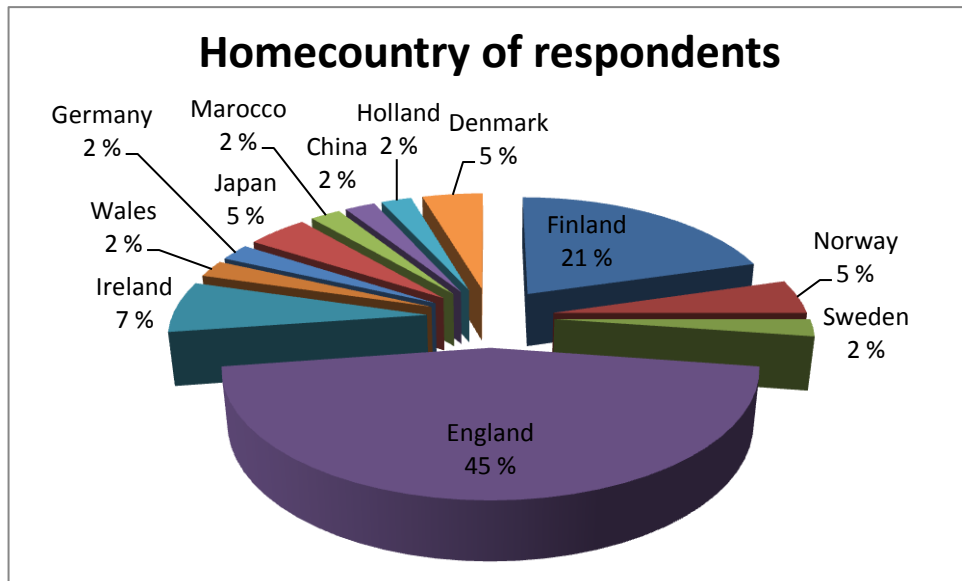


Diagram 3: Origin of respondents

Diagram 3 shows, the most common nationality amongst the respondents was British, making up 45 % of the total. Finnish were the other notable nationality in the survey at 21 %. The rest of the respondents were shattered from other Nordic countries, Ireland, Germany, Holland, Japan, China and Morocco. In this question there were 44 respondents as three did not answer the question and one answer was impossible to read.

#### 5.1.4. Reason for being in Fuengirola

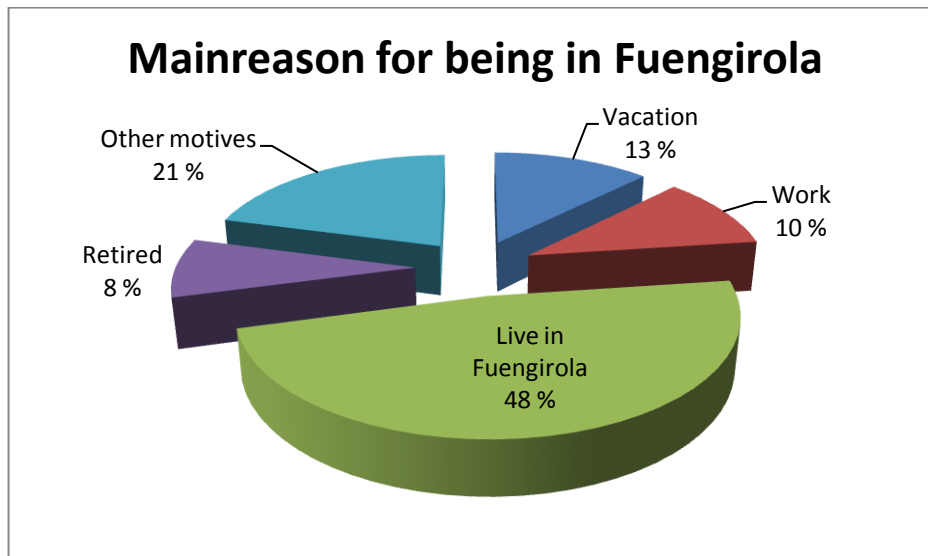


Diagram 4: Mainreason for being in Fuengirola

In question number four almost half of the respondents answered that their reason for being in Fuengirola was that they live there. 13 % responded that they were only there on holiday and 10% answered that they were there because of work. Four people gave being retired as the reason for them being in Fuengirola. Among other reasons given were a combination of living and working here, the combination of vacation and work, one living here temporarily and one answered that he went there for the Spanish girls. This question might have been a bit tricky to answer as it can be difficult to choose a single reason for being there. Where is the limit for working in a destination and living there? All 48 answered the question, although some ticked more than one option. The result is shown in diagram 4.



## 5.2. Studies at Euro-Lingua

In questions number five to seven the aim was to find out briefly about the respondents' studies at Euro-Lingua.

### 5.2.1. Type of lessons

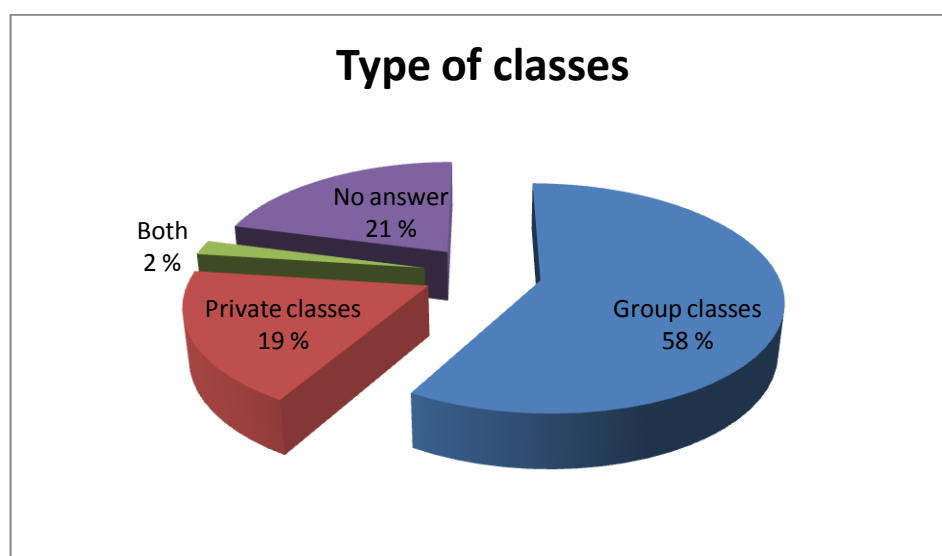


Diagram 5: Type of classes taken

58% of the respondents answered that they were taking part in the group lessons, 19% said they took private classes, one person said he took part in both and the rest, 21% did not at all answer this question as can be seen in diagram 5.

There was both a Spanish and an English version available of the questionnaire, but only a few English questionnaires were returned. I am left to think that people might have had problems with understanding the question in Spanish as this question was left blank by so many people.

### 5.2.2. The teacher

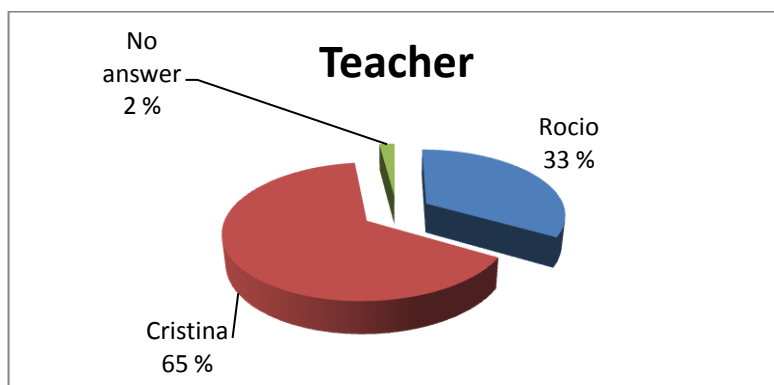


Diagram 6: Teacher of the students

As demonstrated in diagram 6, 65 % of the students had Cristina as their teacher, leaving Rocio with 33 % as one person did not answer the question. This question was put here in order to see if there would be any differences later on in the questionnaire when asking about the classes given. This result also helps point out that the language school had more beginner level classes at the moment as Cristina usually handles the basic classes.

### 5.2.3. Planned study-time at Euro-Lingua

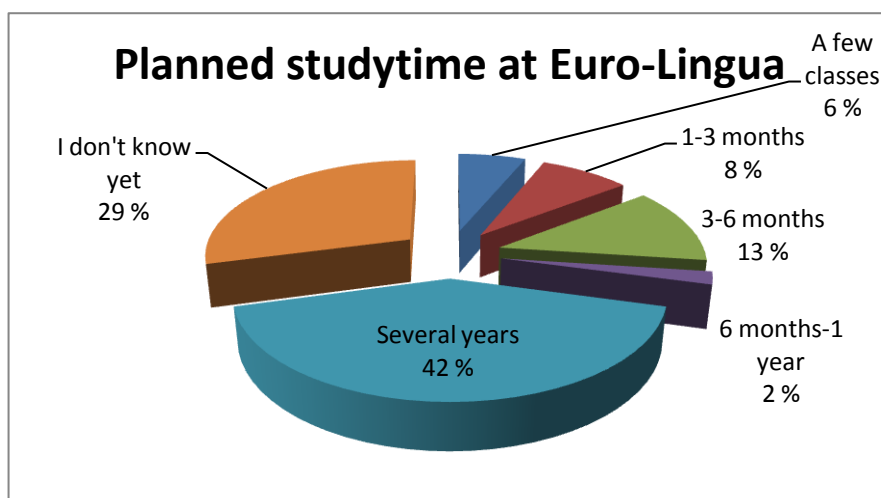


Diagram 7: Planned study-time at Euro-Lingua

In question number seven the students were about how long in total they think they will study at Euro-Lingua. As diagram 7 points out, 42 % responded that they had studied or will study there several years pointing out that the school has some loyal customers that keep coming back. The second largest group of 29 % said that they simply did not know how long they would stay. 13 % said that they would stay three to six months and one person said he would stay more than six months. People planning to only take a few classes at the school made up 6 % of the respondents and the ones planning to study one to three months made up 8 % of the total. It seems like most people that study at Euro-Lingua stay for a longer while. This goes hand in hand with the result of most students actually living in Fuengirola.

### 5.3. Grading the school

In questions eight to sixteen the respondents were asked to give Euro-Lingua grades from one to five on different subjects. Grade 1 was the lowest, meaning very bad, 2 was bad, 3 was ok or neutral, 4 was good and 5 was very good. An average of 4 or more in the different questions would therefore be a good result.

#### 5.3.1. The location of Euro-Lingua

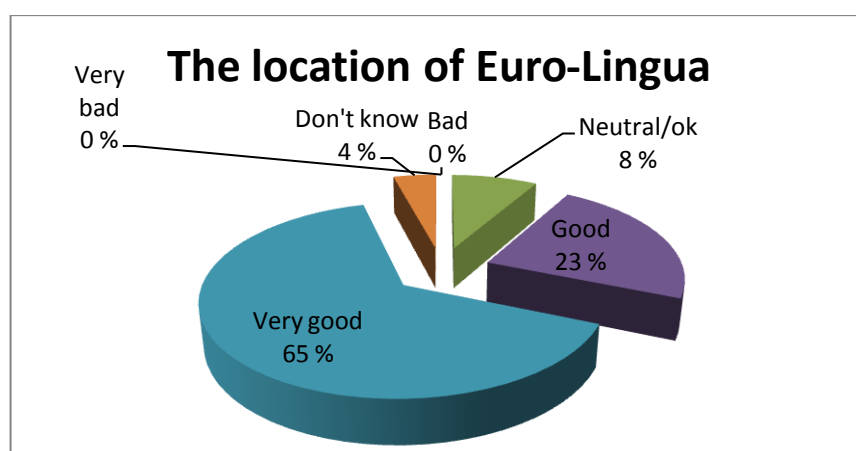


Diagram 8: Location of the school

In question number eight the students were asked about the location of the school. 67 % of the people were of the opinion that the location of the school was very good, 23 % of the ones that gave a grade responded that it was good, four said it was only ok and two people answered that they did not know. The answers are illustrated in diagram 8. The 46 respondents that gave a grade, left the average at 4,59. Apparently the students are quite happy with the location of the school at one of the main streets of Los Boliches.

### 5.3.2. Premises / facilities

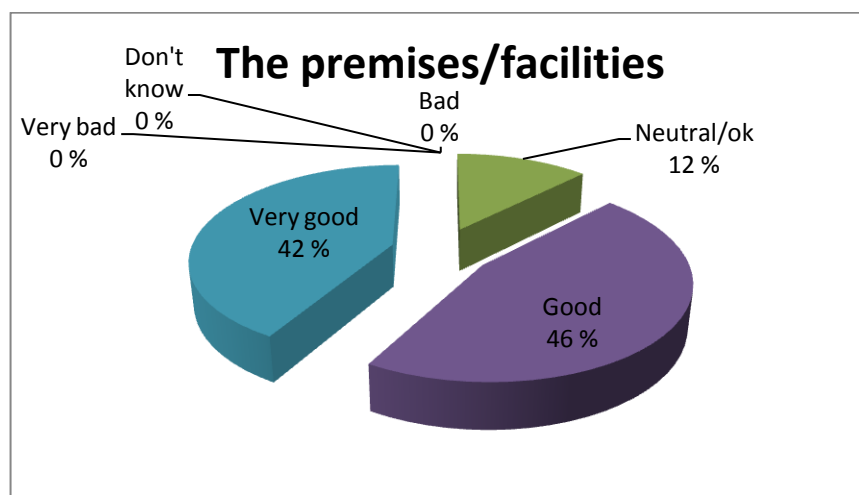


Diagram 9: The premises and facilities of Euro-Lingua

Question number nine asked about the opinion of the facilities of the school. In this question all 48 had an opinion. As diagram 9 shows, 42 % said the premises and facilities were very good, 46 % said they were good and 12 % said they were okay. This left the average at 4,29. This would normally be a good result. However, the students of the school gave good grades to everything, making 4,29 the second lowest result! Maybe there could be something to improve when it comes to the premises after all.

### 5.3.3. Teaching material

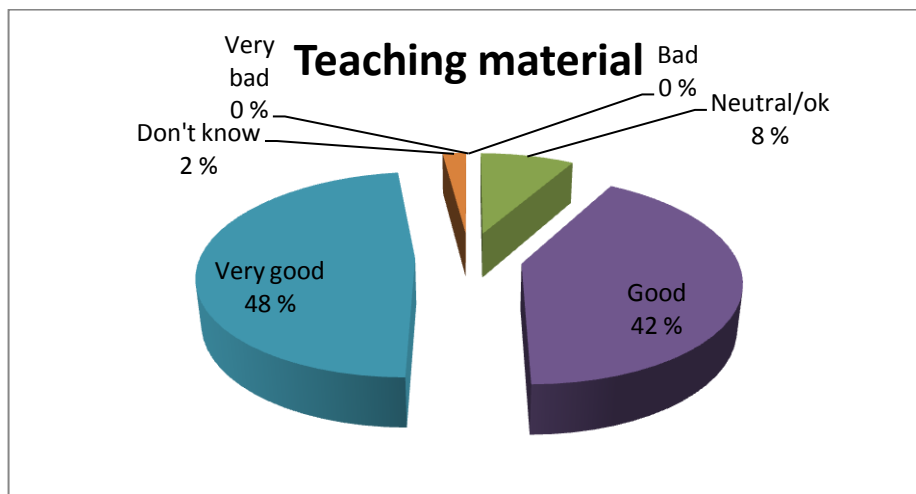


Diagram 10: Teaching material

In question number ten 47 respondents had an opinion about the learning material. Diagram 10 shows the grades given. 9 % said the teaching material was okay and gave it the grade three. 43 % said the learning material was good and 49 % said it was very good. This gave an average of 4,4. One could draw the conclusion that the students are quite happy with the teaching material. The students did however give some further comments about the subject in the feedback section later on.

### 5.3.4. Friendliness of staff

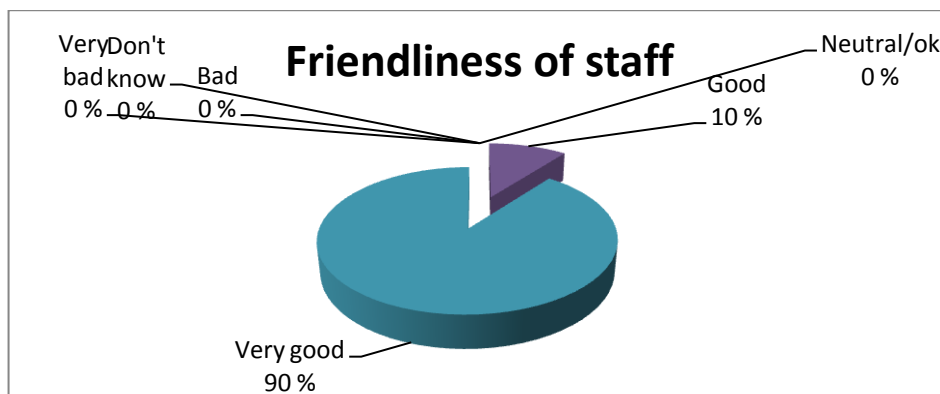


Diagram 11: Friendliness of staff

Diagram 11 shows the results of question number eleven. In this question the customers were asked to rate the friendliness of the staff. This was the question that got the highest score. 43 out of 48 gave the school full points and the five others gave a four. This gave an average of 4,9. It seems like the staff of Euro-Lingua knows how to treat their customers! This seemed to be the thing the customers appreciated most and there were no complaints at all. The staff got more positive feedback also in the feedback section. The staff could be one of the main reasons that the school has so many loyal customers.

### 5.3.5. Effectiveness of staff



Diagram 12: Effectiveness of staff

Question number 12 asked about the efficiency of the service. This question got the mean score of 4,7 with one person ticking the I don't know option leaving the amount of respondents at 47. Still most clients 71% (34 people) gave the school a full five even on efficiency. This is an excellent result as well as can be seen in diagram 12.

### 5.3.6. Size of study group

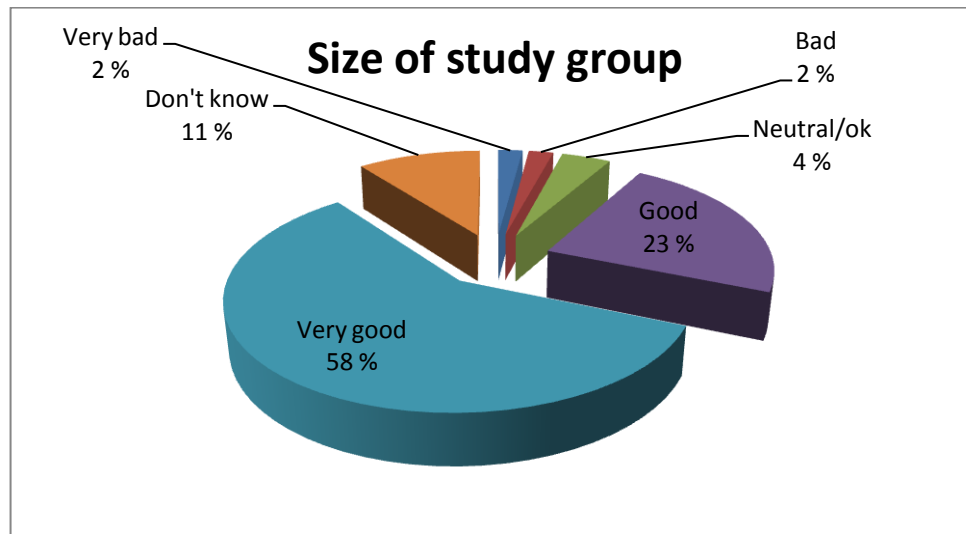


Diagram 13: Size of study group

Question number thirteen asked about the size of the study group. 43 people answered the question and it got a mean of 4,5. However in this question the fact that there were both group and private class students had not been considered. Five of the ones that gave a grade five were actually taking part in private classes, making these answers irrelevant and it only shows that they were content with their choice of taking private classes. The person giving the lowest grade, 1, was also one of the private class students. An explanation for this could be that the person wanted group classes, but that there at the moment was no group at this person's level. Another likely option is that this person understood the question to be that you should tick the actual number of students in class. However, 58% thought that the number of students was very good, 23% thought the size of the group was good, 4% thought it was ok and one person thought it was bad and one very bad. The percentages can be seen in diagram 13.

### 5.3.7. The website

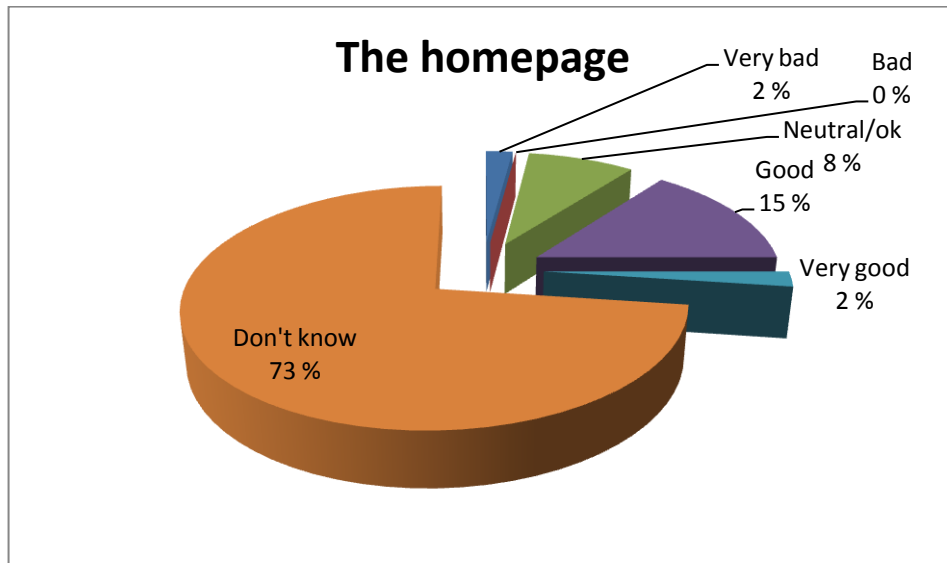


Diagram 14: The webpage of Euro-Lingua

Question number fourteen asked about the webpage of Euro-Lingua. This question got the least answers with only thirteen people giving the webpage a grade. This is understandable as many of the students have not seen the webpage, especially as some of the students have quite a high age. Unfortunately this means that the result is not very reliable with so few respondents. The average however is a 3,5, making it the service the customers seem to be least happy with. The answers are illustrated in diagram 14.



### 5.3.8. The price of the classes

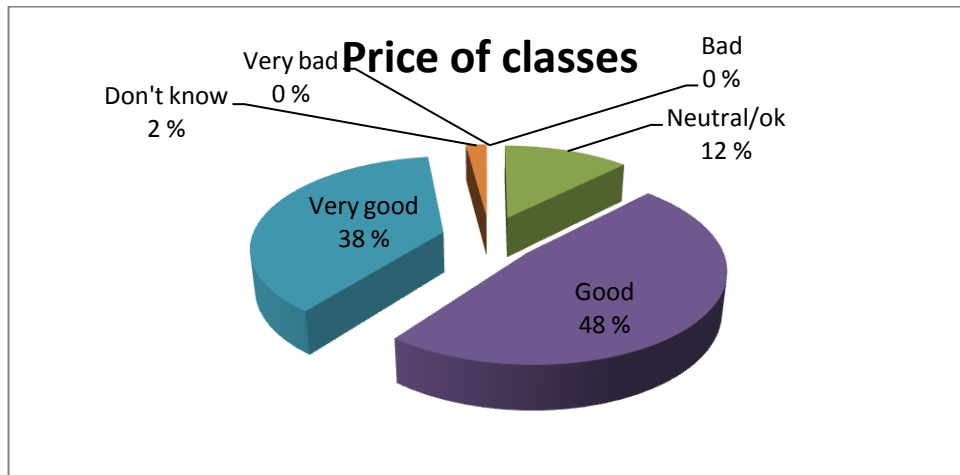


Diagram 15: Price of classes

47 people had an opinion on the price of the classes in question number 15. Diagram 15 shows the results. 18 people, 38%, thought the price was just right for the classes and gave the price a five. 23 people, 48%, gave the price a four and six people, 12%, gave the price a three. This means an average of 4,3. This is one of the worst results in the study. However, it is quite a good result as few people can ever admit being completely satisfied with the price of a product or service and no one actually gave the price a bad grade.

### 5.3.9. The overall satisfaction level

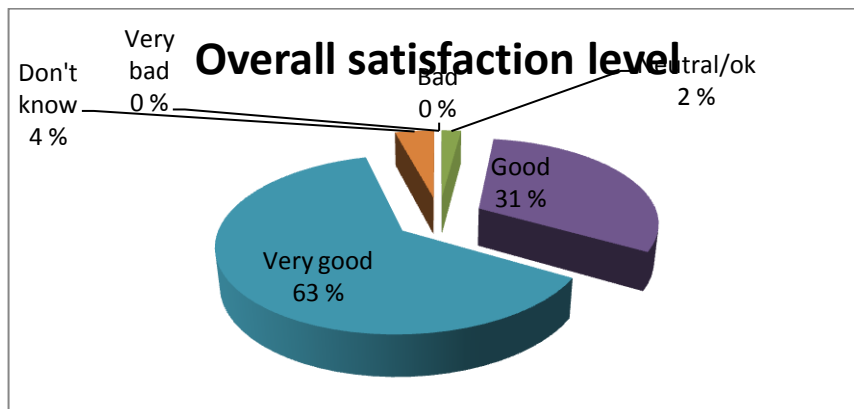


Diagram 16: Overall satisfaction level

In question number 16 people were asked to give the school an overall grade and measure their own satisfaction level. This question got a mean of 4,6. 63% of the respondents gave the school full grades, 31% gave it a four, there was one three and two I don't know answers as can be seen in diagram 16.

### 5.3.10. Balance of discussion and grammar

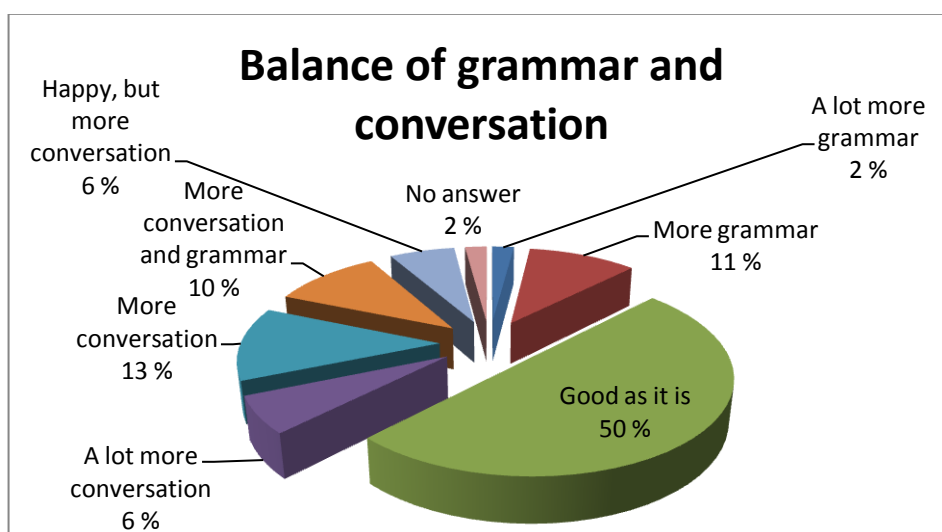


Diagram 17: Balance of grammar and conversation in class

The customers were asked about the balance of discussion and grammar in the class, if they were happy with it or if they wanted more of either one. These results are shown in diagram 17. 50 % of the respondents thought the balance was right. 11 % wanted more grammar, one person wanted a lot more grammar. 13 % wanted more conversation and 6% wanted a lot more conversation. People were meant to tick only one alternative, but three people said they were happy with the balance and that they would like more conversation. 10 % ticked the boxes that they wanted both more grammar and conversation, which probably means they were hungry to learn more. According to this result more conversation would be a little bit more popular than more grammar during class.

Amongst the respondents there was a slight difference depending on which teacher they had. The students of Cristina seemed to want more conversation and the students of Rocio wanted more grammar. This result however is not very reliable as broken down there are too few respondents. Cristina had 31 students and Rocio only 16. 22 % of Christina's students however wanted either more conversation or a lot more conversation. This can partly be explained by the fact that Cristina teaches the lower levels of Spanish, making it a bit difficult to discuss a lot. Analyzing Rocio's students would not be very reliable, having said so, 25 % (4 four people) in Rocio's class wanted more grammar. This would probably be the case even if there were more respondents, because once you reach a higher level of knowing a language, there is only so much grammar left to be taught and Rocio teaches the higher classes of Spanish. 12,5 % (2 people) of Rocio's students wanted more discussion.

#### 5.3.11. Where did the students find out about Euro-Lingua

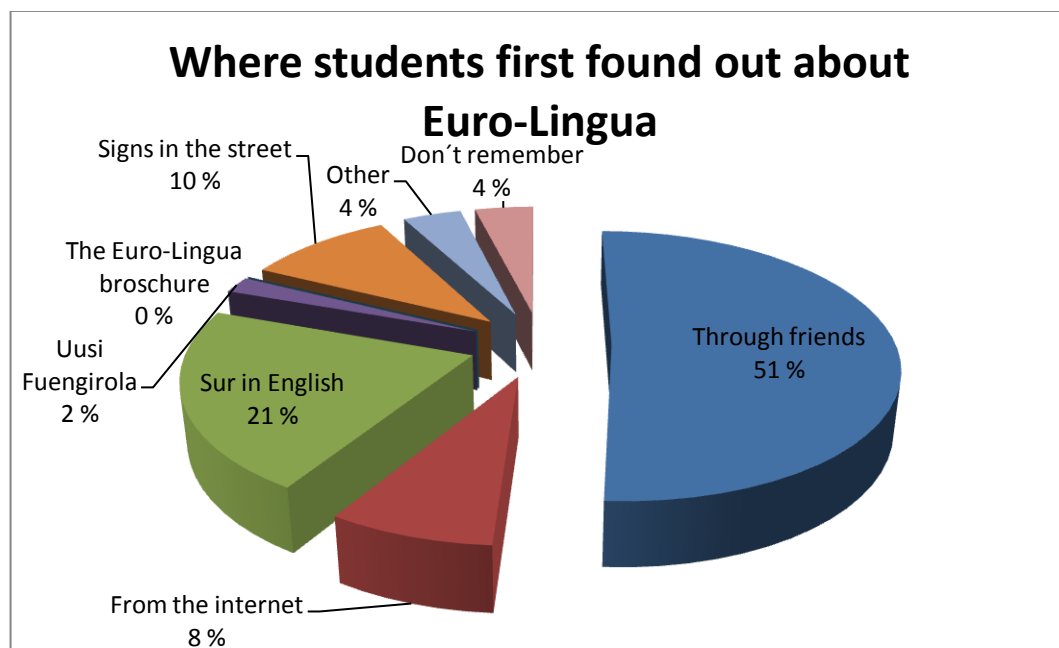


Diagram 18: Where students first found out about Euro-Lingua

In question number 18 the respondents were asked about where they first found out about Euro-Lingua. As diagram 18 points out, most people found out about the school through friends or acquaintances. 51 % of all respondents found out about the school through word of mouth. Advertising in the English version of the Sur newspaper seemed to be a good investment as 21% of the students said they found their way to the school because of the add. The school also has some signs in the street of Fuengirola with the contact information of the school. 10 % of the students said they found the school with the help of the signs. 8 % had checked the school out on the internet, one found the school with the help of the tourist information, one found it through the Finnish Uusi Fuengirola newspaper . There were also a few people that did not remember where they first found out about the school.

#### **5.4. Suggestions and feedback**

One of the aims of the study was to find out if the students wanted Euro-Lingua to offer them some more services in addition to the actual class. In the last two questions the students were asked to tell their possible wants of additional programme at the school and they were given the chance to give good and bad feedback.

#### 5.4.1. Possible future activities

In question number 19 the respondents were given alternatives on activities and services that the school could possibly offer to their customers. They were allowed to tick more than one answer. 15 people however did not choose anything and did not seem to want any extra services. This means 33 people ticked one or more alternatives. The most popular answer people gave was that they wanted there to be a possibility to loan Spanish books and movies from the school, 42 % of all students thought it would be a good addition to the school. This would also be easy and fairly cheap for the school to arrange. 31% ticked that they would like the school to arrange tapas outings. The same amount also wanted the school to pair them up with Spanish speaking students so that they would have the opportunity to practice their language skills and learn more. 31% also thought it would be a good idea to arrange visits to nearby places and cities. 17% were interested in taking Spanish dance classes as well as Spanish cooking classes. One person mentioned that he would like to learn more about the history of Spain. Diagram 19 lists all the extra-activities the students could choose from and shows the number of students that chose each option.

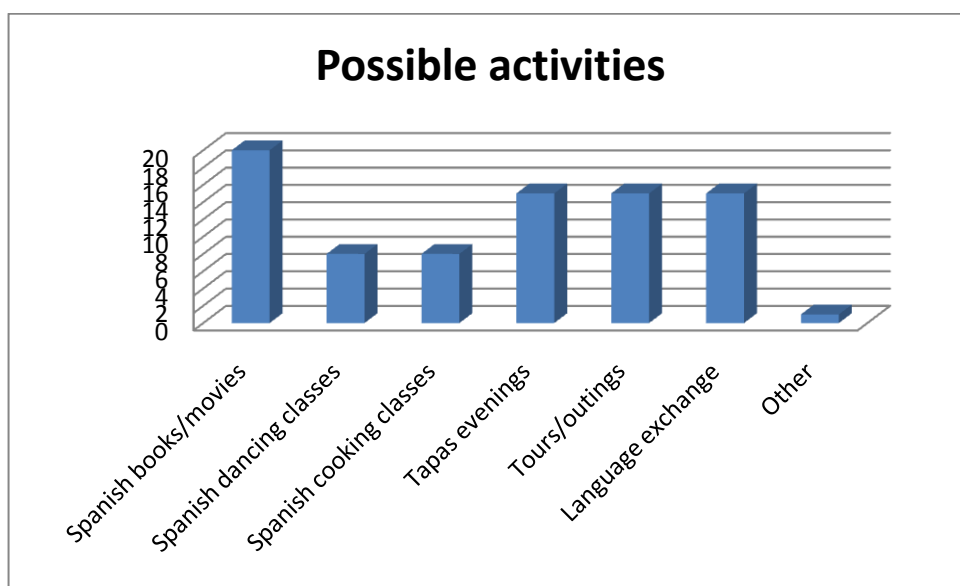


Diagram 19: Requested extra-activities for Euro-Lingua

#### **5.4.2. Feedback**

Question number 20 was an open question asking for both good and bad feedback. Most people that gave feedback mentioned that they were happy with the language school, that they were learning the language or that they liked the teachers.

Some suggestions were given when it comes to what to do during the lessons. One person wished that when it comes to grammar that the teachers would take more time to make sure everyone learns it well before moving on to the next subject. Two mentioned that they wanted to learn more about the history and culture of Spain, or talk about it during class. Reading newspapers was another wish expressed. Two people also expressed their wish for more homework. One wanted to start writing some texts that would be checked in class. A few people mentioned that they like speaking Spanish or want more conversation. One person gave the teacher negative feedback for arriving late for class too often.

One person gave praise to the café in front of the school. One wanted to get to know Spanish speaking people through school. All comments are listed in appendix 3.

#### **5.5. Reliability and validity of the research**

The result of a research is reliable if it is possible to repeat the same research later and get the same result again. (Veal, p. 117) This means first of all that there needs to be enough respondents to a research, otherwise the result is left to chance.

48 people answered the customer satisfaction questionnaire. A larger number of respondents would have been preferred, but this was not possible within the time-frame. Most students are long-time students at the school and a couple of months more would probably not have given that many more respondents. As Euro-

Lingua is a small school 48 people is a fairly big segment of the customers of the school and it is a big enough number for the result to be reliable.

The validity is the extent to what a research asks the right questions for its purpose. (Veal, p. 117) If a research is not valid it does not manage to find out about the things it wanted.

The aim of the study was fulfilled more or less. It was possible to find out about the typical student, the satisfaction level of several subjects and the school got some suggestions and feedback to follow up on. Overall, the study was valid.

One minus with the study was that not all respondents understood all the questions correctly because of the language barrier. This is something that I think can be seen in question number five at least as 21% simply left the question blank. The questionnaires were made in both Spanish and English, but mostly Spanish ones were handed out. The students should have at least had the possibility to look at an English version at the same time to make sure they understood everything.

Question 13 which wanted to find out if the students were happy with the number of students in their class should have been rephrased or skipped altogether. I did not realize that people also took part in the private classes when adding this question to the questionnaire. 9 people had private classes and if they chose to have private classes they should rightfully give a grade of five. The funny thing is that the one who gave the grade one (very bad), actually took private classes. It is possible that some people ticked the actual number of students in their class instead of giving a grade to the size of it.

## **6. Conclusion and suggestions**

According to the survey the typical student at Euro-Lingua would be a British woman older than 56 years old living in Fuengirola. She takes part in the group classes, Cristina is her teacher and she has studied at Euro-Lingua for several years.

Euro-Lingua seems to have a loyal customer base as 42% of the respondents either had or would study several years at the school. The survey also showed that the student base was of a rather high age, meaning that at least part of the customers are probably retired people that spend more or less only the summer in their own country, which is very typical for the area of Fuengirola. Most students were from the UK and Ireland, but Scandinavians and especially Finnish people make up a big segment as well. People from these countries are usually the ones running away from the cold winters, once again confirming that older residential tourists make up a big and loyal customer base for Euro-Lingua

### **6.1. Improving class, service and tangibles**

When it comes to the questions where the students were asked to grade the school, Euro-Lingua got very good grades. The personnel of the school seemed to be the strongest point of Euro-Lingua. The school got a staggering 4,9 mean on the scale from one to five when asked about the friendliness of the staff. This means that the teachers obviously know how to treat their customers. Friendliness of staff is one of the luxuries easier to offer in a smaller company than a bigger one. The teachers have more time to spend on each customer and this might be exactly what makes the customers come back: they feel special. The second highest score also had to do with the personnel. The effectiveness of the personnel / the fast service got a 4,7 in average.

When the respondents were asked about the webpage only 13 people answered the question, meaning that the result is not very reliable. However, the mean of the



results was only 3,5 and this is the lowest grade the school got, making it stand out. I had a look on the webpage myself and noticed that it was a bit outdated, stating for example that you can study French at the school which was not true at the moment. The English version of the page was full of errors also so I advice highly for the school to fix the errors and update the homepage. There was also a Finnish version of the page and it also had some errors in it. Changing the language is also difficult as you could not change it by simply choosing it, you needed to change it by altering the address making it difficult to find other versions than the English one. (www.euro-lingua.es is for the English version, www.euro-lingua.es/es for the Spanish version and www.euro-lingua.es/fi to find the Finnish version.)

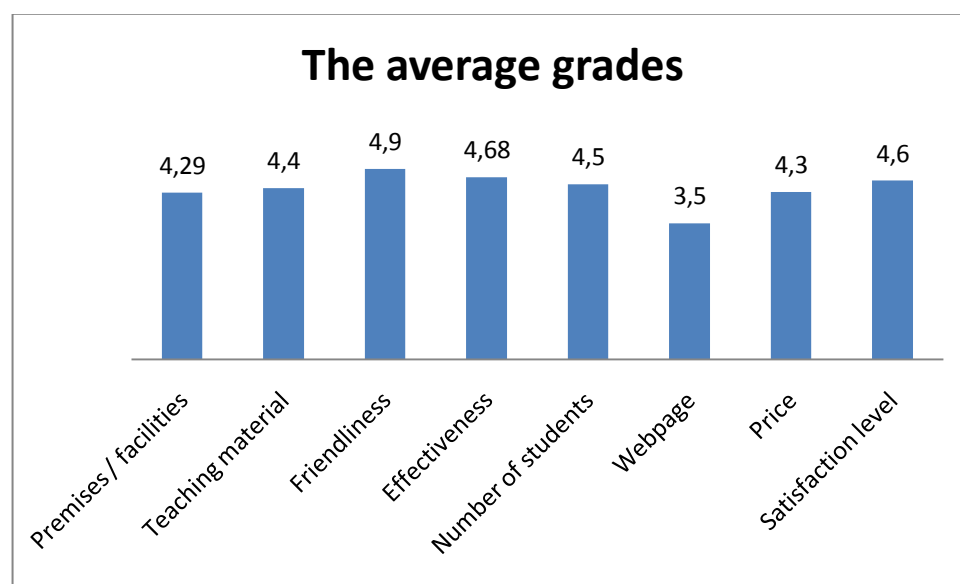


Figure 6: The average grades of the school

The other services all got fairly good reviews. Figure 8 shows all the subjects the students were asked to give a grade on and the averages of each subject. The price of the classes and the premises of the school got the second lowest scores at 4, 3 as an average. However, people are rarely 100% happy with a price. When it comes to the premises and facilities some qualitative research could be done to find out what exactly is lacking according to the students. At the moment as Euro-

Lingua is a very small company it also has small premises, but maybe something could be done to give a better impression still.

When asked about the overall satisfaction level the school scored an average of 4, 6 with the lowest score being 3, given by only one student. It seems like the respondents are rather satisfied with the school, but there is always room for improvement.

The teachers were eager to ask about the grammar and conversation balance in class. More people seemed to want more conversation than grammar. There were also some comments on the open feedback question at the end saying the students would like to talk about more subjects than they do in class. They also suggested reading newspaper articles and learning about the history of Spain etc.

## **6.2. Developing the marketing**

Most of the students had found out about Euro-Lingua through word of mouth. The customers that walk away happy seem to be the ones marketing the school the best. The biggest part of the students was from England and Finland. This is quite natural as they make up a big part of the tourists and winter-escapers in Fuengirola. Euro-Lingua advertises in the Finnish newspaper Uusi-Fuengirola and the British Sur in English, but the school could make sure they had their leaflet or brochure at the call centers and the cafes etc. that are mostly for foreigners.

Euro-Lingua could try to get more students also for the low-season in summer. The area does have a lot of tourists during summer and something could be done to try to allure them towards the school. Euro-Lingua does at the moment not have any cooperation with agencies, not on the internet nor with the agents in the city. It would be simpler for potential customers to find the school if they would cooperate with the local tour agents and the tourist information etc. making sure that they all have brochures and information about the school. The school could also consider establishing a relationship with some of the agencies online.

Fuengirola has quite a few call-centers and other workplaces for foreigners. These are packed with people especially during the summer months. Effective marketing at these workplaces and maybe some special deal for bigger groups could also bring more students to Euro-Lingua.

### **6.3. Additional activities and services**

Although the students seemed to be fairly happy with Euro-Lingua at the moment they were also very open to extra-services. 20 people responded that they would appreciate the possibility of loaning books and movies in Spanish from the school. Rocio Sanchez at the school did comment that she had some Spanish books at the school before, but people did not return them and that was the end of it. However, fixing new books, magazines and DVD's is still quite an easy and cheap manner of making the customers happy and the school could try to find a way to make it work.

15 people all ticked the boxes for tapas evenings, small tours and outings and being paired up with Spanish native speakers. These are all also quite easy for the school to try out. Tapas evenings are great especially for new students or people quite new to Spain who simply do not know what to order when going for tapas as it is a totally different way of eating compared to for example Finland. It is a fun way to learn more about the culture. The other good side it has to it is that it helps the students bond in a more relaxed environment and they could have the chance to get to know students from the other classes as well as making more friends! All it costs the school is a little bit of planning and a couple of hours dining.

The outings or tours were popular as well in the questionnaire. Different options for outings could be for example a vineyard or a bodega, some historical site or just a nearby city.

If the school could pair their Spanish students with actual Spanish native speakers this would be really great. The school also has people studying English there and it would be easy to pair them up with the Spanish language students, although

there are a lot fewer people studying English at Euro-Lingua at the moment and they are not all Spanish or Spanish native speakers, but from many different countries. The other problem is that not all Spanish language students speak good English, meaning that these could not help the English students with their English in the exchange. If the school does not have the possibility to pair its own students with each other, there are English language schools in Fuengirola also that maybe could be open for some collaboration. This is also an extra-service that could lead to a lot of learning and also friendships!

Spanish cooking and dancing classes would be good additions according to 8 people also. These could be a bit more difficult for the school to arrange on their own at the moment as the office of Euro-Lingua is quite small and does not have a kitchen. However, the school could find out about courses like this nearby offering information to the ones interested. Maybe they could get someone to visit from companies like that to tell what classes they offer, forming yet another alliance, as the other company also could recommend Euro-Lingua to their other students!

#### **6.4. Further research**

The school could consider doing some further research in the form of qualitative research in order to find out more exactly why for example the facilities did not get full points or to find out more about what the customers want in class or as extra activities.

Another thing I highly recommend is for the school to design a questionnaire, similar to the one used in this research, to give out to all students either when they are about to finish their studies at the school or a couple of weeks into their studies. This way the school could keep track of what their customers think about the school even in the future, making it possible to address to problems faster. They could also see what kind of students they attract and from what channels, making it easier to know what marketing is working and what not.

## 7. Summary

This thesis was done as a customer satisfaction research for Euro-Lingua language school in Fuengirola, Spain. The research was carried out in the spring of 2010 through a questionnaire handed out to the customers of the school at the given moment. The school did not have any previous databases on their customers and therefore we tried to find out some basic information about the customers as well as asking them what they thought about the school and its services. We also tried to find out what kind of extra-services the customers could like in the future.

The results for the customer satisfaction research for Euro-Lingua language school came out positive. The research amongst other things showed that the school has a large number of loyal customers that keep coming back each year. This alone says something about the service at the school. Another big revelation was that the friendliness of the staff at the school got a 4,9 average out of 5. This is probably one of the reasons that the customers stay so long at the school. They feel welcome.

The school has its low-season in summer. As a big part of the customers are residential tourists that go home for the summer, in order to have more customers also during this season the school would need to attract a new kind of customers. The school could tailor-make classes for the tourists that are in Fuengirola also for a shorter holiday.

Word of mouth seems to be the most effective marketing that the school has. It seems like the school has a good reputation, which is the most important. The word of mouth rarely reaches the short-stay tourist though and to reach these people, the school would need more marketing.

Most of the students however seemed very open to some additions to the services at Euro-Lingua. Popular wants among the students were Spanish books and movies to loan from the school, being paired up with Spanish speaking people, going out for tapas evenings and going out on small outings. The school could

easily get some books and movies for the students and some kind of a special outing or evening could be arranged at least once in a month if not more often.

I recommend that the school in the future would collect data about their customers more frequently. A questionnaire could be given out to all new or all leaving customers and this way the school could easily keep track of what their customers think.

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- |  |   |   |   |   |              |
|--|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 8. The location of Euro-Lingua               |   |   |   |   |              |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Can't say __ |
| 9. The premises / facilities                 |   |   |   |   |              |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Can't say __ |
| 10. The teaching material (books and copies) |   |   |   |   |              |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Can't say __ |
| 11. Friendliness of staff                    |   |   |   |   |              |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Can't say __ |
| 12. Effectiveness of staff / fast service    |   |   |   |   |              |
| 1  | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | Can't say    |

13. The size of the study group

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Can't say \_\_

14. The website

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Can't say \_\_

15. The price of the classes

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Can't say \_\_

16. My overall satisfaction level with Euro-Lingua

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      Can't say \_\_

*Tick the alternative that is right for you in questions 17 to 19. In question number 19 you can choose as many alternatives as you like.*

17. How do you feel about the grammar and conversation balance in class?

☐ I would like a lot more grammar      ☐ I would like a bit more grammar  
☐ I would like a lot more conversation      ☐ I would like a bit more conversation  
☐ The balance is good as it is

18. Where did you first find out about Euro-Lingua?

☐ Through friends / acquaintances      ☐ From the internet ☐ Sur in English  
☐ Uusi Fuengirola      ☐ The Euro-Lingua brochure ☐ Signs in the street  
☐ Other, in that case where? \_\_\_\_\_

19. I would like the school to arrange

☐ Spanish books and movies to loan      ☐ Spanish dancing classes  
☐ Tapas evenings      ☐ Spanish cooking lessons ☐ Tours/outings to  
destinations nearby      ☐ Pairing Spanish speaking and English speaking  
students with each other to help the learning ☐ Other, what? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Here is your chance to give both positive and negative feedback to the school.  
We are thankful for all suggestions!

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*Thank you for your collaboration!*

## Encuesta de satisfacción del cliente: Euro-Lingua

*Mi nombre es Hanne-Marie Pöysä y estudio turismo en Vaasa University of Applied Sciences en Finlandia. Quiero saber más sobre la gente que viaja para aprender una lengua y por eso estoy haciendo una encuesta de satisfacción del cliente para Euro-Lingua como mi tesis final.*

*El personal de Euro-Lingua y yo, estaríamos muy agradecidos si pudiesen rellenar este cuestionario para poder hacer algunas mejoras en la escuela!*

### Información básica

1. Sexo:     \_\_\_ Hombre   \_\_\_ Mujer
2. Edad:     \_\_\_ 16-25     \_\_\_ 26-35     \_\_\_ 36-45     \_\_\_ 46-55     \_\_\_ 56-65  
               \_\_\_ 66-75     \_\_\_ 76-85     \_\_\_ >86
3. País de nacimiento: \_\_\_\_\_
4. El motivo por el que estoy en Fuengirola:  
    \_\_\_ Vacaciones               \_\_\_ Trabajo   \_\_\_ Soy de Fuengirola / vivo aquí  
    \_\_\_ Otros motivos, cuáles \_\_\_\_\_
5. En Euro-Lingua estudio \_\_\_ En grupo   \_\_\_ Clases particulares
6. Mi profesora es:           \_\_\_ Rocío     \_\_\_ Cristina
7. ¿Cuánto tiempo ha planeado que va a estudiar en Euro-Lingua en total?  
    (También cuenta el tiempo que ya ha estudiado en Euro-Lingua)  
    \_\_\_ Solo algunas clases     \_\_\_ De uno a tres meses     \_\_\_ De tres a seis meses  
    \_\_\_ Más de medio año       \_\_\_ Varios años           \_\_\_ Todavía no lo sé

*Puntúe de uno a cinco a Euro-Lingua en los siguientes temas (1 = muy mal, 2 = mal, 3 = regular, 4 = bueno, 5 = muy bueno)*

- |                                |   |   |   |   |   |              |
|--------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| 8. La ubicación de Euro-Lingua | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | No lo sé ___ |
| 9. Los locales / instalaciones | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | No lo sé ___ |
| 10. El material de enseñanza   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | No lo sé ___ |
| 11. La amabilidad del personal | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | No lo sé ___ |

12. La eficacia del personal / servicio rápido

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      No lo sé \_\_\_\_

13. El número de estudiantes en mi clase

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      No lo sé \_\_\_\_

14. La página web

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      No lo sé \_\_\_\_

15. El precio de las clases

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      No lo sé \_\_\_\_

16. Mi nivel total de satisfacción con Euro-Lingua

1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      No lo sé \_\_\_\_

*Elija la opción mas apropiada para usted en las preguntas 17-19. En la pregunta número 19 puede elegir tantas opciones como quiera.*

17. ¿Qué opina del equilibrio entre la gramática y la conversación en la clase?

\_\_\_ Quiero mucha más gramática                      \_\_\_ Quiero más gramática  
\_\_\_ Quiero mucha más conversación                      \_\_\_ Quiero más conversación  
\_\_\_ Está bien como está

18. ¿Cómo encontró Euro-Lingua?

\_\_\_ Un amigo me lo recomendó                      \_\_\_ Por internet                      \_\_\_ Sur in  
English                      \_\_\_ Uusi Fuengirola                      \_\_\_ Páginas Amarillas                      \_\_\_ Vi el  
folleto de Euro-Lingua                      \_\_\_ Vi el cartel por la calle                      \_\_\_ De otro  
modo, ¿cual? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Me gustaría que la escuela dispusiera de:

\_\_\_ Libros y películas en español para prestar                      \_\_\_ Clases de baile español  
\_\_\_ Noches de tapas                      \_\_\_ Clases de cocina española  
\_\_\_ Excursiones a destinos cercanos                      \_\_\_ Reunir estudiantes hispano parlantes y  
estudiantes anglo parlantes para ayudarse mutuamente en el aprendizaje  
\_\_\_ Otro ¿cuál? \_\_\_\_\_

20. Aquí tiene su oportunidad para hacer sus comentarios positivos o negativos sobre la escuela. ¡Estamos muy agradecidos por todas las sugerencias!

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*¡Gracias por su colaboración!*

## Feedback

Here is a list of all the answers to the last question as they were written. The Spanish answers have been translated into English as well. :

- En una mes yo hablar mas y entiendo mas español (In one month I speak and understand more Spanish.)
  - Estoy muy satisfecho ( I am very satisfied.)
  - El cafeteria enfrente es muy agradable antes de la classe. Las profesoras son simpaticas. ( The café in front is very nice before class. The teachers are friendly.
  - Todo muy bien, possiblemente mas deberes pero no puedo prometer que yo los hago... ( Everything is good, we could possibly have more homework, but I cannot promise that I will do them...)
  - If possible it would help if a list/contact of people who speak Spanish perhaps learning English available to contact to chat with over coffee or meet to share languages
  - More basic information. Teacher is good.
  - Yo quiero mas hablar! (I want to speak more!)
  - Siempre discutimos que ha pasado ayer a la semana pasada. Tambien quiero discutir la historia de Espana y la cultura. (We always talk about what happened yesterday and the week before. I also want to talk about the history of Spain and the Spanish culture.)
  - Mas deberes! Para prepararnos en una tema con vocabulario y textos dificiles. Pero pienso tambien que nuestro grupo no pueda funcionar en otro modoque ahora. (informal con poco deberes) No me gusta que la profesora muchas veces llegue demasiado tarde. Quiero escribir ensayos pequenos y traducir textos de ingles a espanol. Quiero que leamos textos de los periodicos. (Ingegerd)
- (More homework! Prepare for us a theme with a vocabulary and difficult texts. But I also think that our group cannot function in another way right now. Informal

with a small amount of homework. I do not like that the teacher often arrives late. I want to write short stories and translate texts from English to Spanish. I want us to read stories from the newspapers. Ingegerd.)

- Yo me gusta praktik. Yo me gusta mucha ablar in de classe. ( I like to practice. I like it a lot when we speak in class.

- Si, yo lo se, profesoras quieren siempre mas gramática. ( Yes, I know, the teachers also want more grammar.)

- Creo que la escuela Euro-Lingua es muy bien. ( I think that Euro-Lingua is very good.)

- Prefiero si podemos aprender mas tiempo a concentrar unas cosas por ejemplo: subjuntivo, verbos pasados etc en conversación antes de empezar otras cosas segun los libros. A practicar phrases especificos en lugar de conversacion general. (I would prefer if we could spend more time to concentrate on a few things like for example: the subjunctive, verbs in past tenses etc before moving on to other things according to the book.)

- Yo me gusto todo. ( I liked everything.)

- Mucho satisfacción. La escuela esta bien. (A lot of satisfaction. The school is good.)

- Mi gusta Euro-Lingua ( I like Euro-lingua.)

- Esta muy bien. (It's very good.)

- I am very happy with this school

- Overall very satisfied

- Muy bien la escuela (Very good the school.)

- He disfrutado de mi tiempo en la escuela. Mi profesora (Rocío) es muy amable y paciente y hace las clases muy agradable. Me gusta mucho venir a las classes. Eso es muy importante, creo. ( I have enjoyed my time at the school. My teacher

Rocio is very friendly and patient and makes the classes very enjoyable. I like coming to class a lot. This is very important, I think.)

- Me gusta la escuela Euro Lingua porque las profesoras son simpaticas y pacientes. (I like the school Euro-Lingua because the teachers are friendly and patient.)

- Me gusta el curso pero importante a haber parecido edad. ( I like the course, but age seems to have been important.)

- Todas bien! Pero a veces gramatica es muy dificil!! (Everything good! But at times the grammar is very difficult!)

- Es mucho bueno. Me gusta Cristina. (Is a lot good. I like Cristina.)

- I find the lessons very good and hope to speak Spanish one day!!