

## **Indexplà. Programme for evaluation of organisations**

by Alfred Castells

L'Indexplà (1995), is a computer programme, created jointly by the Consortium for Language Normalisation and the Directorate General for Language Policy, which makes it possible to measure the extent of the language normalisation of the Catalan language in a give organisation.

By means of a system of indicators, organised into factors: image and signs, staff's linguistic convergence (i.e. on interlocutor's Catalan), criteria for language use, documents for external use, external communication and documentation and internal communication, a weighted mean score is arrived at, with values between 0 and 100, reflecting the level or index of linguistic normalisation (ILN) of a given organisation, which can be presented in graph form.

### **Summary**

1. Indexplà. What is it?
2. Main features of Indexplà
3. Utility of Indexplà in language planning
4. Indexplà Methodology
5. Appendices. Weighting of indicators in each factor

### **1. Indexplà. What is it?**

Indexplà is a computer programme that makes it possible to measure the extent of language normalisation, in terms of use of the Catalan language, using a system of indicators.

The first version of the Indexplà programme, in use from 1995 to 1998, was an application of Excel created by a team<sup>1</sup> at the Consortium for Language Normalisation (CPNL), a division of the Directorate General for Language Policy (DGPL) and a coordinator for computer matters.

Once this version of Indexplà was in existence, in September 1995, its use was piloted in a dozen organisations in different ambits. This trial run made it possible to improve the tool before applying it in a widespread or general way.

Extension of the application of Indexplà and the experience accumulated over the course of more than two years made it possible and indeed desirable to create a second, improved version, with contributions and suggestions from technical people who had been using it. Thus an enlarged working team<sup>2</sup> began working on this second version in 1998.

Currently, a new team<sup>3</sup> is busy developing another version of Indexplà which will be a web application with a database that will collect historical information on the new corporation. The working methods will be much more rapid -based on questionnaires- and they will substantially increase opportunities for the exploitation of the data obtained. It is also planned to have a self-administering version on the Internet.

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<sup>1</sup> The working group comprised the following people: Alfons Duarte (coordinator for computer technology), Assumpta Escolà (CNL Barcelona), Toni Mataix (CNL Barcelona), Carme Miró (CNL Tarragona), Carme Piqueras (CNL Badalona-Sant Adrià), Joan Solé (DGPL), Jaume Urgell (CPNL) and Elena Valls (CNL Terrassa-Rubí).

<sup>2</sup> The working group that developed the second version included all those who worked on the first version, as well as additionally, Mercè Solé (DGPL) and representatives of several centres that had made intensive use of Indexplà: Eugènia Baqueró (CNL Alt Penedès-Garraf) and Anna Saperas (CNL Àrea de Reus Miquel Ventura).

<sup>3</sup> This team comprised different people from the CPNL and the DGPL and a coordinator for computer: Elena Blaya (DGPL), Alfred Castells (Service of Programs, CPNL), Alfons Duarte (coordinator for computer), Josep Maria Fort (CNL Àrea de Reus Miquel Ventura), Montserrat Peitx (CNL Barcelona), Ernest Querol (Institute of Catalan Sociolinguistics, DGPL), Mercè Romagosa (Service of Programs of the CPNL), Arga Sentís (CNL Tarragona), Joan Solé (Institute of Catalan Sociolinguistics, DGPL), Mercè Solé (Service for Learning, CPNL), Elena Valls (CNL Terrassa-Rubí) and Queti Vinyals (CNL Alt Penedès-Garraf).

## 2. Main features of Indexplà

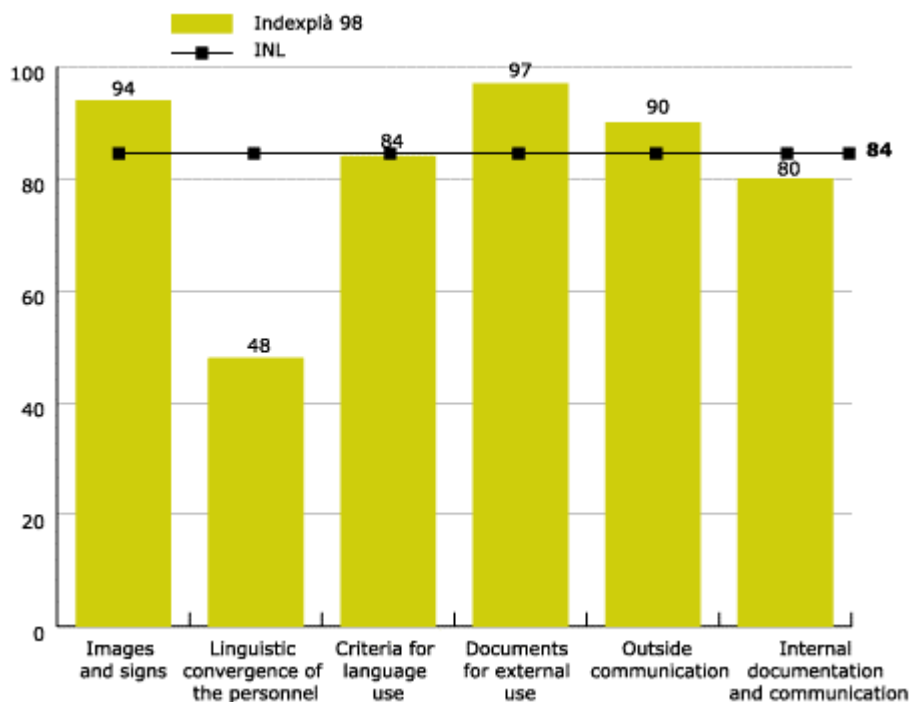
2.1 The indicators used are grouped according to six factors:

1	Images and signs
2	Linguistic convergence of the personnel
3	Criteria for language use
4	Documents for external use
5	Outside communication
6	Internal documentation and communication

-each of which have a value or score of 0 to 100.

A weighted mean is also obtained which has a value of between 0 and 100, and which gives the level or index of language normalisation (ILN) of an organisation as a whole.

2.2 This enables us to arrive at a graph which shows the level or index of linguistic normalisation (INL) of an organisation at a particular moment in time on a scale from 0 to 100. Knowing this level allows us to fix objectives and evaluate achievement, in accordance with the interests of the organisation. It is important to bear in mind that Indexplà is not a tool for obliging an organisation to take particular measures, but rather is there to serve the needs determined by the spokespeople of the organisations in question.



2.3 It is easy to apply because it simply puts into systematic form the information that is habitually obtained on a regular basis from an organisation. And it is, at the same time, practical because the indices are homogenous and allow immediate evaluation and comparison between different stages in the implementation of the same plan -progression- and between all organisations under study.

2.4 It is an instrument intended to be applied to any organisation of any type, from the simplest to the most complex, given that it is based on common variables with their equivalents in all organisations. What is more, the methodology and the language which is used are those typically used in connection with organisations (planning, management and evaluation). In any case, organisations have to have a minimum structure to make the use of Indexplà worthwhile. In this respect, very small associations,

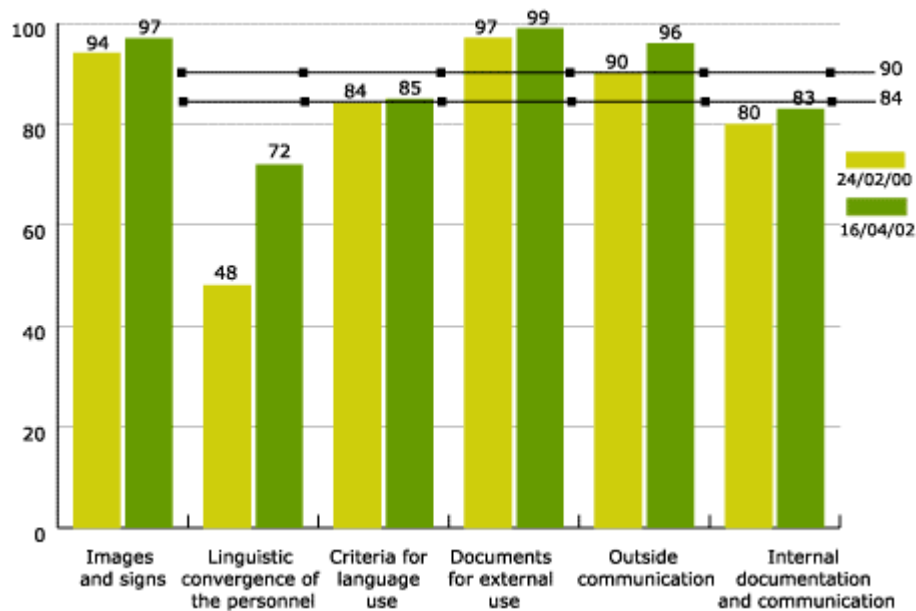
without premises of their own and with a limited output of written texts will need more help with "dynamisation" (revitalisation or boosting) rather than with planning.

2.5 It was decided to have one single version of Indexplà for all organisations and to increase flexibility when selecting elements to evaluate for each indicator. This is to make it possible to obtain observations which reflect the degree of normalisation exactly, using the same parameters, whether we have to do with an organisation large or small, or with one territory or another.

2.6 Because of the large amount of information that the plan requires, it is applicable to organisations collaborated with on an ongoing or regular basis. It would not be worthwhile to use it with studies to determine the language normalisation index in a sample of organisations. It is, then, an instrument for the evaluation of results of a process of linguistic change, which makes it possible to evaluate very well the situation at the outset and after a course of action has been taken.

2.7 It is an instrument that makes it possible to evaluate all degrees of normalisation using a score from 0 to 100. It is useful, therefore, when applied to all language plan needs, since it can be adjusted to any of the objectives -partial, temporary or general- for any organisation.

2.8 It is extremely sensitive to change. It makes it possible to evaluate and quantify any progress made in linguistic normalisation in an organisation, however small it may be. A single page can show graphically the comparison between observations taken at different times.



2.9 The indicators are associated with a factor that they are affected by in particular. Despite that, they are also interrelated with other factors and they affect them to a secondary extent. It is for that reason that a change in value in a single indicator can have a detectable effect on a range.

2.10 The factors and indicators, as well as the scores and weightings have been analysed in depth so that the result, while arbitrary is the outcome of consensus. The attribute for each indicator has been analysed individually in relation to each of the factors and has been compared across all the indicators.

2.11 The weighting assigned to each factor in the ILN (weighted mean), which reflects the degree of language normalisation of the organisation has also been subject to consensus. These criteria, which have been modified for the second version are currently:

Image and signs	25%
Linguistic convergence of the staff	15%
Criteria for language use	20%
Documents for external use	15%
External communication	15%
Internal documentation and communication	10%

2.12 Indexplà makes it possible to set up typologies of organisations according to the degree of normalisation, and these typologies are more useful from the point of view of the internal dimension than the external:

2.12.1 Organisations which have achieved a level of normalisation (ILN between 60% and 80%), which implies a certain level of incorporation of Catalan language in the internal and external image and communications. Normally these are organisations that have decided to use Catalan above all in their image, advertising, external communications etc., but which nonetheless show some important shortfalls in the linguistic convergence of the employees.

2.12.2 Organisations which have achieved a high degree of use of Catalan (ILN above 80%). These organisations normally score very highly in factors like image, external communications (perhaps less so for linguistic convergence, which might have a medium score).

### 3. Utility of Indexplà in language planning

Language plans are instruments that the CPNL uses basically to provide the services that it offers to organisations, and which enable it to manage the latter's language needs.

The language plans incorporate the aspirations of the organisation, determine objectives, actions to carry out and devise systems of evaluation.

One of the services that a comprehensive language advisory service can offer organisations is the IT programme Indexplà, which allows us to measure objectively its degree of language normalisation at a given moment in time and, also, the change in the situation over time as a result of intervention.

Indexplà has been applied to a large number of organisations of different sizes and types (private companies, hospitals, association, town halls, etc.) and territories with very different sociolinguistic situations.

<b>Indexplà 1995-1998 Observations by sectors</b>	
Public Administration	111
Socioeconomic	65
Associative sector	18
Health sector	14
<i>Total observations</i>	<i>208</i>

<b>Indexplà 1995-1998 observations by organisations</b>	
Constortium for Language Normalisation	170
Language Policy technical network	31
Sector-orientated language services	7
<i>Total observations</i>	<i>208</i>

A large part of the observations have to do with local institutions such as local councils and county halls, or with departments and areas within the latter. Nonetheless, observations have also been made in many private companies and hospitals in part as a consequence of the launching of the pilot stage of language management. Lastly, Indexplà has also shown itself to be a valid instrument for work with associations and similar entities.

#### 4. Indexplà Methodology

4.1 As we have said Indexplà is an instrument which analyses, at a given moment, the presence and use of the Catalan language in an organisation.

4.2 The evaluations obtained are fed into a grid (appendix 1) so that the computer programme can process the organisation's data.

4.3 Indexplà allows one to diagnose a situation, in the form of indicators representative of the whole, and basing ourselves upon this we will be able to obtain information which can help us determine objectives and the drafting of a language plan for the organisation.

4.4 The application of Indexplà requires close and frequent contact with the organisation and for that reason, it is necessary to have a contact person in the company who is motivated and helpful. What the organisation communicates to us has to be taken as totally reliable and correct.

4.5 In order to get the organisation involved, it is important that the people in charge of departments or areas of the organisation know that Indexplà is being applied.

4.6 As we have said, Indexplà is formed of a series of indicators common to any type of organisation. Nonetheless, it may sometimes be difficult to find some of the elements demanded by Indexplà. In such cases the solution is to use elements which can be taken as equivalents.

To maintain the reliability of the tool, and not leave any of the indicators null and void, an element should always be chosen that can serve as an equivalent, even where this has already been evaluated previously, or where it is not exactly what the indicator establishes.

To find these equivalents we should always base decisions on the actual situation within the organisation. It would be useful to quote some relevant situations:

- In the case of an area of local council offices which does not have its own invoices, use the ones used by the unit which this area belongs to.
- In an association which has only a limited structure, the same leaflet explaining their activities can be used three or four times as different indicators.

It should be remembered, on the other hand, that in subsequent observations, it will not be necessary to use the same equivalent elements, but rather adapt them to the new state of affairs at the organisation.

4.7 When Indexplà is used from area to area in an organisation it should be borne in mind that the Indexplà of the organisation as a whole can never be calculated as the mean of partial observations since there are elements that need to be evaluated (scored) differently.

Thus, for example, the Indexplà of a local council will have to be done again, even if we have the Index of language normalisation index (ILN) of each one of its areas. Obviously, the information we already have of these organisations can be made use of.

Nonetheless, it will always be preferable to obtain the Indexplà by areas and not globally.

4.8 Indexplà, besides being a tool for analysis of the linguistic situation of a company or organisation at the outset, is an instrument that allows successive observations to be made to monitor an ongoing situation and evaluate the progress in agreed objectives in the language plan. To do this it is important to have a timetable for the successive applications so that the development and change in the language situation of the organisation can be appreciated.

4.9 It is a good idea for the presentation of the Indexplà results to the managerial staff of the organisation be accompanied by a report that explains the main conclusions and where possible horizons for future actions. The latter should be prepared together with the managers of the organisation.

## 5. Appendices. Weighting of indicators in each factor

Indicators	Factor	Factor	Factor	Factor	Factor	Factor
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.1 Letter heading of the organisation	8		3			
1.2 The main sign at the headquarters	9		3	3		
1.3 Sign giving the opening hours of the organisation, or near equivalent	8		3	2		
1.4 First three notices inside, formal or informal	7		1			2
1.5 Last advertising message put out by the organisation in any medium	9		3	6		
1.6 Carrier bag, packaging, label, prospectus, etc.	9		3	6		
(*)		9				3
2.1 Percentage of employees with language profile 1 in knowledge of Catalan						
2.2 Percentage of employees with language profile 2 in knowledge of Catalan	6	9			6	
2.3 Percentage of employees with language profile 3 in knowledge of Catalan	6	9			6	
2.4 Percentage of employees with language profile 4 in knowledge of Catalan	5	9	3	2	6	6
3.1 Evaluation of Catalan in the two incorporations	2	6	9			
3.2a Percentage of personnel with problems in converging on Catalan and who are responsible for training						
3.2b Incentive or support for training in Catalan	1	6	8			
3.3 Technical or professional training in Catalan	1	4	7			
3.4 Explicit guidelines for interacting with the public in Catalan	3		9		6	
3.5 Explicit guidelines for use of Catalan in written communication	2		9		5	
3.6 Utilisation of an internal or external language consultancy service	2	2	7		3	2
3.7 Existence of three or more elements of linguistic autonomy	1	2	7		2	1
4.1 Letter head for the organisation	6		3	9	2	
4.2 The official stamps of the organisation	5		2	8		
4.3 Manuals with instructions for correct functioning	6		3	9		
4.4 Invoice, receipt, cash till tab, etc.	4		1	8		
5.1 Language used for initiating oral telephone conversations with the public	6		3		9	
5.2 Oral use of Catalan in normal non-internal activity	5		2		9	
5.3 Written communication with institutions and service companies	5				7	
5.4 Written communication with users, members, etc.	6		3		8	
5.5 Communication with suppliers	4		1		7	
5.6 Publications	6		3		9	
6.1 Last circular, memo or equivalent			3			9
6.2 Last two orders of the day, calling of two-level meetings or assemblies (i.e. with two levels of employees present)			3			9
6.3 Forms for internal use			3			8
6.4 Language used to open two-level meetings			1			7
6.5 Last two examples of statutes, minutes of meeting, projects, balances, etc.			2			8
6.6 Most usual computer programme or recording machine			3			7

(\*) Factor 2. language profiles

For every workplace what was analysed was the language knowledge necessary to carry out the tasks of the workplace according to the following profiles:

**Linguistic profile 1.** People who have no contact with the public and who do not produce written texts: language knowledge in terms of oral and written comprehension

**Linguistic profile 2.** People who have contact with the public and do not produce written texts: language knowledge of oral expression

**Language profile 3.** People who produce short written texts (whether they have contact with the public or not): language knowledge of oral and elementary written expression.

**Language profile 4.** People who produce written texts: language knowledge of advanced oral and written expression.

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## Appendix 1

### INDICATORS

- 1.1 Name of organisation as shown on letterhead
- 1.2 Main signage of the organisation's head office
- 1.3 Opening hours or equivalent of the organisation
- 1.4 The first three interior signs, either formal or informal ( a minimum of one informal sign is required)
- 1.5 The latest publicity messages broadcast by the organisation via any media, in the following order: - TV, press, radio, poster, booklet, prospectus.
- 1.6 Carrier bags, packaging, labelling, prospectus, envelope, business card, pen, sticker or equivalent.
- 2.1 Percentage of staff of Linguistic Profile 1 that have a level of linguistic knowledge which is adequate for their place of work
- 2.2 Percentage of staff of Linguistic Profile 2 that have a level of linguistic knowledge which is adequate for their place of work
- 2.3 Percentage of staff of Linguistic Profile 3 that have a level of linguistic knowledge which is adequate for their place of work
- 2.4 Percentage of staff of Linguistic Profile 4 that have a level of linguistic knowledge which is adequate for their place of work
- 3.1 Evaluation of Catalan of the two latest recruits
- 3.2.a Percentage of staff with inadequate training undertaking Catalan language teaching
- 3.2.b Incentives or support for Catalan language teaching
- 3.3 Technical or professional training in Catalan
  
- 3.4 Explicit criteria for the provision of information services in Catalan
- 3.5 Explicit criteria for the use of Catalan in written communications
- 3.6 Use of an internal or external assessment service
- 3.7 Existence of three or more different elements of linguistic autonomy ( IT tools, dictionaries, grammars, specific vocabulary etc.)
- 4.1 Letterhead bearing the organisation's name
- 4.2 The organisation's identification stamps
- 4.3 Instruction or usage manuals
- 4.4 Invoice, receipt, till receipt
- 5.1 Language in which telephone conversations are initiated and in which spoken contact with the public is undertaken on 3 observed occasions
- 5.2 Use of Catalan in regular external activities
- 5.3 Written communications with service institutions and businesses excluding clients and suppliers
- 5.4 Written communications with clients, users, members etc

### REPLY OPTIONS

- Does not apply : -1
- Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
- Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
- Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
- Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
- Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
- Nº of workers LP 1
- Nº of workers LP 2
- Nº of workers LP 3
- Nº of workers LP 4
- No evaluation : 0
- Percentage (0 - 100)
- No financial support or time (no incentives) : 0
- No training : -1
- Percentage (0-100)
- No criteria : 0
- No criteria : 0
- Neither : 0
- Do not exist : 0
- Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
- Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
- Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
- Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
- Never in Catalan: 0
- Percentage (0 - 100)
- Percentage (0 - 100)
- Percentage (0 - 100)



5.5 Communications with suppliers	Percentage (0 - 100)
5.6 Publications	Percentage (0 - 100)
6.1 Last circular, directive or equivalent	Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
6.2 The last two agendas, convening of meetings or minutes of meetings, at 2 different levels	Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
6.3 Forms and internal documents	Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
6.4 Initial language in which internal meetings are held, at 2 different levels	Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
6.5 Two latest examples of statutes, reports, projects, balances, annual results or budgets	Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0
6.6 The most used computer programme or recording method	Everything or nearly everything in another language : 0