

Marketing languages other than English

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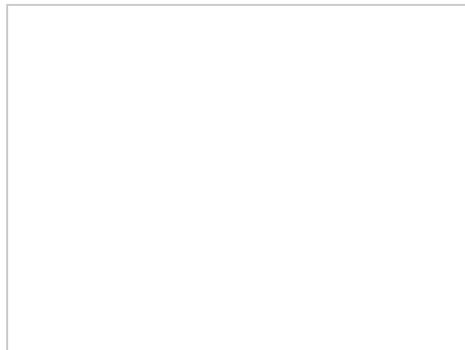
A *lingua franca* is a bridge language, sometimes called a trading language, in that it is used to support communication between people who don't share a native language. English is perhaps the best contemporary (and global) example of this phenomenon but there are many other *lingua francas* in use in different parts of the world, including French, Spanish, and Chinese.

"Surprisingly 75% of the world's population actually doesn't speak English," says Jan Capper. Ms Capper is the Executive Director of the International Association of Language Centres ([IALC](#)), a global network of leading independent language centres that teach the language of their country, and is also the co-convenor of the Global Alliance of Education and Language Associations ([GAELA](#)).

We sat down with her recently to explore the market for teaching languages other than English and she quickly made a convincing case for why students are pursuing other foreign languages: "In a global economy, people are going to have to be communicating with more and more other countries and other markets, and English will not be the common language of most of them. If you want really good relationships with trading partners in other countries, the way to achieve that is to speak their language as well. It just gives you the edge."

We are pleased to present a feature video excerpt from our conversation below. In it, Ms Capper makes the point that a student's choice of language will be influenced by any number of factors, including geography, personal interest, or family connections, but that [economic opportunities and career interests](#) are often a major consideration. From that point of view, major global trends with respect to language usage, population, and economic growth are also important underlying indicators of demand for foreign language study.

Below we have also included the slides from a presentation Ms Capper gave at the ICEF Berlin Workshop last autumn on the similarities between marketing English and languages such as Spanish, Russian and Mandarin. She explained the advantages for students in learning other languages abroad, as well as the benefits for agents who want to enhance their student offering with languages other than English.



Marketing Languages other than English from ICEF Monitor

The advantages of foreign languages

As we noted recently, this is a fascinating moment in world history, one where [global power is shifting away from advanced economies and toward Asia](#) and a block of faster-growing emerging economies. You can layer on top of that unfolding power shift any number of statistics to reflect the world's most commonly spoken languages ([Mandarin](#), English, [Spanish](#), Hindi, [Arabic](#)), the largest economies (US, China, Japan, Germany, France), or the most populous countries (China, India, US, Indonesia, Brazil).

In addition to economic growth and trading opportunities, how widely a language is spoken – particularly how prominently it is used in diplomacy and business – is another important consideration for language learners.

For example, along with English, the United Nations has five other official languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian, and Spanish. Those six languages are commonly used in UN meetings and, where budget is available, all official UN documents are written in some or all of the six as well.

In terms of popularity, Spanish is the official language of no less than 20 countries, Germany is the most widely spoken native language in the European Union, and French

is the only language other than English spoken on all five continents.

[Demand for English remains strong](#) and its place as a global language of exchange, travel, and business is not in question. But seen from any of these perspectives, the case for studying languages other than English becomes more clear, and the underlying shifts in population and economic power that we are seeing in the world today provide some important indicators of where demand for foreign language study is going in the decades ahead.

The many different language programmes of IALC members will be on display next month in France at the [2015 IALC Workshop in Rouen](#), the historical capital of Normandy. The workshop brings together language education providers and agents, and includes business appointments, networking opportunities, and a [seminar programme](#) led by industry experts and guests.

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