

# ialc presents research report on language demands



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ialc, the International Association of Language Centres, has presented its research report on language demands from international students, and shows there is a huge demand around the world to learn English, particularly in Asia.

The report, *Trends in the Demand for Foreign Languages*, administered by [StudentMarketing](#), was presented at the [ialc](#) 2016 Workshop in Leeds and York, hosted by [CES Leeds](#) and [Melton College](#) in York by Jan Capper, Executive Director of ialc, and Samuel Vetrak, CEO at StudentMarketing. English was the preferred language choice of 78 per cent of all student customers in the survey, which had a total of 466 participating agents representing 74 countries and a total pool of over 236,000 language travel students. A total of 97 per cent of surveyed agents promoted English language courses and multiple answers were allowed in this category. The demand for English was highest in Asia, where 87 per cent of students opted to study the language, compared to 86 per cent in the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, 77 per cent in Latin America, and 74 per cent from Europe. French and German were joint-second in terms of the languages promoted by all agents with 62 per cent each. Spanish was fourth with 51 per cent, followed by Italian (46 per cent), Chinese (29 per cent), Japanese (25 per cent), Russian (22 per cent) and Portuguese (21 per cent). The second most popular language choice for student customers after English was French, with seven per cent. Six per cent chose German while five per cent chose Spanish. It was also noted that none of the agencies selling multiple languages witnessed a decrease in business. Reasons for studying abroad varied between languages. Students primarily sought German (62 per cent) and English (61 per cent) for current and future studies, while Portuguese and Italian were chosen for personal reasons, with 65 and 64 per cent respectively. In order to improve their future employment prospects, 53.6 per

cent of students chose Russian and 42.3 per cent chose Chinese. The top market in terms of the number of agents responding to the survey was Turkey, followed by Russia, Italy, Brazil, India and Germany. The average number of students sent abroad in 2015 by all agents was 526, and 59 per cent reported an increase in the number of students they sent abroad last year. However, approximately a quarter of agents (26 per cent) experienced a decrease in their business from 2014 to 2015. The most important age group highlighted in the report was 18-to-25 year olds, representing 46 per cent of all agent customers. However, the junior sector (age 17 and under) was a rising market with the report stating, "Students improve their language proficiency in earlier stages of their lives, hence the greater need for language training abroad for the junior age segment." Looking to the future, 80 per cent of agents predict that the demand for English will be the strongest growth market over the next three years, with a projected increase of 41 per cent. Other languages that agents have confidence in are Chinese, predicted to increase by 33 per cent, and French by 21 per cent. When presenting the data, Samuel noted that the industry was heading towards multilingualism where an increasing number of students will study abroad to learn a third or further language to stay ahead of their peers. In a Q&A with IalC in the [April issue of StudyTravel Magazine](#), Jan Capper noted that it was important to reflect the trends of all the major languages promoted by schools in the association and added, "While English is the first foreign language most people learn, having a second foreign language is increasingly important, and native English speakers also need other languages to compete in a globalised economy." For the 2018 IalC Workshop, members chose the Italian city of Bologna with [ALCE](#) as host school.

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