

The impact of English on Spanish daily life and some pedagogical implications

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Abstract

In applied linguistics, it is far from doubt the prominent role of English as a global language. However, not many studies (Rodríguez 2002; Reichelt 2006) have provided a deep account of the current role of English in Spain. This paper sheds light on the unprecedented prominence of English in almost every single area of Spaniards' daily life. It aims to show the impact of English in various settings such as the Spanish linguistic landscape by analysing shop signs in English; the media, including television, radio, and music; interpersonal communications, which includes the workplace, and the academic setting. The Spanish education system has been given special attention, as this study examines all the educational levels and it discusses, from a pedagogical point of view, the Spaniards' level of proficiency.

KEY WORDS: Spain, anglicisms, ELF, communication, pedagogy

1. Introduction

A considerable volume of literature has been written to discuss the situation of English in the world. Dewey (2007:333) aptly depicts the impact of English on present-day societies:

English is like no other language in its current role internationally, indeed like no other at any moment of history. Although there are, and have previously been, other international languages, the case of English is different in fundamental ways: for the extent of its diffusion geographically; for the enormous cultural diversity of the speakers who use it; and for the infinitely varied domains in which it is found and purposes it serves.

In Europe, this influence impacts every realm of Europeans' daily life. The role that English plays in Spain is not far from the ones played in other European countries. English has unquestionably become the main vehicle of communication or *lingua franca* among speakers who do not share a common tongue. Consequently, different trends have emerged among scholars as regards the international role of English.

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In 1995, Berns¹ adapted Kachru's model within the framework of *World Englishes* to describe the position of English in Europe. At present, as a result of globalisation, and development of technological means that allow interconnectedness, the role of English has become more prominent in many European countries. Its presence is so pervasive in every realm of daily life that we need to consider whether its conventional role as a mere foreign language is now shifting. Modiano (1996; 2001) was one of the first authors to consider the emergence of a European variety of English or "Euro-English".

As the world moves, and does so very quickly, language also moves and evolves. Europeans wish and need to speak English in order to be able to communicate among each other, which is leading to a certain sense of identity with English as it serves the purposes of communication in many different settings.

Spain is an example of this linguistic situation. Even though Castilian is the official language of the whole of Spain, there are other 'minority' languages such as Catalan, Basque or Galician, which have a recognised official status in their specific autonomous communities. Thus, they co-exist with Castilian. Spain is a multilingual country, and in certain communities, Castilian is taught along with these minority (at the national level) languages. Consequently, there are areas where English is not the second language to be learnt, but the third or fourth one. This fact has not prevented many anglicisms from being introduced into Castilian Spanish.

When it comes to the position of Spanish scholars towards this penetration of English words into Spanish, they have traditionally adopted two different positions. Some of them (Lorenzo 1996; Segura 2003) have regarded these English words as unnecessary, since there are Spanish equivalents for most of the concepts they refer to. They consider that these uses are the result of snobbery, modernity and prestige, rather than the real needs of the Spanish language. Two examples are *marketing* instead of *mercadotecnia*, *online* instead of *en línea*.

¹ Berns (1995) adapted Kachru's typology of the three concentric circles to the context of Europe. Kachru's (1992) typology distinguishes three kinds of countries according to the function of English: *Inner circle* (countries whose native language is English); *Outer circle* (countries where English functions as a second language that may have an official status); *Expanding circle* (countries where English is a foreign language with no official status).

The second position is shown by those scholars, among which I personally subscribe, who have merely described the situation of English in Spain without judging these uses in a positive or negative way. Evidence that supports this claim is offered by the following studies which cover different areas: economy and finances (González 2000), the legal domain (Sánchez and Durán 2002), advertising (Durán 2002), music (Olivares 2009), computers and new technologies (Pano 2007; Bolaños and Luján 2010), shop windows (Luján-García 2010b). Special attention has also been paid to the uses of English words by young Spaniards, as they seem to be the most influential section of the population in terms of the way English and Spanish co-exist in contemporary Spanish and with regard to their cultural production (González et al. 2009). The fact that English is present in all these settings in Spain is more evidence of the increasing interconnectedness and mutual influence among languages, largely brought about as a result of globalisation.

In this article, I will provide an overview of the linguistic landscape of Spain by giving photographic evidence of the presence of English; the media (television, radio, and the internet); and an analysis of the use of English in interpersonal communication. To start with, some remarks on the teaching of English in Spanish educational system are offered.

2. English in the educational system

A couple of decades ago, Spanish people learnt French as the first foreign language. Today, English has become the first foreign language studied in all the different educational levels in the Spanish educational system. In Lorenzo's words (1996:17):

In the 1950s, English was taught as an optional first foreign language in secondary schools to around 5 per cent of the students, whereas French was studied by over 90 per cent of students. At present, the situation is totally different: English is in the first position, and French is in a second place.

2.1. Primary and Secondary education

One of the principles supported by the LOE, or Law on Education in Spain (2006), is the process of learning foreign languages throughout the students' lives (<http://www.educacion.es/educacion>). This may give a

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broad idea of how studying languages, other than Castilian, and especially English, has become essential for Spanish students. English is not an option but an obligation for the youngest generations.

When considering the study of other foreign languages, English is by far the most studied language in Spain. Other foreign languages such as French or German are also offered in most state schools, not as a second but rather, as a third or even fourth language. Young children start studying English from three years old, in an optional way, and when they are six, in a compulsory way. At those levels, they attend two hours of English lessons per week. The exposure to English is increased as the students are at higher levels. At secondary education, which comprises four academic years, Spanish students get four hours of English classes per week. This amount of time varies slightly depending upon each specific autonomous community. In some bilingual communities such as Catalonia, Basque country, Valencia, Galicia and the Balearic Islands, English instruction is provided for two or three hours a week, and for these students English is their third language.

There are also some communities such as the Canary Islands, Andalusia, or Valencia where a new ambitious programme is being run by the educational authorities. It is called CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) programme, and it consists of using English as the medium of instruction for other subjects different from English (for example, arts, sciences, and so on). The different subjects are partially or totally taught in English. Therefore, these students get more English exposure than the followers of the regular curriculum. Students are required to pass an English entrance exam to be eligible for this programme. It is still a new programme but it is becoming quite widespread among primary and secondary schools.

To illustrate, in the Spanish community of the Canary Islands, this programme began in academic year 2004/05 as a pilot in 11 primary educational centres. In 2005/06, the programme was rolled out into 10 secondary schools. For 2010/11, this programme is being implemented in 407 educational centres in the Canary Islands (367 primary schools and 40 secondary schools) (González-Ares 2010:28). Therefore, the number of educational centres involved in this programme has multiplied by thirty seven times in a period of 5 years.

2.2. Official schools of languages

This kind of ‘special’ school may be considered an alternative way to learn foreign languages. It is basically addressed to people who are 16 years old or more. The curriculum is organised over three different levels, each of which is studied for two years. After the completion of each level, learners are expected to have reached levels A2 (for the first or basic level), B1 (for intermediate level) and B2 (for advanced level) (Ley Orgánica 2/2006 de 3 de mayo, de Educación). These schools offer many different foreign languages to be studied; English, German, French, Italian, and Chinese, which has been recently included in the curriculum of these schools. Spanish is also studied as a foreign language.

In the specific case of English, this is by far the most demanded foreign language, and it may sometimes be quite difficult to find a place in an English classroom. As an example, in the Canary Islands, the most chosen foreign language has traditionally been English. In academic year 2009/10, there were 18,518 students of English. The second most chosen was German with 4,226 students. French was third with 3,292 students and Italian was chosen by 841 students (Dirección General de Formación Profesional y Educación de Adultos de la Consejería de Educación, Universidades, Cultura y Deportes del Gobierno de Canarias). As it may be observed, the number of students of English is not comparable with the rest of the foreign languages studied at this kind of school.

2.3. Higher Education

The Bologna Process was an agreement signed in 1999 that involved a number of European countries. The goal of this project is to harmonise and standardise the European Higher Education system. It is also a way to encourage mobility of students from different countries. As Graddol explains (2006:74), this process uses “a common approach to levels and length of courses” and it follows the lines of the British model. Although the use of English is not a requirement within this process, it is true that English is the most popular choice of foreign language in the European educational systems. The implementation of the Bologna process in different countries of the EU has become a challenge for the educational authorities, teachers and students.

The Bologna declaration of a European Space for Higher Education has been compulsorily implemented in all Spanish universities in the academic year 2010/2011. The great importance of this process in Spain should be highlighted, as it has produced many changes in the Spanish University system. Some of these changes include; curricular redesigning processes, in which English has a more prominent role; the new design of most subjects, which have undergone major changes in terms of assessment and methodology; new organisation in the different colleges and faculties regarding timetables, seminars, and tutorial hours.

As a consequence, the Bologna Process has produced controversial reactions among teachers and students. These protests were based on several reasons such as; the increase of study time outside the classroom, the fear of having to pay higher fees and the increased prominence of English. At present, the situation might be considered to be relieved by the gradual implementation of this process throughout all the Spanish universities. Students to the new system seem to offer a more positive attitude towards Bologna. Most degrees in Spain take four years for students to graduate. Students are expected to get a number of credits for class attendance, work and examinations, with extra credits for out-of-class work. English is included in most of these degrees, where it is taught as a foreign language, whereas in others, English is used as the means of instruction in certain subjects. There are a number of credits which are related to English instruction and which have to be fulfilled by all the students, no matter whether they are attending a humanistic or a scientific degree. In short, English has gained a more prominent role throughout Higher education in Spain.

2.4. International student mobility (ERASMUS)

ERASMUS linguistic programmes are becoming more and more popular in the context of Europe. According to recent estimates, in the academic year 2008/09, 168,200 students received Erasmus support to pursue studies abroad and spent an average of six months at their host university. The most popular destinations were Spain (33,200 students), France (24,600) and Germany (22,000). (<http://www.euractiv.com/en/culture/record-numbers-take-part-eu-student-mobility-scheme-news-495478>). This is evidence of the growing interconnectedness among young Europeans. What is most significant here is the fact that the most

chosen destinations are not the UK or Ireland, but the language that serves the purposes of communication among these students is, in most cases, English.

3. English in the Spanish linguistic landscape

The interaction of language in society is an indicator of how those societies are breathing and changing. A detailed picture of language in any given social context can be gained from a consideration of a relatively recent field of study, *linguistic landscaping* or *ecology of language*, the purpose of which is to “bring together the micro- and macro- level streams of sociolinguistic research that are necessary to fully grasp all aspects of the social mechanisms involved in multilingualism” (Hult 2009:88). Laundry and Bourhis (in Barni and Bagna 2009:128) assert that “the presence of languages in a given territory can be described by observing their traces within the social communication space”. These authors refer to the messages and texts produced in the public contexts of inhabited areas: cities and towns, and within them, streets, squares, etc. This approach to linguistic data allows us to address societal changes, and consequently, linguistic changes in any ecosystem. In present-day Western societies, a number of shifts are taking place in an unprecedentedly quick way. These changes are produced due to the confluence of a series of factors such as; globalisation, migration, the media, language policies, among others.

3.1. Shop-signs

In Spain, the presence of English is very noticeable in the streets, as you look at shop signs. It is very common to see the name of a shop in English, with a mixture of English and Spanish, and with the use of inflected genitive construction. One recent study (Luján-García 2010a) reveals the impact of English on Spanish shop signs. This research, which is focused on the city of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Canary Islands), analysed all the shop signs in English in the two main commercial areas of this town. The study covered 25 streets and two squares of the area of Triana and 19 streets of the area of Mesa y López. The total number of shops in Triana is 695, out of which 132 shop signs contain some English. This means that 18.9% of the shop signs in this

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area contain an anglicism. In the examined area of Mesa y López there are 433 shops, out of which 80 display English words in their shop signs, 18.4% of the total. In this study, a distinction between different kinds of uses of the English language in shop signs was carried out; a) English words, b) genitive construction, c) English/Spanish words, and d) hybrid-mixtures of English and Spanish in the same word.

This piece of research sheds some light on the vast volume of shop signs using anglicisms in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. In qualitative terms: English-only shop signs are the most common ones (rather than English-Spanish, as it might be expected in principle). Fashion and communication shops, along with restaurants, are the kinds of shops that use English words and expressions most frequently (Luján-García 2010a). This provides evidence that English is commonly associated with values such as modernity and fashion. In addition, it is the language more frequently employed in the settings of telecommunications and new technologies.

It is also important to highlight the role of tourism in Spain, which is the third most popular tourist destination in the world, with 48 million tourists (Phillipson and Milner 2006:190). Tourism is unquestionably a source of influence, not only for the Spanish culture, but also for the Spanish language. These tourists, in most cases, use English in order to communicate with locals, which creates a need to understand and make yourself understood in English amongst Spaniards.



Figure 1. Example of the presence of English in Spanish shop signs.



Figure 2. Example of English in Spanish shop sign.

These photographs depict some of the current impact of English in Spaniards' daily life. Canary Islanders see these kinds of shop signs on their way to school, work, and so on. The question that remains though, is what are these indicative of? It leads us to wonder whether this increasing familiarity with English is creating a certain sense of identity with the English language amongst Spaniards? We need to consider whether the role of English in Spain is undergoing substantial change. This is one more realm of Spaniards' daily life in which the presence of English is noticeable. Can the prospective Spanish customers understand these shop signs in English? The answer might be related to values such as fashion, modernity and perceptions of 'coolness'. As Goddard (1998) comments, English is commonly used in advertising, as it is perceived as a very fashionable language. Durán (2002) states that English is the most chosen 'foreign' language for advertising products in Spain because it not only appeals to customers as a fashionable language, but it also makes prospective customers feel good when they are able to understand these words in English.

In other parts of Europe, similar studies focusing on the presence of English words in shop signs have been carried out. McArthur (2000) reports on the amount of English in the shop signs of Zürich (Switzerland) and Uppsala (Sweden). Schlick (2002) researches the same issue in three European cities: Klagenfurt (Austria), Udine (Italy) and Ljubljana (Slovenia), and she finds that the most frequently employed foreign language is English. Griffin (2004) reveals the important

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presence of English in Rome shop signs. Dimova (2007) points out the increasing use of English in Macedonia. These studies document the increasing impact and familiarity of European citizens with English. Again, it may be questioned whether the role of English in Europe is shifting.

The following section intends to document the importance of English in the media in Spain.

4. *English in the media*

4.1. *Television*

In Spain, a number of television channels broadcast in different foreign languages, but mostly in English. The following piece of news describes the easy access to English speaking channels in this country, “If you wish to stay in touch with television in the UK there is absolutely no problem whatsoever as SKY, BBC & ITV and over 200 free to air channels & radio stations can be received all over Spain” (<http://thisisspain.info/help-advice/english-and-spanish-television-on-the-costa-blanca/>).

With the rapid development of unlimited sources on the internet, the world of telecommunications has been revolutionized. Satellite TV was accessible in Spain a couple of decades ago in many different areas, but only with the use of a special kind of aerial, which was needed in order to see various channels for free. Many of them are English speaking channels: *Eurosports*, *CNN*, *Fox*, among others. Technology has given a step forward in the field of television broadcasting, and cable TV is already a reality in most Spanish homes. With this kind of television, the access to more channels is ensured and it also allows us to watch any film in English in its original version. This way of watching TV is a further consequence of the processes of globalisation and increased interconnectedness. It allows Spanish speakers to be in closer contact with the English language than they were a decade ago.

4.2. *Internet*

The internet has become one of the most important vehicles of communication of present-day society. It is a very useful tool in this

globalised world, where you can contact anybody, anywhere, at any time. When it comes to the most frequently used language on the Internet, according to Graddol (2006:44), it is English, since 32% of Internet websites are in English, followed by Chinese (13%). Once more, English is used as a *lingua franca*, as it serves the purposes of communication of people whose native languages are different.

According to data obtained in September 2010, English is the most chosen language for the largest Spanish companies that want to advertise their products on-line to the rest of the world. For example, the well-known Spanish department store *El Corte Inglés* provides on its website information and services to customers in English, instead of French or German. The same thing happens with the telephone company *Telefónica*; with the Spanish bank *Grupo Santander*, which offers the choice of English and Portuguese; the oil company *Repsol* provides users with the option of the different languages spoken in Spain, Portuguese and *international English*, as it appears on this website; and the oil company *Cepsa*, offers English as the only foreign language in its website. It is also the most widespread foreign language for academic journals published on-line, since the international academic world is dominated by English. The cyber world of the Internet is teeming with English terms. This is evidenced by the number of anglicisms that are used by young Spanish people. A list of words such as *messenger*, *chat*, *on-line*, *e-mail*, *wifi*, *bluetooth*, *router*, *hacker*, and the very word *internet* are used on a daily basis by any Spanish speaker.

4.3. Radio

English is massively present in Spanish radio stations. This presence can be observed by means of music (current and classic hits) in English, which may be listened to in almost all the different radio stations. But, what is more, there are a number of Spanish radio stations that broadcast programmes solely in English. These programmes range from talk shows to local news. According to data taken from the website *www.listenlive.eu*, in Spain there are a total of 169 radio stations which broadcast on the internet. From this figure, 20 of these radio stations are totally in English (11.8% of the total of Spanish radio stations

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broadcasting on the internet). Many of these stations² are based in local tourist areas where a number of foreigners, mostly British, are settled.

4.4. Music

There are a number of Spanish singers who choose to compose and perform their songs in English rather than Spanish or any other foreign language. There are different reasons that account for this fact. First, the bands may wish to look fashionable and 'cool', as English is seen as a very trendy language; second, the fact that singing in English you may address a major audience. Some of the Spanish bands that choose English as the language to sing are: *Cat People*, *The Sunday Drivers*, *The Blows*, *Second*, *The Singletons*, *The Unfinished Sympathy* or *Mendetz*. Notably, these bands also choose English names instead of Spanish. In recent research, Olivares (2009) has found that a number of English words are frequently used in music magazines addressed to young people. Some examples are *CD*, *VIP*, *hip hop*, *boom*, *hard rock*, *making off*, etc.

5. English in interpersonal communication

The current role of English in Europe may represent a challenge to the conventional *World Englishes* framework, which claims that English in Europe is used only as a 'foreign language', i.e. as having no institutional status or performing no culture / identity related functions. By contrast, the situation is shifting, as English has gained a prominent position, and continues to achieve an even more prominent one.

As an effect of globalisation along with the increasing development of communications technologies that allow fast and easy contact among Europeans, English serves these purposes of communication. When doing this, English becomes a pluralised entity, with its different accents, pronunciations, vocabulary and so on. In other words, English is playing the role of *lingua franca* in Europe.

² The radio stations which broadcast in English in Spain are: *Ace FM*, *The Beat*, *Bay Radio*, *Central FM*, *Coast FM*, *Cool FM*, *Excite FM*, *Heart FM*, *Global Radio*, *UK Away FM*, *Torre FM*, *TKO Gold*, *TKO Gold*, *Ocean FM*, *Hot FM*, *JFM Radio*, *Smile FM*, *Sunshine FM*, *Spectrum FM*, *Talk Radio Europe*.

5.1. Academic setting

Spanish Academia is another realm which is gradually being more and more dominated by the English language. Many of the most important academic journals in any field (medicine, computers, engineering, telecommunications, and linguistics) are published by foreign publishers. Thus, the chosen language in these journals is English. It implies that the scholar, engineer, doctor and so on, who reads this kind of journals, needs to have an acceptable mastery of English to read the articles. Furthermore, if these professionals want to publish their own findings at a global level, rather than locally, it has to be done in English. When attendance at international conferences is considered, the situation is not very different, as most presenters and speakers give their talks in English. All this requires a proficient level of English among the qualified professionals in Spain, if they want to be updated with the latest advancements, and findings.

One example is this paper I am writing in English, even though I am writing about the situation of Spain. I wish this paper to be published in an international academic journal, and be read by an international audience. As a result, I have to write in English.

5.2. The workplace

More and more companies in Spain demand from their candidates a proficient level of English if they want to become part of the firm. According to an article by the Spanish distance education institution *Qué cursar* (www.quecursar.com), four out of each five Spanish companies, demand a proficient level of English from their candidates in order to get a position in the company.

In Spanish newspaper adverts, there is an increasing tendency to require a proficient level of English from candidates, especially for positions addressed to highly qualified professionals. On one of the most popular websites to find a job in Spain, www.infojobs.net, many of the positions posted include a good level of English as a compulsory or, at least, desired requirement. Many employers offer courses to their employees in English in order to address their needs. For example, the local police of many communities in Spain offer courses on English for specific purposes. In some examination processes to get a position for the government, a test in English is part of the process. This exam may be

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compulsory or optional (depending on each position), but in all cases, it may be decisive in order to get that position. According to Eurobarometer (2006:32), 73% of Spaniards regard English as the most useful foreign language for personal development and career.

All in all, English is necessary for many different professions. In the service sector: waiters, taxi drivers, hotel receptionists, travel agents, bank employees, they all need to be able to communicate with foreign speakers, not to mention that Spain is a very tourist oriented country, as explained before. Consequently, the contact of Spaniards with tourists is very common. In those cases, English is used as the *lingua franca* which allows communication.

5.3. Levels of proficiency and pedagogical implications

Spain is conventionally classified as an EFL country, where the authorities struggle to improve levels of proficiency in English (Reichert 2006). Traditionally, Spaniards have been considered to have a relatively low proficiency in English and different reasons have contributed to this fact. In this country, there has not been a co-existence of Spanish with any other foreign language, as in some European countries, especially Northern countries. In the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland, people speak their native language along with English. Different reasons explain that fact; for example, in these Northern countries, children are exposed to English from a young age. One example is that films are not dubbed, instead they are subtitled. That is far from the Spanish reality, where each film is dubbed into Spanish. These Northern countries also have a longer tradition of studying English, as there has been a close contact (via trade and commerce) between these countries and the UK. These facts have an effect on present-day Northern European citizens in terms of their mastery of English.

However, in certain realms such as the tourist industry, whose importance in Spain has been highlighted throughout this paper, people have to use English in order to communicate. Many of these users (usually waiters, hotel receptionists, taxi/bus drivers, shop assistants, and so on) are able to understand and make themselves understood with speakers of other foreign languages. Those uses of English are not always 'grammatically correct', but they allow communication, and they fit the framework of ELF, as the language is used to enable Spaniards to

communicate with tourists coming from all over the world. Cogo (2008:58) defines ELF as

[...] an umbrella term that encompasses all types of communication among bilingual users of English in the expanding circle, but allows for local realisations as well as extensive use of accommodation strategies and code switching.

The paradigm of ELF may be regarded as a suitable one for the 21st century communication, and a good one to describe the specific reality of English in many realms (especially the tourist one) in Spain. Seidlhofer (2009:39) points out that the

Changes in communications brought about by technological advances have accelerated and forced changes in the nature of communication. Where communities are no longer characterized by shared primary socialisation nor by a common native language, the need for a lingua franca is paramount. And for the time being anyway, the only genuinely global lingua franca is ELF.

This paradigm has emerged in response to the need to document and make sense of this type of English communication effective among speakers who do not share a common native language. In Spain, as in most European countries, this is the function of English. This issue leads us to wonder what is the Spaniards' level of proficiency in English. According to Eurobarometer (2006:10), 44% of Spaniards can speak 1 foreign language (English in most cases), 17% can speak 2 languages, and 6% is able to communicate in 3 languages.

In Spain, there is a tendency to believe that native teachers are better models to teach than non-native ones. However, that is far from appropriate, since these misbeliefs respond to traditional views of English language teaching strongly supported by numerous interests (mostly economic) and / or lack of sociolinguistic awareness.

In this paper, it is claimed that the levels of English proficiency among Spanish speakers might be more successful if the conventional attachment to NS (native speaker) norms of language practitioners and teachers were diminished, and new possibilities were considered. Most of the materials employed by English teachers in Spain come from English speaking countries (UK or USA basically), and these books, recordings, and so on, do not consider the specific requirements of Spanish learners, as they have been created in a foreign context to address students from all over the globe. The acquisition of knowledge

should be a local issue rather than a global one, as we have traditionally been told.

Canagarajah (2005:13) states that the difference is that although we previously adopted a position based on Western or modernist paradigms that were imposed on everybody, we are now going to think from the alternate position of our own locality, which is more relevant for our community life. Blommaert (2010:95) also highlights the positive effects of a “realistic local normativity” rather than a “punitive, external, perceived universal normativity”.

Materials for English teaching/learning thus need to be generated at the local level, as these should meet the specific needs and interests of each country’s students. To illustrate the point, Spanish students most probably do not have the same interests and they do not live the same reality that say Mongolian students do. However, in terms of current conventional practice in ELT, they may well be using the same kind of materials created in the UK or US. Therefore, it might be questioned whether these materials really address the needs of such distant and different students. This rationale leads to highlight the ‘burden’ of NS models on NNS, and the need to get rid of this ‘burden’. As Jenkins asserts (2007:33):

ELF speakers are deeply affected by the standard language ideology that has resulted from these historical processes by virtue of the fact that their Englishes are (still) designated as ‘performance’ varieties that should look to Britain or North America for their norms.

By standard language ideology, Jenkins refers to the traditional consideration of native models as the ‘desirable’ models to learn English, which do not consider the specific features, needs, realities of the NNS. English in Spain is going through a fundamental qualitative as well as quantitative shift. Its status is changing, as the exposure to English is gradually increasing. The current situation of English in Spain is not the same than just two decades ago, as our parents could hardly understand a word in English. The young generations are not only very familiar with the presence of English in every corner, but they also like to see such a presence, and they commonly use English words in their Spanish discourse (Luján-García 2003). The positive attitudes of Spaniards towards the English language and Anglo-American culture are closely related. This relationship is another issue that needs to be taken into

account, since it has a direct impact on Spaniards' sense of identity towards English. This topic, though of great interest, is beyond the scope of this paper.

I am asserting that from the increasing appreciation of NNS teachers, as most of them are from Spain, to the gradual exposure of people to English, means that research on this field may be regarded as essential for the improvement in the levels of proficiency of English in Spain. It is this line of research that will be able to improve Spaniards' mastery of English.

My point is not based on the creation of many different varieties of English; Dutch-English, Spanish-English, Finnish-English, and so on, but it is based on the natural (i.e. not forced by native norms and models) use and function of English, which allows mutual understanding and allows communication among non-native speakers from all over the world. In doing that, certain local features (phonological, grammatical, lexical levels) have to be considered and respected, as long as communication takes place. In Jenkins' words (2009:200), "ELF is a question of mutual negotiation involving efforts and adjustments from all parties [...] ELF involves both common ground and local variation". The traditional belief that the native models are the 'desirable' ones to imitate must stop being the cause of frustration to non-native speakers of English in Spain.

6. Discussion and conclusions

After having documented the situation of English in Spain, it is unquestionable that English is playing an increasingly substantial role in present-day Spanish society. It is doing so to the extent that we now need to reconsider the situation of English in Spain. Some decades ago, Spanish people were not very concerned about English learning and the use of English words in so many different settings. As Pennycook (2010:61) argues,

Yet the sociolinguistic study of the multidimensional distribution of languages and varieties in urbanized settings is only useful if it takes on board a dynamic account of that relationship, an account of how urban spaces are given meaning through local language practices.

This unprecedented influence of the English language and Anglo-American culture in Spain is increasing, and it responds to the dynamism of current societies. English is finding its way, and is adapting to the context of Spain.

This influence affects, to a certain extent, almost every single area of Spaniards' daily life. This current role of English leads one to wonder whether the traditional paradigm of Spain as an EFL (English as a foreign language) country should be kept or whether it should be considered some other way. As explained before, the current situation of English seems to be undergoing a change, especially in the case of the youngest generations. Spanish teenagers are surrounded by the English language and Anglo-American values. The current status of English in Spain is unprecedented and we should not turn back to this fact.

From a pedagogical perspective, this paper questions whether the conventional beliefs that address native speakers and native English teaching materials as the models to follow are the most appropriate, in every context. New and well founded approaches focus on the uses of English that serve international purposes of communication and which are not tied to native grammatical rules, but aim at making communication effective. Many Spanish speakers working in tourism subscribe to these uses in order to be effective when talking to other foreign speakers. Spain might be regarded a country which, in certain contexts and with a specific accent, uses English as a *lingua franca* in order to communicate with other English speakers. As Jenkins (2009) comments,

In many contexts that would conventionally be described as EFL, the role of English is shifting, with widespread growth in the number of domains in which the language is spoken, and an expansion in terms of intranational functions, especially in institutional settings such as higher education.

Teachers of English in Spain should have a better consideration of non-native accents, as the final goal of teaching students English is that they can communicate with their English rather than with a native English accent. Most of their Spanish teachers of English do not have this accent, nor will they be able to achieve it, unless they spend many years in an English native speaking country. This fact should not be a source of frustration, neither for English teachers nor for students in Spain.

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