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**BREAKING THE LANGUAGE BARRIER: INSIGHTS FROM
BILINGUAL COURSES**

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Abstract: This research project aims to provide an in-depth analysis of bilingual education within the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Oviedo. As a second-year student in the bilingual Business and Management Administration (BMA) program, I seek to examine the key characteristics and current practices of the program. Preliminary results from surveys indicate a high level of dissatisfaction among both students and professors. However, there seems to be a reluctance from both groups to openly address these concerns. What is the underlying reason for this "elephant in the room" that no one is willing to discuss?

Key Words: *Bilingual, education, challenges, surveys, opinions, evolution,...*

Please note that in this paper "UniOvi" refers to the University of Oviedo (And in this case specifically to the Faculty of Economics and Business).

Resumen: Este proyecto de investigación tiene como objetivo realizar un análisis en profundidad de la educación bilingüe en la Facultad de Economía y Empresa de la Universidad de Oviedo. Como estudiante de segundo año en el programa bilingüe de Administración de Empresas (ADE), busco examinar las características clave y las prácticas actuales del programa. Los resultados preliminares de las encuestas indican un alto nivel de insatisfacción tanto entre los estudiantes como entre los profesores. Sin embargo, parece haber una falta de disposición por parte de ambos grupos a abordar abiertamente estas preocupaciones. ¿Cuál es la razón de este "elefante en la habitación" del que nadie está dispuesto a discutir?

Palabras clave: *Bilingüe, educación, desafíos, encuestas, opiniones, evolución,...*

Tenga en cuenta que en este trabajo "UniOvi" se refiere a la Universidad de Oviedo (en este caso concretamente a la Facultad de Economía y Empresa).

1. INTRODUCTION.

Bilingual education, as a growing educational trend, has been gaining increasing significance in universities across the academia network and the University of Oviedo hasn't been left behind. In order to make their students able to compete in an increasingly globalized and multilingual world, bilingual courses were introduced. As globalization accelerates, universities look forward to making their graduates not only "experts" in their respective fields but also have the linguistic skills that are necessary to engage in an international job market and not restrain themselves to such an open world of opportunities. This study takes an in-depth look at the bilingual education model at the University of Oviedo (specifically at the Faculty of Economics and Business) analyzing its beginnings, growth, challenges found, and impact on students and teachers, while providing recommendations for further development.

1.1 WHY CHOOSE BILINGUAL EDUCATION?

Nowadays, in the current job market, being bilingual is not just an optional skill to have but a requirement in numerous work positions. Bilingual education is essential for students since it provides them with the resources necessary to thrive in a globalized environment. Many students seem obligated to enter the international market in order to search for a job position which fits their necessities and tastes but, do they fit the job requirements? These multinational companies search for students who have not only a great knowledge in economics or business management but those who can also work in multilingual environments. By offering bilingual programs, universities like the University of Oviedo allow students to improve their language skills and prepare them more effectively for an increasingly competitive global job market. Additionally, studies indicate that bilingual people often excel in cognitive activities, including problem solving and multitasking, and demonstrate greater adaptability to diverse cultural environments (*see references 1 and 2*).

Moreover, bilingual education promotes a more profound comprehension of global matters and worldwide relations. Bilingual education involves not just learning languages but also enabling students to interact with an increasingly interconnected world. Knowing two or more languages isn't merely an advantage anymore as it has become essential for significant participation in global trade, diplomacy, and innovation. Students involved in bilingual programs cultivate improved communication abilities, cultural awareness, and the flexibility needed to succeed in global environments.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH.

This research focuses on understanding how bilingual education has developed at UniOvi and its current state. The main goals are:

- Evaluate the present and past conditions of bilingual education.

- Examine student experiences: By using the data obtained from surveys and interviews, the research will gather information on student experiences and the perceived advantages of bilingual education.
- Examine educator experiences: Professors are vital in bilingual education, and this study will look into their teaching methods, the institutional assistance they obtain and the obstacles they may have found.
- Assess the results: The academic achievements and professional success of bilingual students will be analyzed to grasp the concrete advantages of bilingual education.
- Identify challenges and opportunities: Explore the difficulties faced by students and the institution in expanding bilingual programs and suggest ways to overcome these obstacles.

The aim of this research is to provide practical recommendations to improve UniOvi's bilingual education programs, therefore making them more efficient, effective and valuable for both students and faculty.

1.3 METHODOLOGY: SURVEYS, INTERVIEWS, AND DATA ANALYSIS.

To understand the full impact of bilingual education at the University of Oviedo, the research adopts a mixed-methods approach. As a result, this methodology allows for a comprehensive understanding of the issue and allows the comments of both students and faculty members (professors and managers) to be more visible.

- Surveys: Two different types of questionnaires have been sent. One to students in bilingual programs and another to faculty members teaching these courses. These will collect data on why students choose bilingual courses, their opinions on these courses and how bilingual education affects their studies and career goals. Faculty surveys will focus on their teaching methods, classroom challenges, etc...
- Interviews: By making one-on-one interviews with faculty and department managers we will be able to check what are their opinions about the true effects on the careers of their students, how they can handle challenges and what support they do need.
- Data Analysis: Survey results will be analyzed statistically to find patterns, such as the link between bilingual education and academic performance. As well, interview responses will be reviewed to identify common key ideas and challenges.

By combining these methods, the research aims to get a full picture of bilingual education at Uniovi. These approaches will show what works well in the current bilingual programs, what needs improvement, and where there are opportunities to grow. This complete view will reveal how effective bilingual education is at Uniovi and

offer practical suggestions to make it more accessible, high-quality, and beneficial for students and faculty.

2. BILINGUAL EDUCATION AT UNIOVI: AN OVERVIEW.

2.1 WHEN AND WHY BILINGUAL COURSES WERE INTRODUCED.

Bilingual education was introduced at the Faculty of Economics in the academic year of 2010, coinciding with the growing recognition of the importance of speaking more than only one language in the job market. The introduction of this program was an experiment in a very “amateur” manner and as a part of a broader strategy to enhance the university’s international competitiveness. The growing need for graduates with advanced language proficiency, especially in English, which is the main language used in many academic and professional fields, also influenced the decision to implement bilingual programs.

2.2 CURRENT PROGRAMS AND DISCIPLINES OFFERING BILINGUAL INSTRUCTION.

The Faculty of Economics and Business offers bilingual courses in three main areas: Business, Economics and Finance. These three courses are, mainly, taught in English to those students who chose to take the bilingual program. As a result of their decision these students will have to pass 120 ECTS (half the studies program) in English. This will allow them to develop the necessary language skills to succeed in international job markets related to their chosen field of studies:

- Business (BMA): This degree offers a strong bilingual component, with 61% of its subjects (33 out of 54) available in both English and Spanish, preparing students for international business environments.
- Economics: The degree in Economics includes 43% of its subjects (23 out of 53) taught in both languages, allowing students to gain a comprehensive understanding of global economic principles in bilingual formats.
- Finance (A&F): The Accounting and Finance degree offers 36% of its subjects (17 out of 47) in both English and Spanish, focusing on bilingual instruction for financial analysis and management.

There is still much to be done to expand bilingual education, according to an examination of the Faculty of Economics and Business's current bilingual offerings. There is still a significant gap in the Economics and Accounting and Finance (A&F) degrees, even though the Business and Management Administration (BMA) degree is notable for having a significant percentage of its courses offered in both Spanish and

English. This implies that even though some progress has been made, there is still a lot of space for expansion in terms of making more courses bilingual so that students pursuing all three degrees end possessing the language abilities required to succeed in a setting that is becoming more and more international in both academia and the workplace.

2.3 GROWTH AND STRATEGIC GOALS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION.

In order to commit to international expansion, the University of Oviedo has been improving the program of bilingual education since its introduction. Since its beginnings the quantity of people that can be enrolled has steadily increased as, now, more students recognize the value of studying in a foreign language. Some goals the university has set for the future are the following:

- Expanding program offerings: As mentioned before, in the degrees of Economics and Accounting&Finance, there are many subjects that aren't still fully integrated in this program and many bilingual students are forced to take numerous subjects in Spanish and, therefore, limit their foreign concepts knowledge in all fields of their degrees.
- Strengthening international partnerships: The University of Oviedo, and particularly the Faculty of Economics and Business, is working on establishing more and more international collaborations with universities around the world. This can be seen in the exponential increase of opportunities (from 11 countries in 1987 to 28 countries in EU plus all the countries available in the "Convenio" program [America, Asia, etc...]) that are open in exchange programs, joint degrees, etc... which require a great level of English.
- Increasing faculty staff training: One of the main goals is to provide the professors and lecturers with specialized training in bilingual teaching so that they are able to have the necessary tools to deliver high-quality education in their non-native language.

3. STUDENT'S POINT OF VIEW

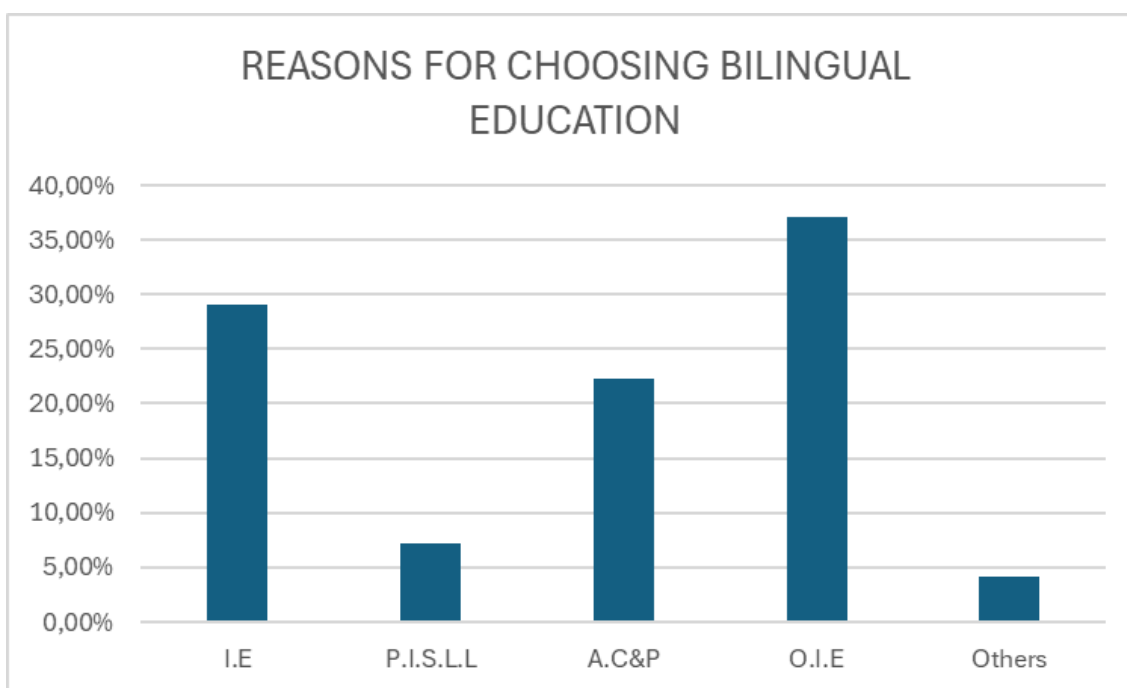
3.1 WHY STUDENTS CHOOSE BILINGUAL PROGRAMS.

After asking in a form some of the bilingual students of the Faculty of Economics I was able to check what were the main reasons why they chose bilingual education rather than the usual Spanish course. As we are able to see in the graph:

- Almost 70% chose as the main reason for joining bilingual education the topic of employability (*I.E: improved employability and O.I.E: Opportunities for international exposure*) It is a thought that runs through many of the minds of

the students of this program: It will enhance their language skills and gain a competitive advantage over the other contestants in the job market, both nationally and internationally.

- A little over 20% told me their main reason was for academic challenge and prestige (*A.C&P*): These programs are often perceived as more challenging and the students who choose them may be seeking for a more prestigious academic curriculum.
- On the other hand, we can see two small percentages of the students: The first one (>5%) which is personally interested in improving their level through specialized language learning (*P.I.S.L.L*) – *They get a more in depth understanding of specific field concepts in another language* – and another small percentage (<5%) which has other reasons such as getting to meet foreign students (*erasmus*), increased adaptability to different academic and job situations, etc...



As there is not enough space, please note that I.E stands for improved employability, P.I.S.L.L for personal interest in language learning, A.C&P for academic challenge and prestige and O.I.E for opportunities for international exposure.

3.2 CHALLENGES FACED: LANGUAGE, ACADEMIC, AND SOCIAL.

When talking about bilingual education we must know there are some barriers and challenges we must overcome in order to achieve our goal: A great and specialized understanding of a specific field in a foreign language. Despite the benefits this program can provide us, we, national and erasmus students, may find some challenges such as:

- Language barriers: The actual requirements of English levels for both professors and students is really low. This cannot be permitted, especially for professors. It shouldn't be allowed for students to enter a bilingual bachelor's degree by only obtaining a 7 as a mark in the EVAU (*Evaluación para el Acceso a la Universidad - University entry exam*) or obtaining a B1 certification as both exams can be fully prepared and they are nothing out of this world. This happens as well for the professors. How is a professor going to give a class to foreign and Spanish students with only the requirement of a B2 certification of English?

What I try to make a point out of this is: How is a student going to understand specialized and complex economic/business/accounting concepts if their generic English level isn't even as high as to speak fluently with a native English speaking person? And how are professors going to teach for more than one and a half hours in English if they do not have enough English level as should be required? As most students and professors are not fully proficient in English this can impact both understanding the course material and participation in class discussions which can be critical for well-understanding of the specific subjects.

- Academic pressure: This happens because at the same time that you are required to master knowledge in many subjects in a specific field, you also need to improve your language skills to meet the requirements. This is especially difficult for those non-native English speakers who can identify the problem of having to learn concepts they have not seen in their entire life, not even in Spanish.
- Social integration problems: Many incoming students of the Erasmus program find problems when trying to communicate with their classmates in the bilingual programs: None can speak the native language of each other, neither Spanish, French, English, etc... This can lead to feelings of isolation and difficulty in constructing their social network in their year-period country of residence during this program.

4. THE FACULTY'S PERSPECTIVE.

The Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Oviedo has over 230 faculty members across four degree areas: Business Administration and Management, Economics, Accounting and Finance, and Labour Relations and Human Resources. This extensive faculty team plays an essential role in education and in ensuring the quality of academic programs.

4.1 TEACHING STRATEGIES AND CHALLENGES IN BILINGUAL CLASSES.

In order to optimize the learning outcomes of the course teachers within the different departments of these bachelors' degrees must adopt many strategies. Engagement with bilingual education involves not only teaching in a foreign language but also adopting

different pedagogical approaches, rather than the traditional ones, so that we meet the diverse needs of students. In order to do this we could integrate language learning with subject matter teaching; Use visual aids and multitype resources (*check reference 12*); Encourage collaborative learning through team work and peer interactions; Etc...

But, what are the main challenges we may find when trying to implement these strategies? As always, language proficiency. Ensuring that both faculty professors and students possess the necessary language skills to engage effectively in bilingual courses and understand complex economic and business concepts is not always possible. Many professors have expressed to me their concerns about the varying levels of language level among students.

Additionally, the adaptation of the teaching guide to the necessities to the bilingual course. They must accommodate this bilingual instruction without compromising academic rigor. All this takes much work: Translating materials, developing bilingual resources and ensuring the assessments are fair in both spanish and english courses. As well, a great percentage of the faculty staff have noted that bilingual courses not only take time but also effort as it involves not only simple traduction processes but extra checking to ensure the contents are of the same quality as in the spanish courses.

4.2 BALANCING LANGUAGE AND SUBJECT INSTRUCTION EFFECTIVELY.

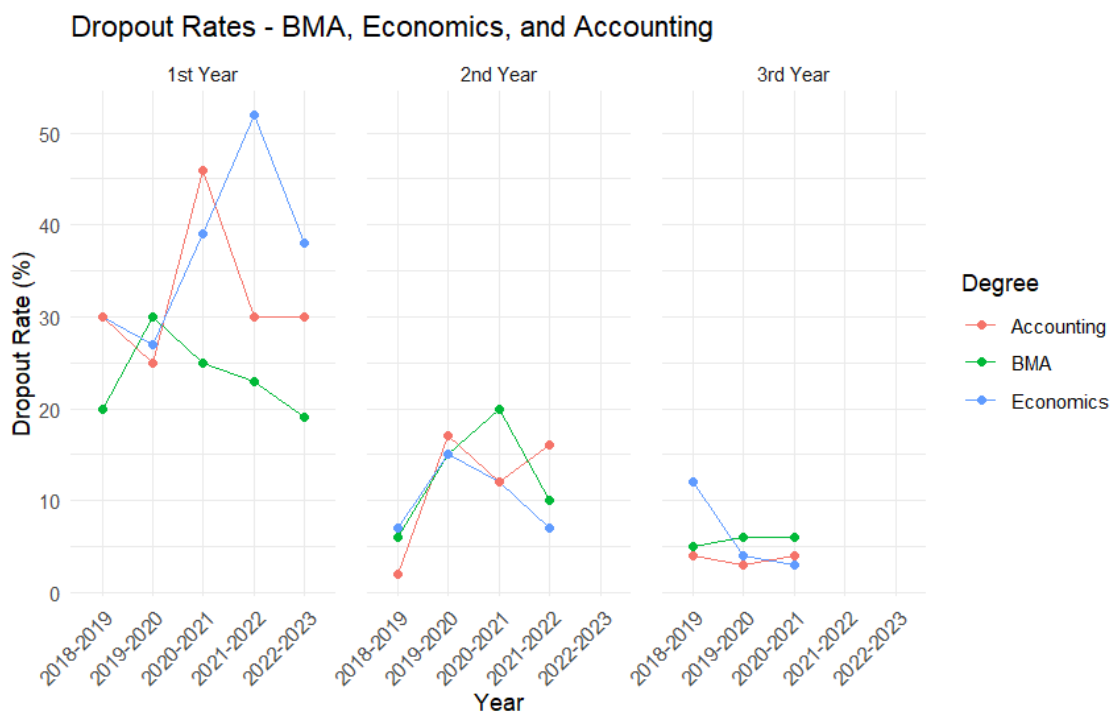
Balancing language learning and subject matter instruction is a critical aspect of bilingual education: If both goals cannot be achieved at the same time this course results in a complete failure. Faculty professors strive to ensure that language proficiency does not hinder the comprehension of the concepts of the different programs studies. This balance requires planning and faculty members have expressed me the concerns that there is still something missing that could help achieve great levels of quality in this programs:

- Scaffolded learning: Gradually increasing the complexity of language and subject content, allowing students to build both confidence and competence over time. Although we can check that subject content complexity is increased over the years in the bachelor's degree we can check that, since the starts of the study program, complex english concepts are introduced without previous learning and students are expected have acquired the necessary knowledge in that foreign language before starting the program when, in most cases, this isn't true.
- Collaborative teaching: Engaging teaching practices where specialized language instructors and subject matter experts work together in order to design lessons and teaching guides ensure that both language and subject objectives are met at the same time, without leaving any of them behind.

5. IMPACT OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION.

5.1 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF BILINGUAL STUDENTS.

To start with this section I would like to cite a “funny” comment a professor made on my research: “*The only thing you usually judge are the results (the grades)*”. How are we not going to judge based on the marks when the only thing the universities usually do to present themselves to the world is the marks their students get as an indicator of their suitability for teaching? Although all universities want to put a mask on and make it seem like they care about green spaces, certifications, etc... The most important and realistic indicator is MARKS: They reflect the level of the teaching of professors. Although there are some exceptions where the students are the reason why marks are low most times we will have to take a look at teaching programs as they may be the reason why these marks are low and, as well, for the “high” dropout rate (20% in BMA, 38% in Economics and 30% in Accounting) in the first year of many degrees and the low graduation rate of students within the expected timeframe of four years (18% in BMA, 17% in Economics and 15% in Accounting) – using data from 2018-2021 – (Check reference 10)



The graph presents a combined line plot displaying the dropout rates for BMA (Business Management and Administration), Economics, and Accounting for each year group (1st, 2nd, and 3rd year). As there is not enough data for specific periods, such as 21-22 or 22-23, some bachelors don't present data.

However, going back to the focus of the section: Many professors and students have always thought that bilingual courses got better marks, in average, than any other spanish course based on the reasoning that they are more interested in learning

economic, business and accounting concepts while developing a great level of another language, that they got better marks in entry exams, etc... However, based on a study of last year marks of the english course we can check that:

- Only 8/27 students have an average mark of all the subjects over 5,000.
- Only 5/27 students have presented to all the exams of the year.
- Only 3/10 subjects have an average mark over 5,000.
- Only 1/27 students passed all the subjects on the first call.

(Check figure 1, 2 and 3)

Although this is not representative because it only takes into account one year it tells us that the “thought” of bilingual courses getting better marks than the spanish courses doesn’t truly verify always. We can check that the evolution of bad marks in the English course has been happening since a little after its introduction. As I was told in one of the interviews: ***“I was extremely satisfied with the bilingual group the first years it was taught (from 2010 to 2014, more or less). The students were interested, had a very good level of English and were well prepared (in general) to study. Since I taught them in the 1st and the 4th course I could appreciate their evolution and it was really impressive. I think I can affirm the bilingual group that started in 2010 (the first Bolonial) was by far the best group I remember. Unfortunately, this is different now. In 2010 competition to enter the bilingual group was high (many students interested, few places available). We had the best students”***

5.2 CAREER AND PROFESSIONAL OUTCOMES OF BILINGUAL GRADUATES.

Graduates from bilingual programs in the Faculty of Economics and Business at the University of Oviedo gain a significant competitive advantage over those who didn’t take the English course. Although these graduates are enoughly equipped to enter directly into the job market after graduating, the statistics tells us that only 70% decide to enter the job market, meanwhile the other 30% prefer to take another step in their education process: A master’s program. And, after the master’s program only 5%-10% decide to pursue PhD studies meanwhile the other 90% find a job in less than 6 months after completing their master’s program.

Many of the professional outcomes that exist for only bachelor’s degree studies are international business consultant, marketing and communications manager, financial analyst or consultant, supply chain manager, etc... The other 40% that decide to take a master’s program mainly take the MBA (Master in Business Administration), the Master in Economy: Analysis instruments; or the Master in Information Systems and Accounting Analysis and, afterwards the program, work as: International account manager, director of markets, head of global strategy, found a startup, etc... *(See reference 14)*

6. BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES.

6.1 INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES: FUNDING AND RESOURCES

The lack of funds and resources is one of the main obstacles to the success of bilingual education initiatives. Budgetary restrictions frequently prevent educational institutions from providing sufficient assistance for the creation and execution of multilingual programs. These restrictions may appear in a number of ways:

- Insufficient resources to design the course: Textbooks, internet resources, and instructional aids in both languages are among the many things needed to provide bilingual courses. To create and maintain these resources, a significant financial commitment is frequently required. Institutions could find it difficult to continue offering top-notch multilingual programs without enough financing.
- Inadequate training of faculty: In order for bilingual education to succeed, teachers must be fluent in both languages and knowledgeable about pedagogical approaches that successfully combine teaching language acquisition with subject-matter instruction. For schools with tight funds, professional development programs that concentrate on enhancing language skills and teaching strategies in bilingual situations can be expensive and time-consuming.

6.2 STUDENT AND FACULTY CONCERNS: ACCESSIBILITY AND SUPPORT NEEDS.

Although bilingual education has a lot of potential advantages, there are also certain difficulties that need to be resolved to guarantee that all participants learn effectively. Among the issues raised by the students are:

- Language proficiency: If they are not completely competent in the second language, many students who enroll in bilingual programs may feel uneasy about their language abilities. Their capacity to fully participate in class discussions may be hampered by the fear this causes.
- Increased workload: If multilingual courses need more time for language understanding and translation, students may see them as more difficult. Higher dropout rates might result from the additional strain, particularly if students don't feel sufficiently supported.

On the other hand, some issues raised by professors and staff include teaching challenges: Providing bilingual education can provide difficulties for faculty members, especially if they are not fluent in the second language or have not used bilingual teaching strategies before. It takes a lot of time and work to make course materials and

exams equally accessible in both languages. As well, they will also have to face some additional responsibilities. Teachers may have to help pupils who are having trouble with the language barrier in addition to the difficulty of creating multilingual classes. Burnout or dissatisfaction may result from this increased effort, especially if faculty members are not provided with the necessary tools or training.

Institutions must offer sufficient support systems for teachers and students in order to allay these worries. This entails giving faculty members professional development chances to enhance their multilingual teaching abilities, expanding access to academic support services, and providing language competency training.

7. SURVEY AND DATA ANALYSIS.

In all the subsections included in section 7 I will omit names, public roles and departments of the students and professors responses in order to comply with the privacy policy established in the forms. However, I must indicate these forms include responses from all year students (except 3rd course as they are in erasmus) and from all types of professors: associates, substitutes, tenure associates, cathedratics, etc... In this way, we get a much more clear view from all points of view from different roles in the “pyramid” of the University.

7.1 STUDENTS’ RESPONSES ANALYSIS

The aim of this section is to provide a clear overview of the students' opinions on various aspects related to the bilingual program, such as: their perceived level of English, whether they believe it is easier to pass a subject with one professor compared to another, their thoughts on the assessment criteria, the resources they use to study, and the reasons for them not attending presential classes.

- First of all, how do students perceive their own level of English in relation to their studies? (*Knowing 0 is not sufficiently prepared and 10 is very well prepared*). No student perceives as not well prepared their level of english. Each of them gives themselves a mark higher than, at least, 6. We can see that the average mark that they give themselves amounts to 8.42/10. Also, many students mark their level of English as almost very well and very well prepared, 20% and 22.85% respectively; a great percentage, 42.85%, thinks its level of english is fairly prepared and, finally, a 5.71% and a 8.57% perceive their level of english adequate, a 7 and a 6 were given as marks, respectively. (Check figure 4)

- In second place we find one of the main questions we make to ourselves and classmates, in which class should we enroll so that we can pass a subject that is known to be difficult? More than 90% of students think that being in a class with a specific professor makes you pass easier and get a better mark which, in some cases, is crucial to have. (Check figure 5)

- But, what about the assessment criteria? We found that only 14.28% believe the same criteria are applied in both English and Spanish courses, while 57.14% think the criteria are somewhat similar in both. However, 28.57% believe there are significant differences between the criteria applied to Spanish and bilingual students. *(Check figure 6)*
- On the third place: the data shows that students primarily rely on their own notes (77.14%) and professor-provided materials (71.42%) for studying, highlighting the importance of in-class resources. Past exams (62.85%) are also commonly used for preparation. While academy notes (48.57%) and explanatory videos (25.71%) are somewhat helpful, they are not as essential as personal and professor materials. Reference books (20%) are the least used, suggesting students prefer more practical or course-specific resources over textbooks. *(Check figure 7)*
- Finally, an arising problem related to the rate of assistance to the presential classes. Why do students not attend presential classes? The reasons for not attending face-to-face classes vary among students. The most common reasons are the professors' attitude towards students (60% chose this option), followed by a lack of interest in the subject or prioritizing other subjects (54.28% chose this option). This suggests that students may feel disengaged or undervalued in class. Language issues are also a factor, with 28.57% of the students citing problems with understanding the language due to the professors' low level of proficiency, though no students reported issues with their own language skills. Only a small number of students (5.71% chose this option) mentioned difficulties in understanding the subject itself as a reason for not attending classes. *(Check figure 8)*

7.2 PROFESSORS' RESPONSES ANALYSIS

This section aims to reflect the perceptions and opinions of the faculty staff (who have taught both bilingual and Spanish courses) regarding their views on students' English proficiency, whether the same content is taught in both groups, the resources they use to teach, their opinions on the reduced attendance rate, whether they think the same assessment criteria is applied in both groups, etc...

- First: How do professors perceive the level of English of students in relation to their studies? The majority of professors perceive the level of English of students to be sufficiently prepared for their studies, as no one rated the students' level as "not sufficiently prepared." The most common assessment from professors is a score of 7, indicating that they generally consider students to be moderately well-prepared. The average score given by professors is 7.07/10, with some giving a higher score of 8 (28.57%) or 9 (7.14%) to their students. *(Check figure 9)*
- In second place: Do professors teach the same content in both Spanish and English groups? A large majority of professors (78.57%) report that they teach the same content in both groups, with the same PowerPoint presentations and reference books used for both Spanish and bilingual groups. Only 21.43% mention that the content is slightly

different between the groups. However, no teacher believes that the contents differ from one group to another. (Check figure 10)

- On the other hand, how do professors teach classes and which resources do they use? The most common resources used by professors are their own notes (a 100% affirm they use their own notes), followed by reference books proposed (85.71%), and exams from previous years (57.14%). A smaller number of professors rely on presentations from colleagues (42.86%) and explanatory videos (42.86%). These results reflect the professors' emphasis on personalized and course-specific materials for teaching. (Check figure 11)

- Then, what do professors think is the main reason for the reduced attendance rate in in-person classes? The main reasons for low attendance are attributed to students' personal reasons, such as lack of interest in the subject or prioritizing other subjects (100% think this is the main reason). In addition, 35.71% of professors think that students' ability to understand the subject and language also play a role. Only a small number (14.28%) attribute the low attendance to the professors' attitude towards students. (Check figure 12)

- Finally, do professors think the assessment criteria are the same for both Spanish and English groups? Most professors (78.57%) believe the assessment criteria for both groups are the same or very similar. Only a small number (14.28%) think the criteria differ significantly depending on the language. (Check figure 13)

7.3 COMPARISON BETWEEN STUDENT AND PROFESSOR SURVEYS.

This section provides a comparison of the results from the student and professor surveys, highlighting key similarities and differences in their perspectives on various aspects of the bilingual program.

1. Perception of English level: As we can see, students think their level of English is really great as they self-assess themselves with an average mark of 8.42 out of 10. Meanwhile, teachers evaluate them with an average mark of 7.07 out of 10. We can observe 33% of the professors marked their students' level as sufficient or less than sufficient which is translated in the demand of higher requirements in order to enter the bilingual program.
2. Related to the application of the same assessment criteria in all groups: Here we can observe a key difference in the perspectives of both students and professors. We can see that only 14.28% of the students believe that the same assessment criteria are applied in both English and Spanish courses while the 78.57% professors think the same criteria of assessment is applied. This means that students are not confident that the professors assess the same way in all groups resulting in significant discrepancies, making it easier to pass in one class than in another and this should be identified by the Faculty and prohibited.

3. Now, a topic that worries most of the professors: The reduced attendance rate in presential classes: In this case all professors (100%) checked the box of “Due to their own reasons: No interest in the subject, more important subjects to do, etc...” with additional factors such as language and subject comprehension also playing a role (35.71%). On the other hand, students believe that the main reason for that reduced attendance rate is the attitude that some professors have towards students and other personal reasons such as lack of interest or deciding to prioritize other subjects. Also, they attribute this reduced rate to language-related difficulties that should be something to be addressed by the Faculty.

Although all opinions coming from students and professors are valid, as a personal opinion I believe that in all topics students and professors are partially right. As professors perceive that the level of English is low they should also do some self-criticism to check if their level of English is good enough or not (this also applies for the students). In relation to the application of the same assessment criteria I believe that the problem is not professors assessing in different ways two different groups in which the same professor teaches but when there’s a change in the professor who evaluates. Also students have expressed to me their concerns about how being with one professor can make you pass a subject with high marks by only doing some small research projects. Meanwhile with other professors you need to continuously do exercises, go to classes, participate, etc... I do not say that we should make it either so easy or so difficult but to meet in the middle: These discrepancies should definitely be identified and prohibited, therefore making it more fair for all students.

In second place, related to the rate of attendance. As a student who believes that going to classes is crucial in order to pass subjects, I’ve observed how, after the first week of classes, students start to drop out and don’t return until the first partial exams or even the final exam. Without trying to offend any student, I find it so unreasonable not to attend classes but to go to the Faculty just to spend three and a half hours in the cafeteria doing nothing productive... or worse, paying for private tutoring to try to pass subjects. Poor parents—you’re making them pay almost 200 euros to attend private sessions to practice exercises that are covered in face-to-face classes. Couldn’t you at least make the effort to go to the classes, see if you understand the material, and then seek additional help if needed? Therefore, professors are right when deciding that students decide not to go to classes because of their own reasons.

However, it is also highly noted the problems with the professors’ attitudes in which I partially agree. This was the first year I had to drop out of a class and I’m still devastated. Since my start in the faculty I have been able to chat with professors as if they were my colleagues (*don’t understand “colleagues” as friends but as classmates*). I understand some professors may become angry when students come and spend all the class chatting and not paying attention but if in a class where there should be 50 students there are only 10 because 20 dropped out and other 20 changed to other spanish

groups you have no right to get angry and make unprofessional comments to the students that are still in your class trying to get the concepts. Some professors do not know when to apply this “attitude” and therefore affects students who are really keen on learning. I would like to add this comment a professor told me both in their office and in the form: *“In my case, when I go to class, I think that I'm going to teach for the students who come to class and, within that, for those who participate in class. If I think that a lot of students didn't come, I get angry and disappointed at the same time, and that wouldn't be good for those who came and paid attention and participated.”* – All professors should do this, why unleash your anger on students who haven't caused you any problems...?

7.4 SOME COMMENTS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.

I will include some personal comments from the students and the professors so that we get a much more personal opinion and perspective of the bilingual program. These comments will address their opinions on the main differences between studying and teaching in English and Spanish as well as any other remarks that came to their mind during the completion of the survey, which may add value to this research. Some of the most interesting comments, made by students, I observed were the following:

- *“I think **some groups are better in order to get a better mark**: In some subjects in Spanish and in others in English.”*
- *“There are **some teachers who don't know how to explain their own subject** so I don't understand them. **Others who read all but it's true that there are some of them who teach really well. It depends on the subject**”*
- *“I'm not satisfied with the level of English of some professors. Also I think we should have an introductory subject of **Business English in first year**”*
- *“It is a **good initiative and encourages language learning, there is room for improvement. Some professors lack the necessary English fluency, which can make it harder to follow the material.**”*
- *“I find it pleasing the way that the degree is taught. However some teachers make the degree difficult and unpleasant because they **demotivate students and make remarks that are unprofessional given their position as a professor.**”*
- *“I would like that teachers use the same terms we would use if we were actual **English students**. I have realized that, in some subjects, we are taught with **direct translations** from Spanish. I think it would be better to teach us with more precise terms and concepts, since I think that we, as bilingual students, **should be able to benefit from learning English business language** and use it, for example, should we go to America, where business activity is the strongest. In*

summary, what I would like is for this degree to be worthy and not just a mere ornament in our curriculum, that being taught business in English actually allows us to be more competitive in the labour market.”

- *“Most of the “bilingual” teachers I've had didn't know how to compute a full sentence in academic english. Moreover some of them would first ask the students if there were any erasmus and if it happened that there were not or there were just a few, then the teacher would explain the class in Spanish, not caring about the people who didn't speak Spanish.”*
- *“The majority of the bilingual teachers aim to do a good job and make an effort to prevent English from being viewed as an obstacle. In general, I'm satisfied with the bilingual itinerary. As an additional comment, I appreciated this year that some subjects are significantly more difficult in the bilingual group. The Spanish exams are less demanding in the numerical exercises and maybe the correction style of the teachers may have an influence. Some of our bilingual colleagues changed to a Spanish group and the disparities in the continuous assessment marks between Spanish and Bilingual groups are great.”*

What do I extract from these comments made by the students who were interviewed? That, basically, certain teachers lack English competence, which makes it challenging for students to understand classes. Students think there is potential for improvement, particularly in the use of more precise business terminology rather than Spanish translations. The quality of education varies widely; some teachers struggle to explain the subject in their non-native language, while others appear to have a unique talent for transferring knowledge to their students. Additionally, because the Spanish and bilingual groups differ in terms of difficulty and grading, a great number of students have changed groups. I've noticed that students want to see changes made to the way that classes are taught, how teachers treat their students, and how the two types of programs are consistent. We need to get rid of any inequalities that may exist.

On the other hand some interesting comments made by the professors were the following:

- *“Of course, for the teacher, if it is not the mother tongue, it requires extra effort and concentration since materials, classes, exams, and activities must be prepared and translated. I can imagine that for the student it may be the same.”*
- *“I think that only students with a high level of English should be accepted. Also, only students and professors with high speaking capabilities should be accepted to enroll and teach.”*

- *“I think that a good level of English should be required of both teachers and students. Unfortunately, in that case, there probably wouldn't even be enough teachers, nor enough students to form a group.”*
- *“I quitted .. it's exhausting and not rewarded as it should be”*
- *“ I would suggest students to think seriously if they want to study in English or not. If they want to study Economics or Business. If they want to study at all. In particular, **if your English is below B2** (I can tell this is the level of many bilingual students) **why don't you choose a group in Spanish?** I would also **suggest the students attend the classes.** I know, this is asking too much. But if you try, you will see the benefits. At least in my case I can tell this assures a good understanding of the topics and much better grades {...} Also, **we must start taking the requirements seriously. A B2 level for teachers is clearly NOT sufficient** (no matter how many courses the teacher does to prepare). **C1 or higher is needed. B2 for students can be ok, but it needs to be certified. A grade in the English EVAU (I think they ask for a 7) is clearly NOT sufficient.**”*
- *“Learning in a foreign language can be challenging. However, the signal to the market is completely different. In addition, foreign students always pick a bilingual degree. Hence, the future network in this degree is much more interesting than in a Spanish degree. ”*
- *“In my opinion, a small percentage of the class should be taught in Spanish. This means that if it is a bilingual course, it should be taught in English and, at some point in the class, in Spanish, just to clarify concepts and make the students learn the vocabulary in both languages.”*

So, what are the main concerns of the professors? First, the challenges and benefits of bilingual and English-taught programs. Both teachers and students must put in a lot of work when teaching in a non-native language, and many emphasize the necessity of having higher levels of English proficiency (certified B2 for students, C1 for teachers). Others emphasize the significance of students critically evaluating their preparedness for such programs, while others believe the effort is draining and underappreciated. However, many professors give a high value to bilingual degrees for networking and abilities despite the challenges.

8. CONCLUSIONS.

8.1 MAIN FINDINGS AND TAKEAWAYS.

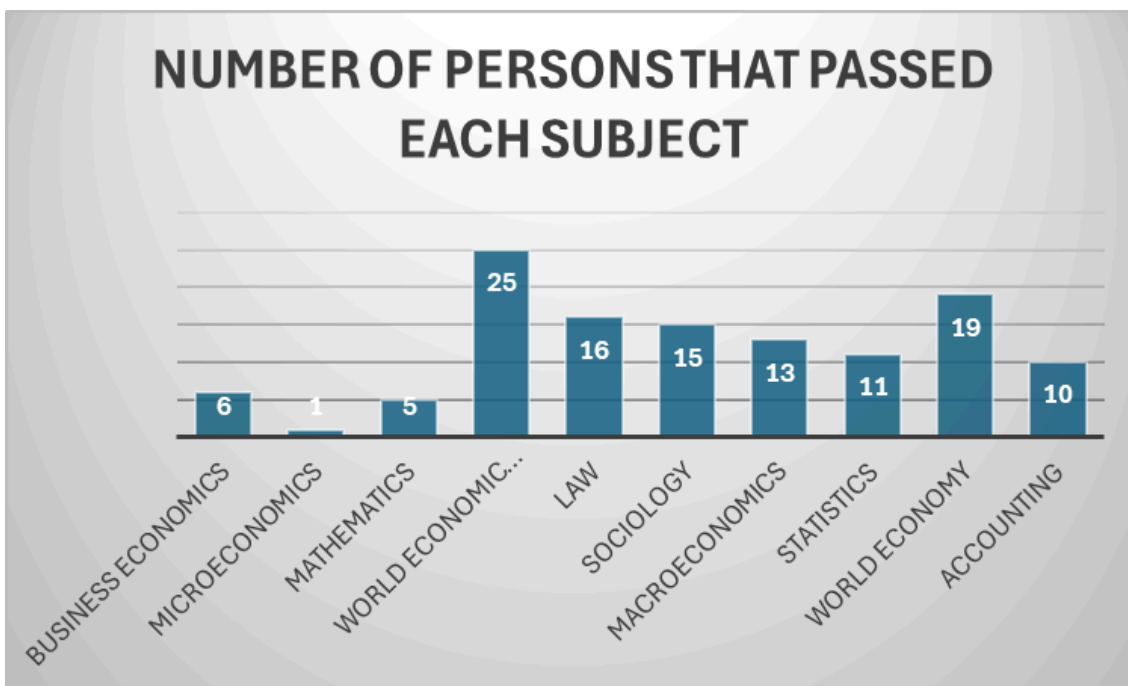
This research about bilingual education in the Faculty of Economics and Business reveals both its enduring difficulties and its transformative potential. Students place a high value on bilingual education because of its ability to improve employability,

develop global competencies, and get graduates ready for opportunities abroad. These advantages are, nevertheless, limited by structural problems that prevent the programs' full potential from being realized. The high dropout rate, especially among first-year students, is one of the biggest problems. This pattern illustrates how challenging it is to balance the demands of learning challenging academic material with improving one's English. The high abandonment rates in accounting and economics raise questions about institutional support's adequacy and accessibility. Notwithstanding these challenges, students see bilingual education as an essential part of their professional development and acknowledge its long-term benefits.

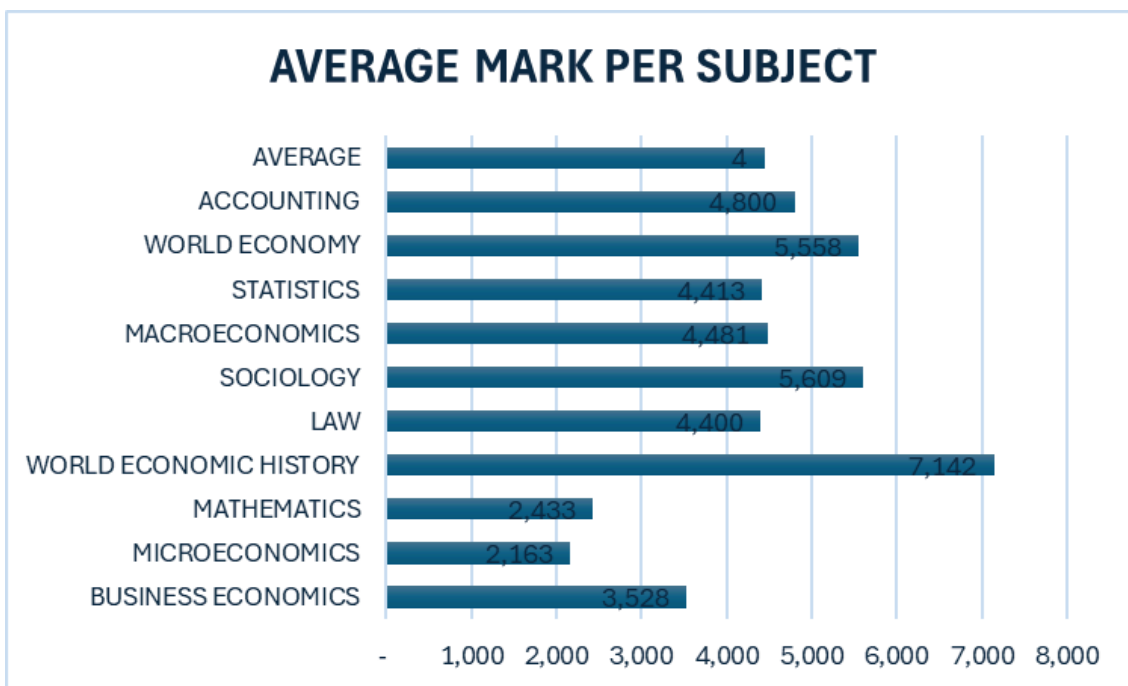
Despite their dedication to the program's success, faculty members encounter significant challenges. It takes more planning and creative teaching techniques to strike a balance between subject-specific instruction and language integration, frequently without enough institutional support. However, the dedication of teachers to improving their teaching strategies and helping students demonstrates an understanding of the value of bilingual education.

9. FIGURES AND REFERENCES.

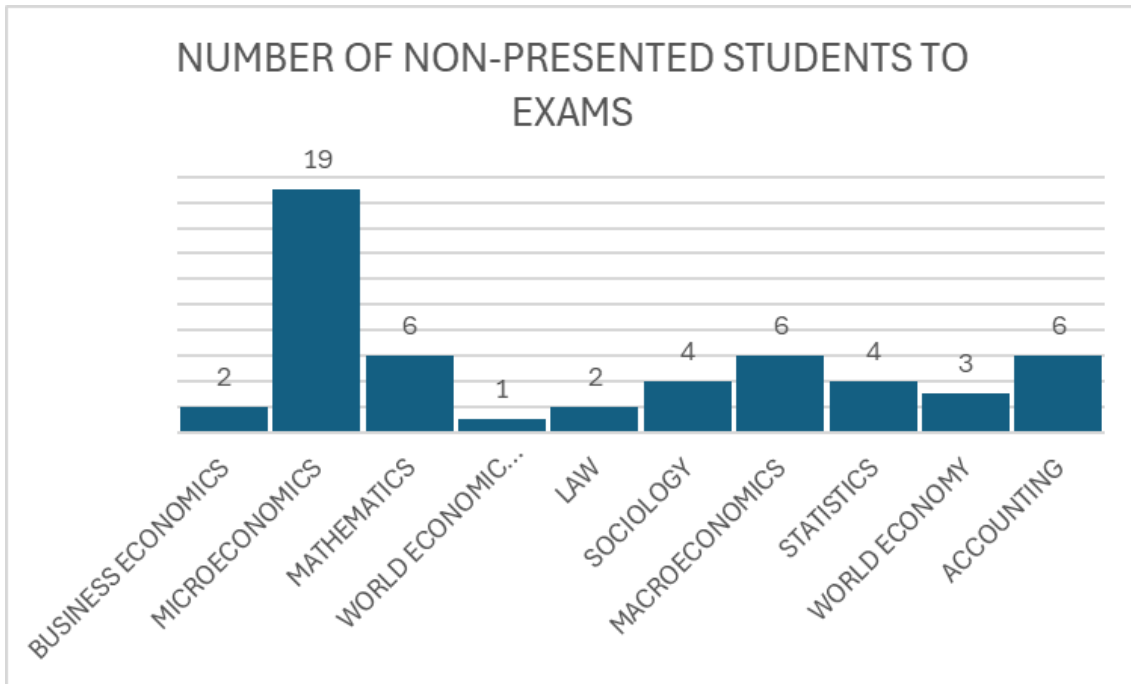
9.1 FIGURES



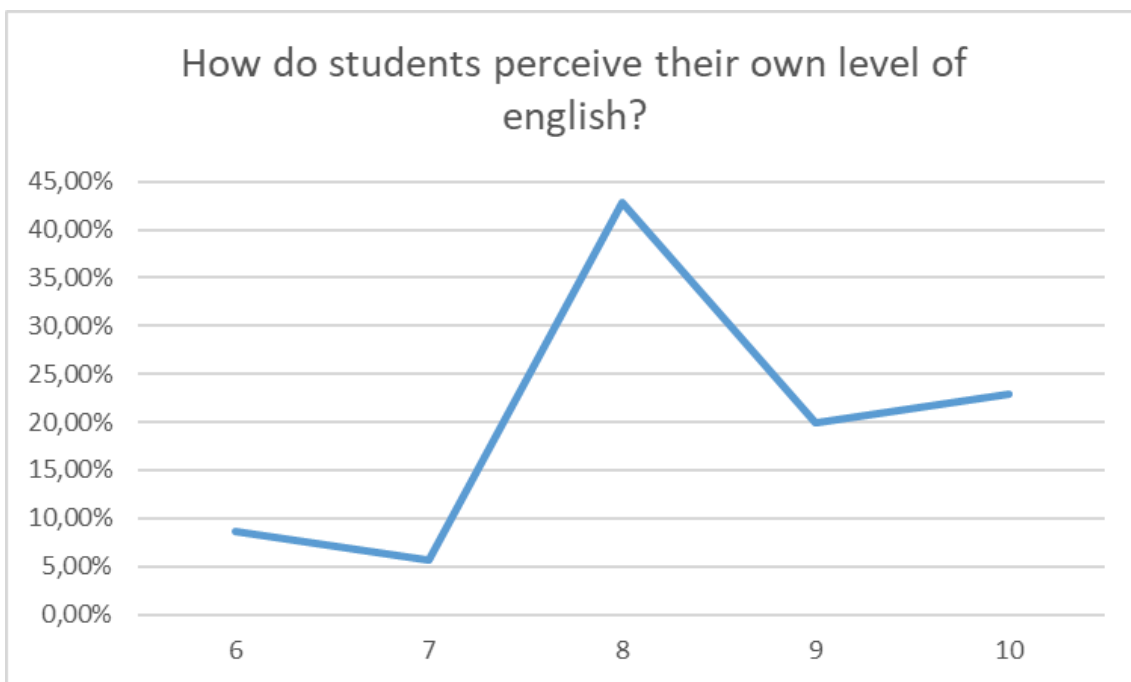
(Figure 1) - Notes: This graph presents the number of persons that passed each subject in the first year of the course of Economics and Business Management and Administration. (First call)



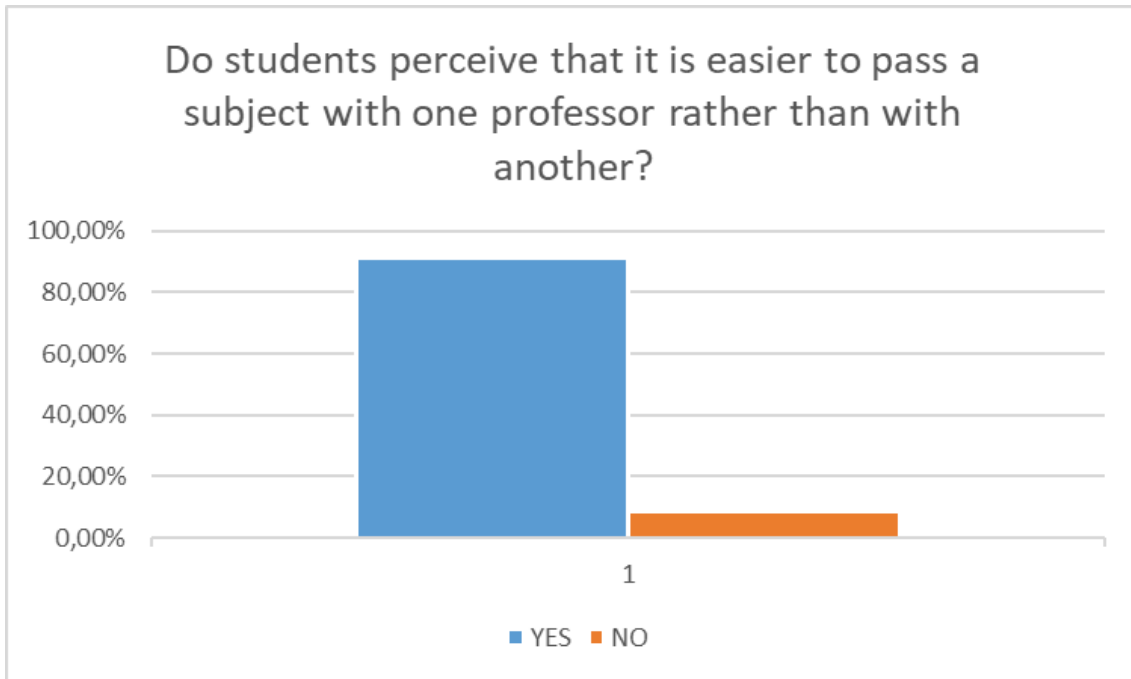
(Figure 2) - Notes: This graph presents the average mark obtained in each of the subjects that are taught in the first year of the course of Economics and Business Management and Administration. (First call)



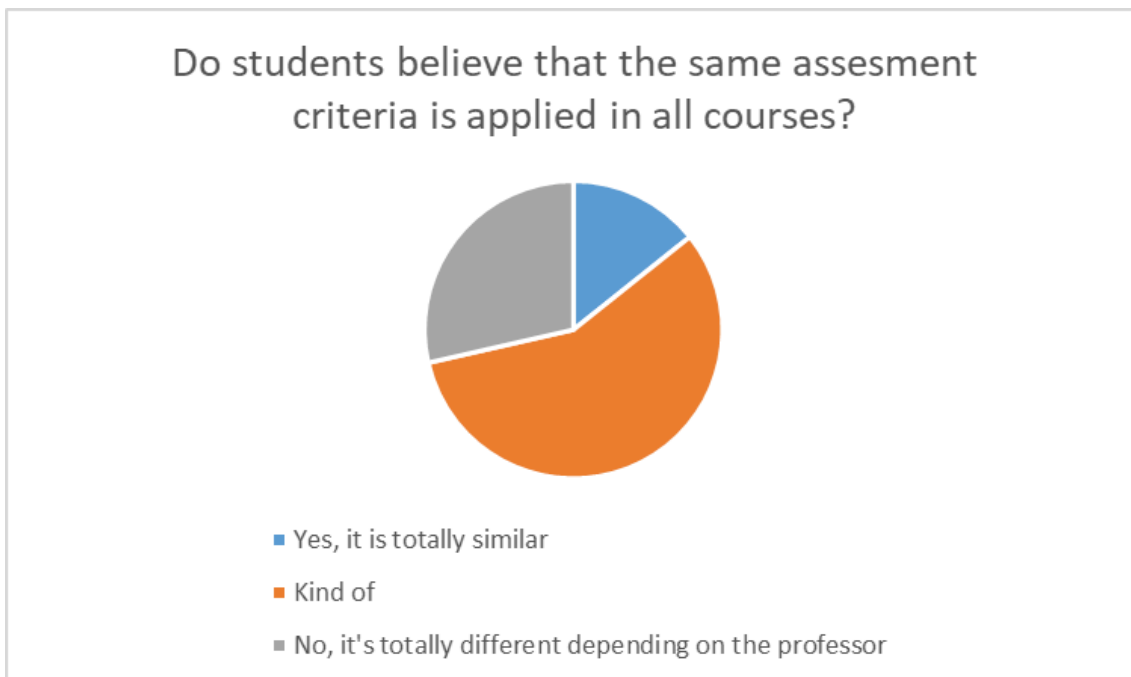
(Figure 3) - Notes: This graph presents the number of persons that didn't present to the exams in the first call to each of the subjects of the first year of the course of Economics and Business Management and Administration.



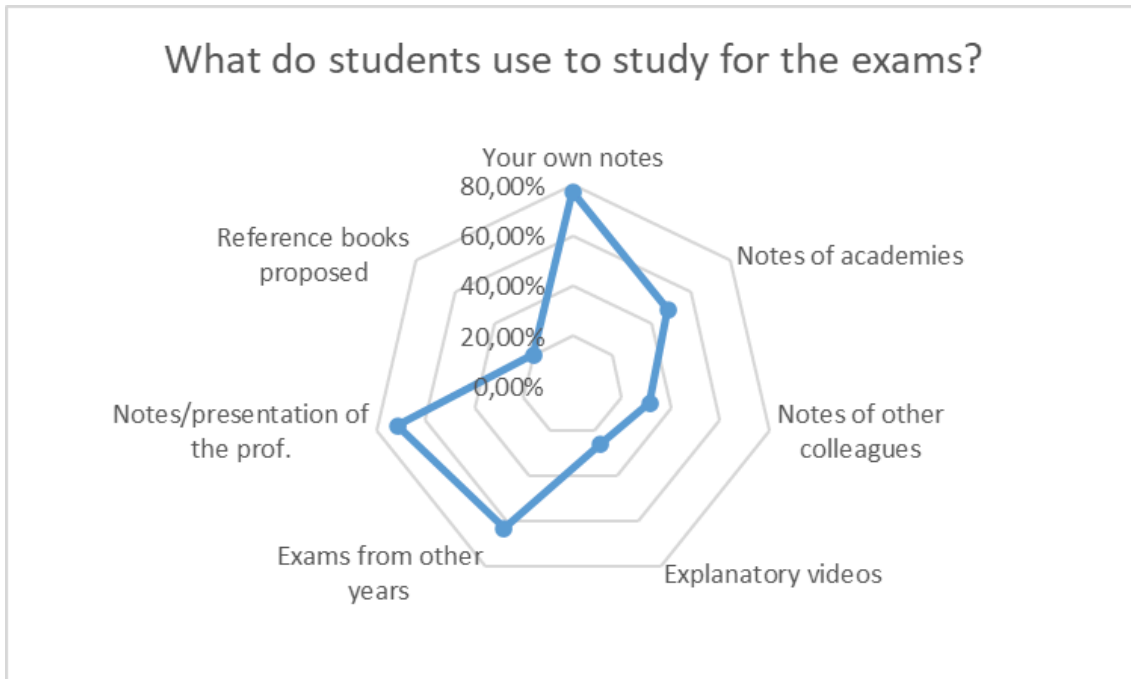
(Figure 4) - Notes: This graph presents students' opinions on how they perceive their own level of english in relation to their studies, as a percentage of the total number of students interviewed.



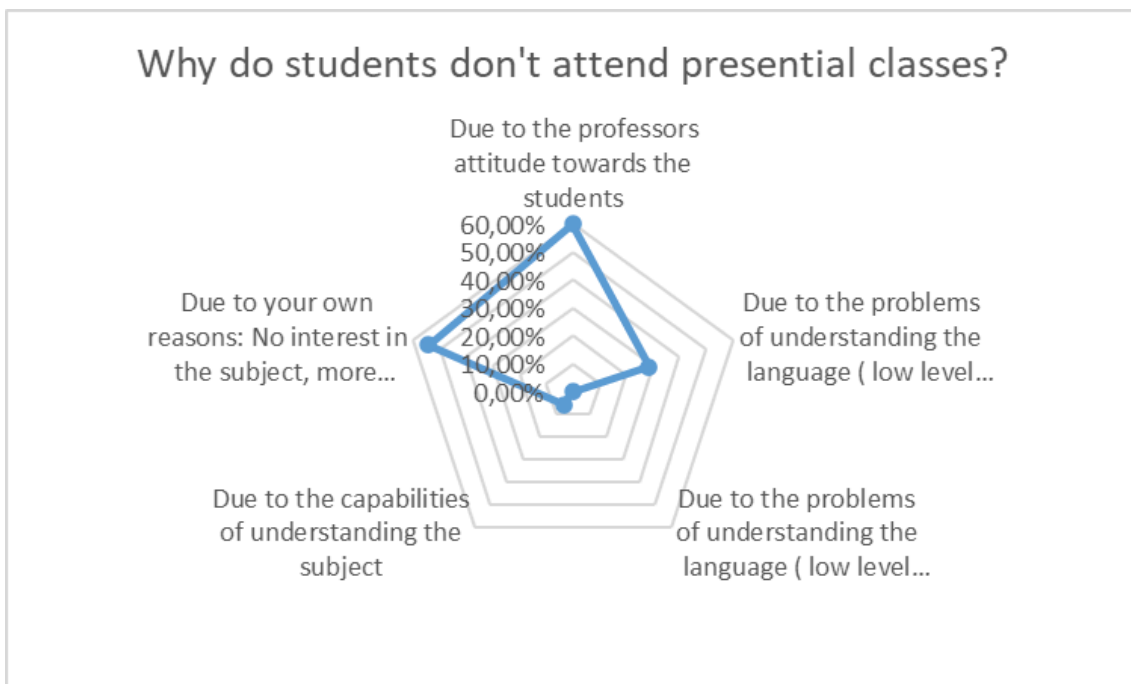
(Figure 5) - Notes: This graph presents students' opinions on whether it is easier to pass a subject in one or another group in both Spanish and English courses, as a percentage of the total number of students interviewed.



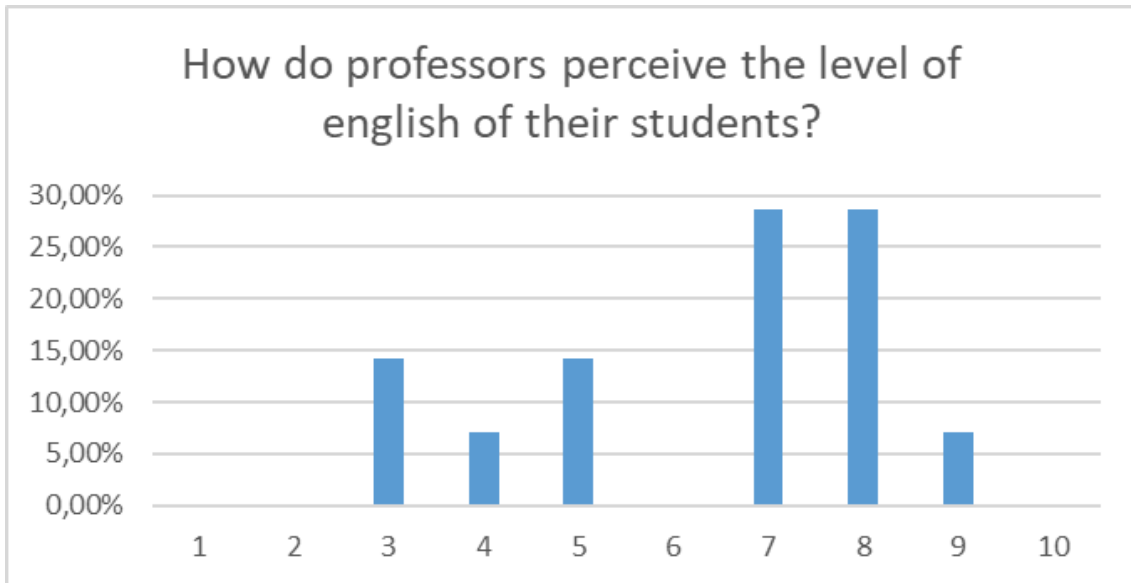
(Figure 6) - Notes: This graph presents students' opinions on whether the same assessment criteria are applied in both Spanish and English courses, as a percentage of the total number of students interviewed.



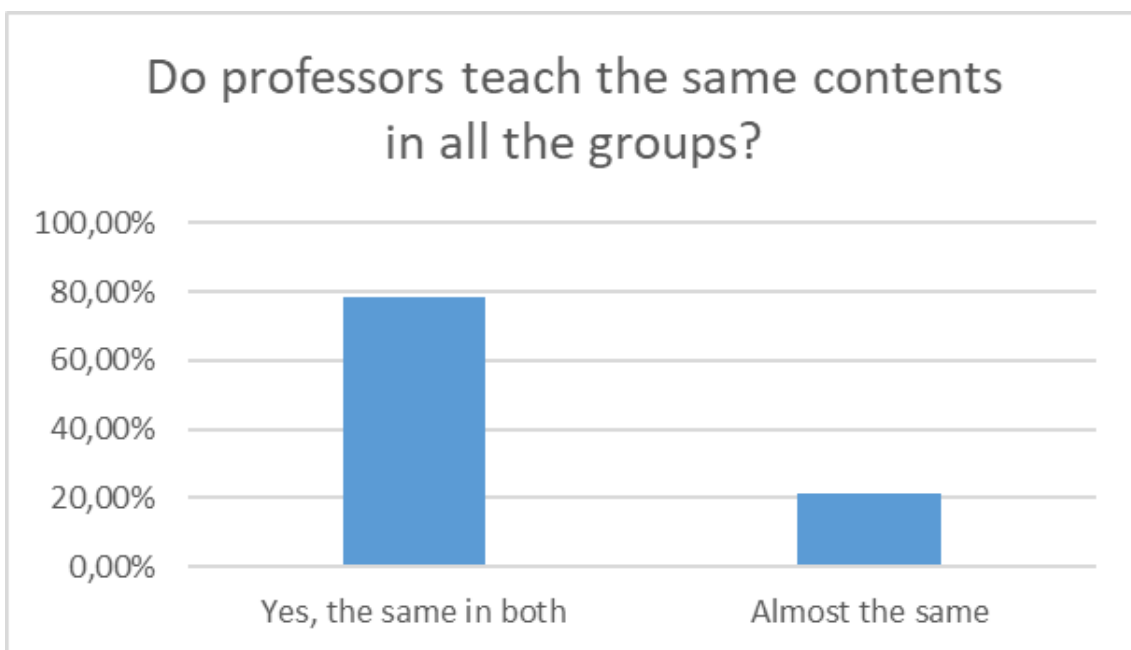
(Figure 7) - Notes: This graph presents the main resources used by students in order to study for partial and final exams, as a percentage of the total of students interviewed.



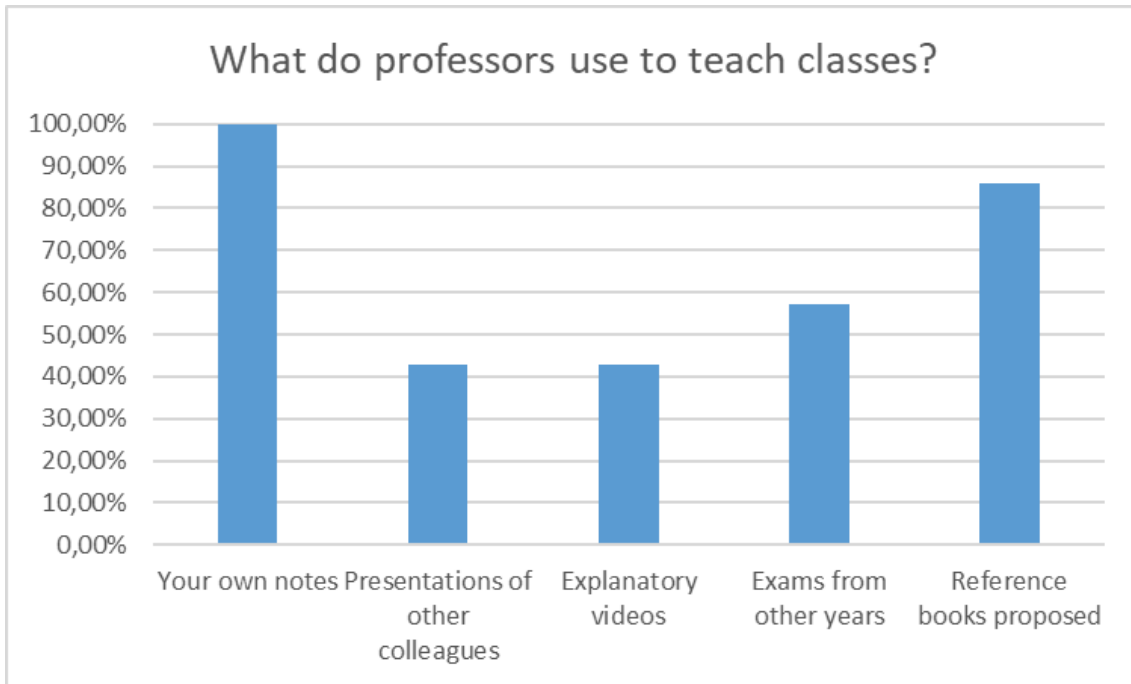
(Figure 8) - Notes: This graph presents the reasons on why students don't attend presential classes, as a percentage of the total of students interviewed.



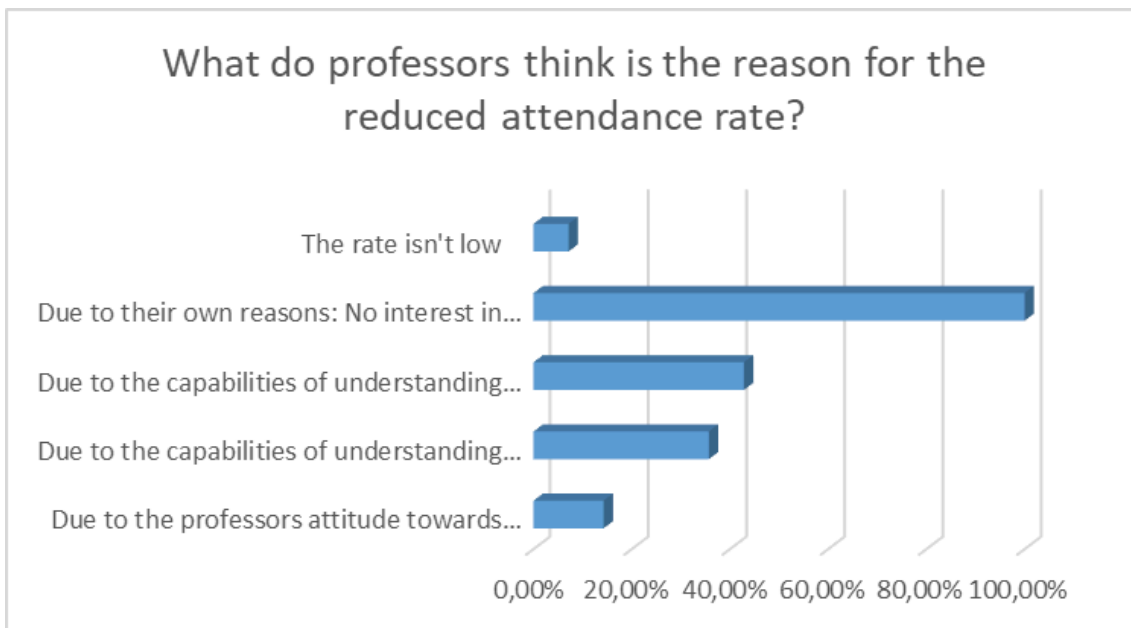
(Figure 9) - Notes: This graph presents how professors perceive the level of english of their students, as a percentage of the total of professors interviewed.



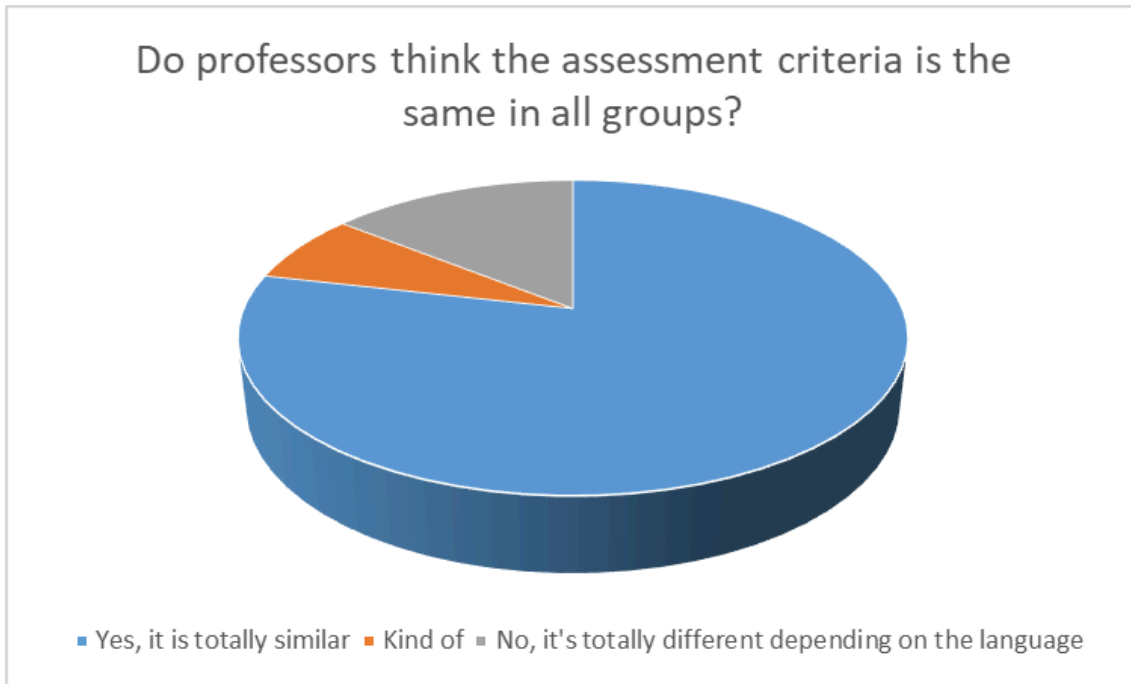
(Figure 10) - Notes: This graph presents the percentage of professors that think that they teach the same contents, almost the same or totally different contents.



(Figure 11) - Notes: This graph presents the main resources used by professors in order to teach their students, as a percentage of the total of professors interviewed.



(Figure 12) - Notes: This graph presents the main reasons that professors think are causal of why students don't attend presential classes, as a percentage of the total of professors interviewed.



(Figure 13) - Notes: This graph presents professors' opinions on whether the same assessment criteria are applied in both Spanish and English courses, as a percentage of the total number of professors interviewed.

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