

# The Local application of Ofercat to the city of Tarragona

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## Abstract

The Ofercat Tarragona study was carried out between spring 2001 and spring 2002. The fieldwork was done between November and January of that period. In June of last year (2002) the results were presented publicly to the whole city, in an open meeting at the City Hall as were various press dossiers, and reports were subsequently published in some of the local news media. At the end of that year, a talk was given on the functioning of the programme at the Seminars on the language in the counties of Tarragona (27th - 29th November); at these Seminars a Power Point presentation was also given and in June, a part of the results that had not previously been made public were used in a talk in the socio-economic sector. The data that are presented here in this article constitute a summary of all the public presentations carried out during 2002.

## Summary

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### 1. Tarragona: General background

Tarragona is an industrial city and a centre for services, as well as a tourist resort and the capital of its province. It has been growing rapidly since the second half of the nineties. However, the Tarragona of today is the outcome of the social and economic evolution of the last four decades of the 20th century of a city of "soldiers and civil servants". As a result it has become the present-day centre of the petro-chemical industry (one of the top 3 in Europe), with many multinational companies and commercial chains, and, on the other hand, a large number of tourists much in evidence. The latter come to the city, basically, to see the Roman monuments, the beaches and the Universal Mediterranean tourist complex (Port Aventura). According to the latest census figures, issued on 4th April, 2002, the city has 119,353 inhabitants, although more realistic assessments speak of 140,000 inhabitants all told, given that over the last three years a large number of immigrants have arrived who do not yet appear in the official figures.

When preparing the Ofercat survey for the year 2001, the data we worked with were: 109,995 habitants on census with linguistic competence oscillating between 94.5 (understand Catalan) 73.5 (can speak Catalan), according to the 1996 census. As the Provincial capital it has all kinds of administrative offices: those of central government, the regional government, the provincial administration, as well as the county hall, local government offices and the law courts. Also, the services sector contains businesses and companies of all sorts.

The anatomy of the city is peculiar and has been decisive in shaping the current situation. What we find is a densely populated urban area and a series of separate nuclei (ever decreasing in number, because of the constant building) in the form of the Ponent (Western) and Llevant (Eastern) districts. Historically, this structure has led to the isolation of these suburbs: they have been separate nuclei of population, with separate sociolinguistic stories. Thus, the suburbs in the Ponent grew out of the massive influx of migrants from elsewhere in

Spain in the nineteen sixties and seventies, while the Llevant suburbs are the consequence of the move out from the city itself, in search of space and tranquillity.

Broadly speaking then we could conclude that what we have here is an urban area and (certain) residential suburbs where Catalan is obviously in use, but with other suburbs (the Ponent) formed by Spanish speakers, in the main, who have maintained Spanish as their everyday language. Only the use of Catalan by the schools has made it possible for the new generations in these latter districts to learn both the official languages (Catalan and Spanish) and to achieve a level of knowledge (not necessarily of use) at an acceptable level.

## 2. Local justification

When the pilot run of the Ofercat programme was carried out, five very different types of settlement were chosen, on the basis of sociolinguistic diversity, economic activity and number of inhabitants. At the same time, however, these populations —in addition to Santa Coloma de Gramenet— were seen representative of the main types of settlement in Catalonia at the present time.

## 3. The usefulness of the tool for language planning

As a result of the setting up of the Consortium for Language Normalisation (CPNL) some fourteen years ago, one of the aims that was articulated —in collaboration with other organisations and entities— was precisely the creation and setting up of instruments that would facilitate vigorous analysis, with the ultimate objective of obtaining reliable data that would allow planning of the most suitable action in a particular area and a given moment.

The *Indexplà* and the *Programa per a l'anàlisi lingüística d'organitzacions* (Organizations Linguistic Analysis Program) were the first tools of this type created by the CPNL, applicable to all kinds of organisations, individually. Now, Ofercat represents an important step forward in this growth process and improvement of tools. It consists of a programme that makes it possible to analyse a municipal area in its entirety. Or, if wished, a single district within the area can be examined. Thus the focus is shifted from the individual —*Indexplà*— to the collective —Ofercat— providing real information on public use of the language from different viewpoints also applicable, obviously, to sociolinguistic studies.

With Ofercat the provision of Catalan is analysed —in this case— of a whole territorial ambit, based on indicators referring to: public administration, the social and economic spheres (primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors) ranging from industry to small businesses, including shopping centres and public services (on the way) also health, education and the media, associations, sport and leisure. The result can be expressed by means of graphs and figures that allow us to quantify the degree or extent of the provision of Catalan in a particular place, whether territory, municipal area, or district within the latter.

With the graphs generated by the programme, one can begin to evaluate the result, from the most global to the most specific —by ambits. Naturally, the Ofercat indices can be taken as a reference to detect the strong and weak points of the territory under study (in terms of language provision) to then be able to plan actions to promote language normalisation in ambits and sectors where it is really needed. Another possibility that the programme offers, given that it can be applied periodically to the same territory, is to detect trends and developments in public use —both in cases where normalisation has been applied (detecting the effectiveness) and where it has not. In the latter case it will be detecting the natural trend of change in public use of the language in each of the ambits.

The CPNL plans take observations every five years, so that the second round of observation at Tarragona will be carried out in 2006 and the results obtained will be presented during 2007.

In terms of trends, from the sociolinguistic point of view, comparison of the results from the different territories where Ofercat has been applied also provides invaluable information for

the drawing of a map of public use of the language. Then, with the successive observations, the direction of change since the first application of the programme can be detected. It should be said that commission that developed the programme drew on the expertise of technicians at the CPNL, the Institute of Catalan Sociolinguistics <http://www.gencat.cat/llengua/dades> (ISC, the organ of the Directorate General for Language Policy, DGPL) as well as an advisor in evaluation and IT. Accordingly, thanks to the ISC, the data provided by Ofercat has been cross-referenced with the data on population growth, the sociolinguistic data on knowledge and use of Catalan. The information was taken from the linguistic censuses, and from certain specific surveys on declared knowledge and use of the language. The last-mentioned sources were only available for Tarragona (1991 data), Manresa and the Barcelona suburb of Santa Coloma de Gramenet (figures for both populations obtained in 2000). These comparisons allow us to observe sociolinguistic trends and to conclude that knowledge, use and language provision are three variables which are closely interrelated and mutually condition each

#### **4. Main results: tables and graphs**

The Ofercat study of Tarragona was carried out between the spring of 2001 and spring 2002. The fieldwork was completed between November and January of that period. In June of last year, there was a public presentation of the results for the whole city, with an open meeting of the City Council and the production of several press dossiers, as well as the reports that were subsequently published by certain of the local media. At the end of the year, a paper was given on the functioning of the programme at *Jornades sobre la Llengua a les Comarques de Tarragona* (Conference on Language in the Counties of Tarragona) (27 to 29 November 2002); at this Conference a Power Point presentation was also made of the results first presented in June, and, a part of these results, never before in public circulation, was utilised to describe the socio-economic sector. All the data offered below represent a summary of these various different public presentations.

#### **5. The provision of Catalan in the Public Administration**

In the twenty years since the approval of the Language Normalisation Act (April 1983), the various levels and ramifications of the Public Administration has undergone adaptation to various degrees. Tarragona, as the provincial capital, has all the types of administration amply represented, ranging as it does from Central government (with delegations for all the ministries) to the strictly local (municipal), including on the way the Regional Autonomous (with territorial delegations of all departments of the Generalitat), the provisional (Delegation) and county level (Tarragona County Hall), as well as Justice (the law courts and offices, approximately 30 altogether). This coverage enables us to take a surprisingly complete X-ray of the different levels of provision of Catalan across the range.

The Autonomous and the local administration levels show extremely high indices, a mean of 98% and 96% respectively. In the case of the Autonomous level (the government of Catalonia) only the written communications [WRC] score lower than 90% —specifically 85%— as a result of the legal obligation of having available models of documents in Spanish for any citizens who might request them.

Figure 1. Local administration

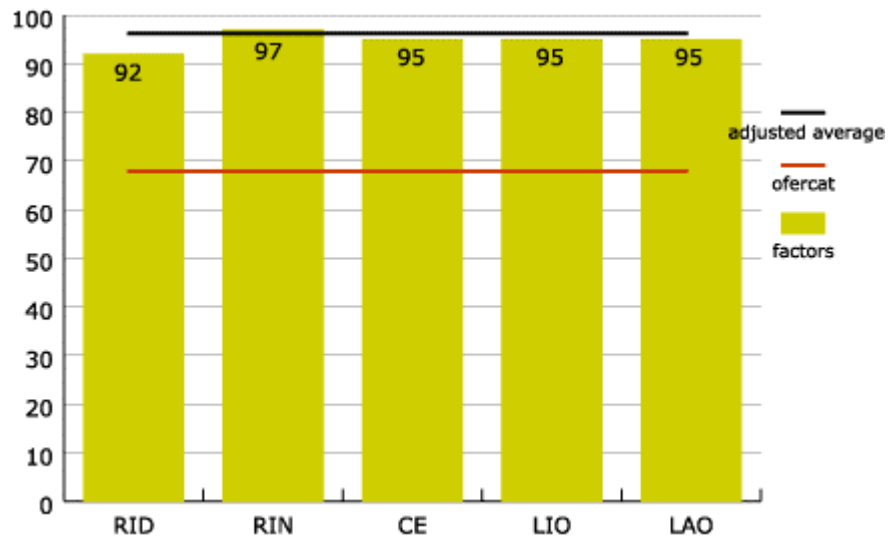
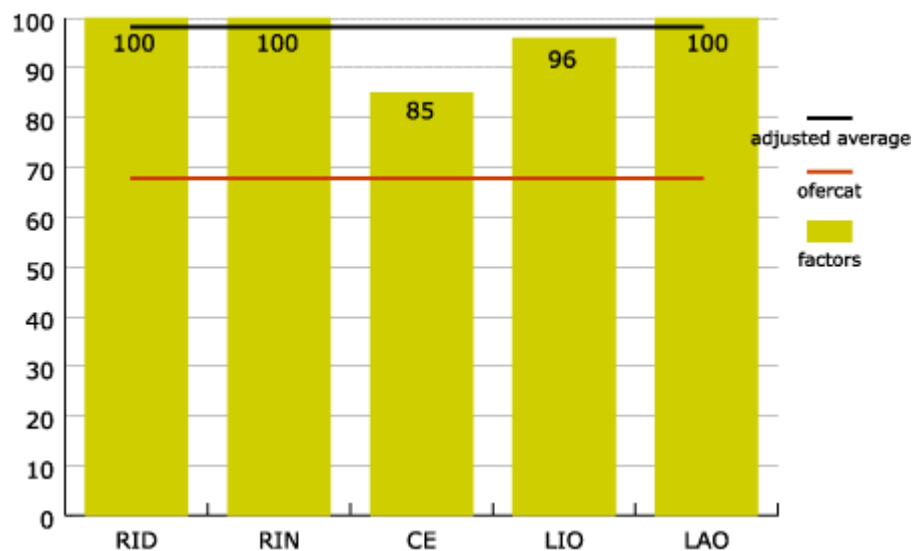
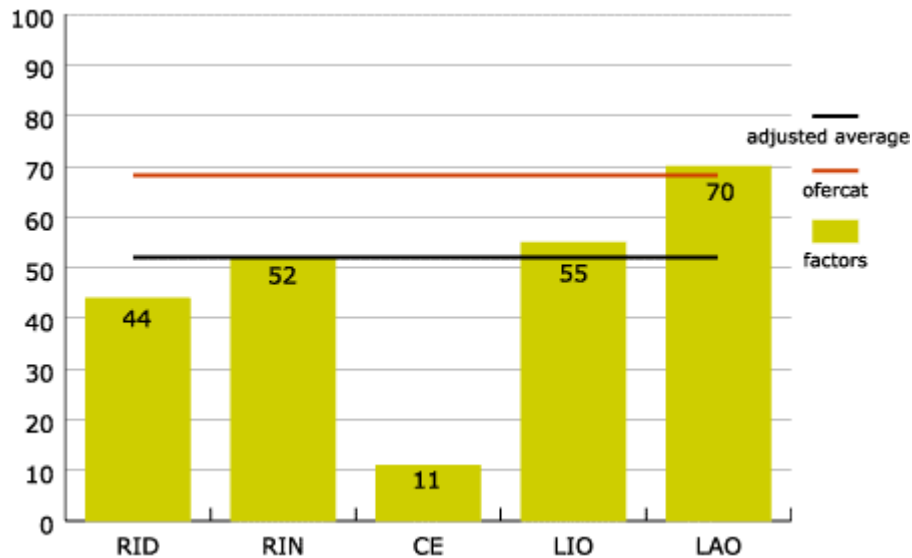


Figure 2. Autonomous administration



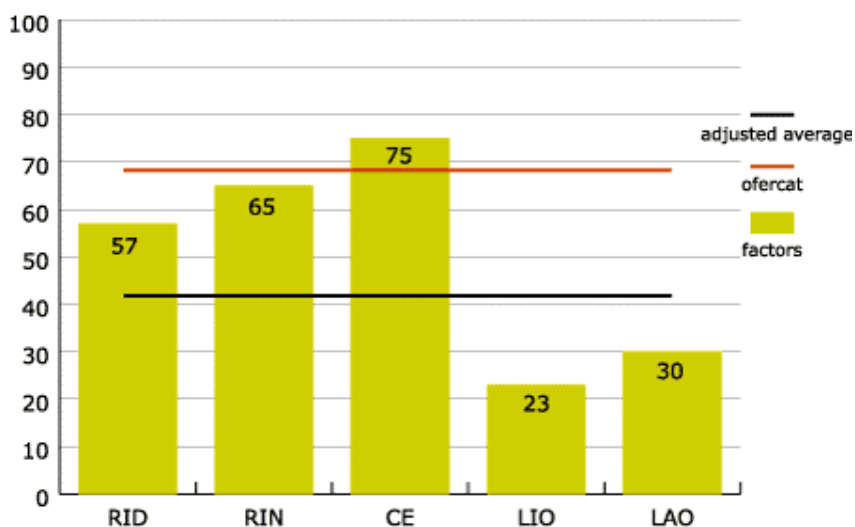
Turning to the State administration, with a mean score of 52%, there is a noticeably negative result for written communications, where surprisingly only 11% of written communications are realised in Catalan, which means that this administration neither issues documents nor holds, practically speaking, models of documents in Catalan for the local population. The situation for signs and labels in central government offices —both for identification purposes [RID] and informational purposes [RIN]— is less than bilingual. On the other hand, the oral language tips slightly in favour of Catalan in self-identification [LOI, 55%] and clearly does so in adapting to the language of a caller who expresses himself / herself in Catalan [LOC, 70%].

Figure 3. State administration



Justice and the law courts constitute rather a special case (no pun intended) because the transference of competences to the Generalitat was subsequent to 1983 and was not total, since in certain fundamental aspects it continues to be subject to state directives. This can be seen in the way signs and labels or identification purposes tend to be bilingual [RID, 57%] while informational signs are more Catalanised [RIN, 65%]. The strongest point of the Justice administration is the availability of models of documents in Catalan for the general public and the staff in this ambit [WRC, 75%], the result of the work of language normalisation technicians of the Department of Justice in recent years who have translated these models. That does not mean, however, that the paper work, rulings and verdicts, the judicial documents in the widest sense, are in the Catalan language. The weak point of Justice is the oral language factor: 23% in identification [LOI] and 30% in the convergence on the caller's Catalan [LOC]. This almost certainly reflects the fact of staffing and mobility: gaining of posts of responsibility by means of competition is still organised by central government in Madrid.

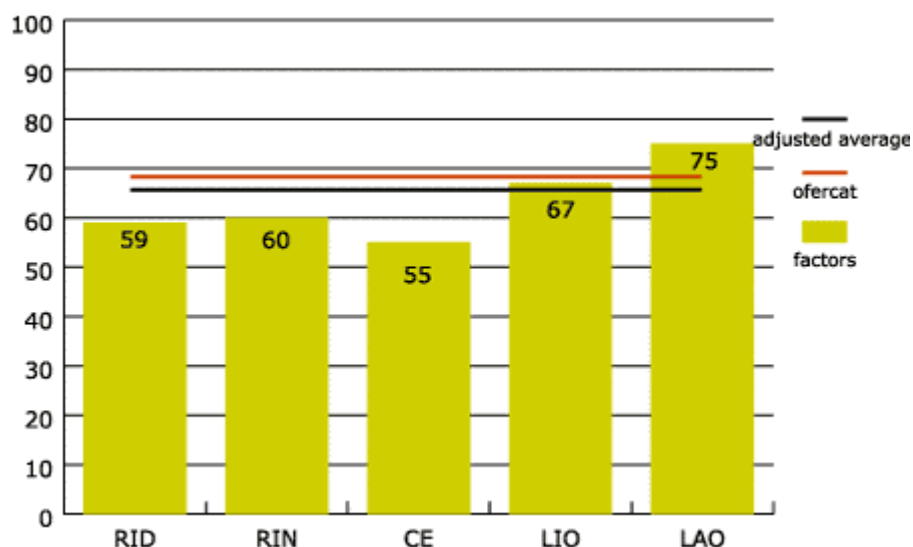
Figure 4. Justice



### 6. The provision of Catalan in the Economy and Society sectors

The Economy sector includes companies in the primary and secondary sectors in the factory estates, hypermarkets and shopping centres, as well as professional and trades associations, public transport, shops and services. Each of these subsectors (and the ambits in which they are divided) present indicators that are quite differentiated depending on the factors. The overall mean score or index is 66% for provision of Catalan, where the language of oral convergence has considerable weight [LOC, 75%]. Less favourably, there is the factor of written communications [WRC 55%], where considerable skewing comes from the advertising leaflets dropped into letterboxes, so here Tarragona barely scrapes a bilingual score. Signs and labels, both the identification and the informational, attain 60%.

Figure 5. Economy



Also a separate study was made of the signs and notices in the centre of the city and the suburbs. In this case the differences are notable: the percentages we find in the city centre reach 80% (RID) and 72% (RIN), while in the Tarragona suburbs percentages dip as low as 54% (RID) and 23% (RIN). The signs and notices, of course, are a reflection of the sociolinguistic contrasts of the city.

Figure 6. Shop and service companies (neighborhood)

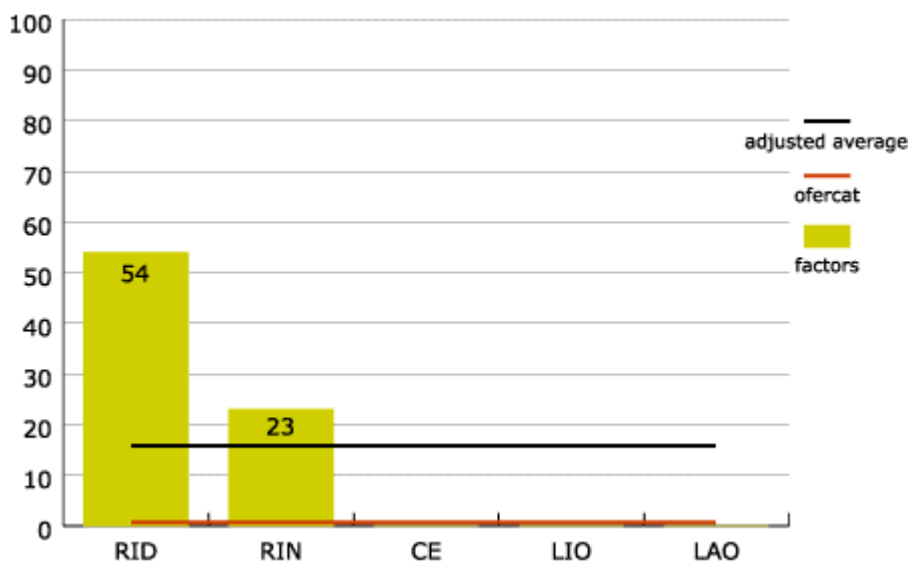
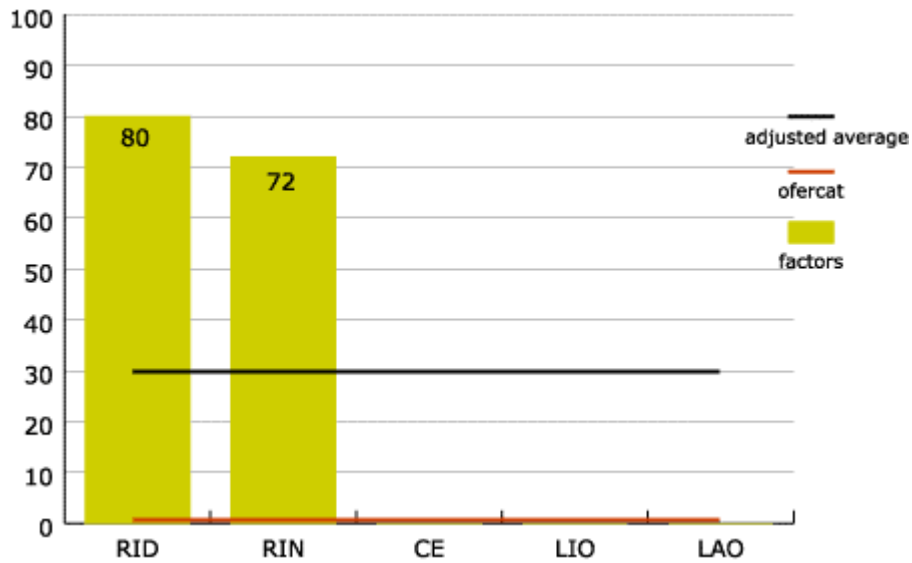
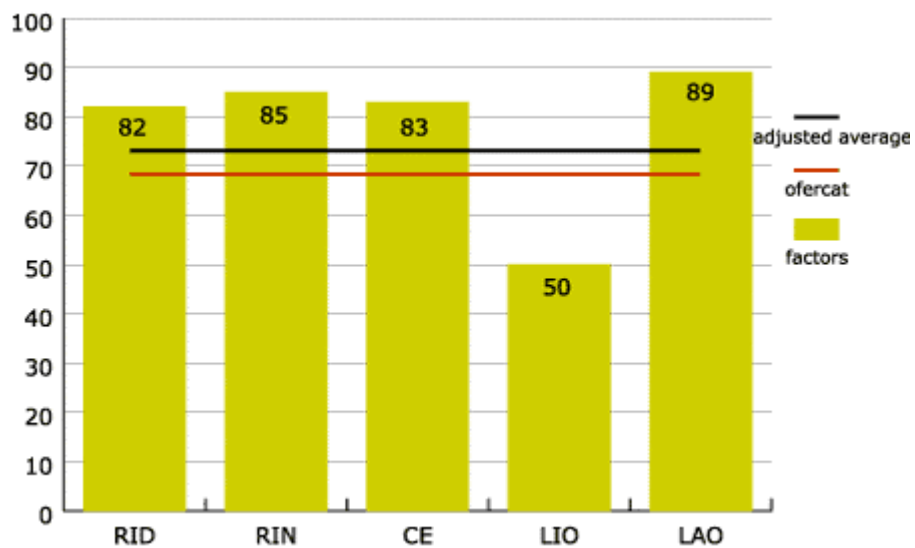


Figure 7. Shop and service companies (town centre)



The Society and leisure sections include cultural and sports associations of all kinds, Christian parishes and churches, cinema, theatre and sports events. All factors are around 80%, except the language of oral identification [LIO] which scores 50%. The reason, in large part, for this discrepancy lies in the language used in the films —100% in Spanish, whether dubbed or direct— at the time the observations were made. To a lesser extent, it is also the result of the language use of the cultural and sports associations, although in this case the situation is notable compensated by the language of Oral Convergence, that is, the degree of Oral Convergence on the caller's Catalan [LOC], which reached 89%.

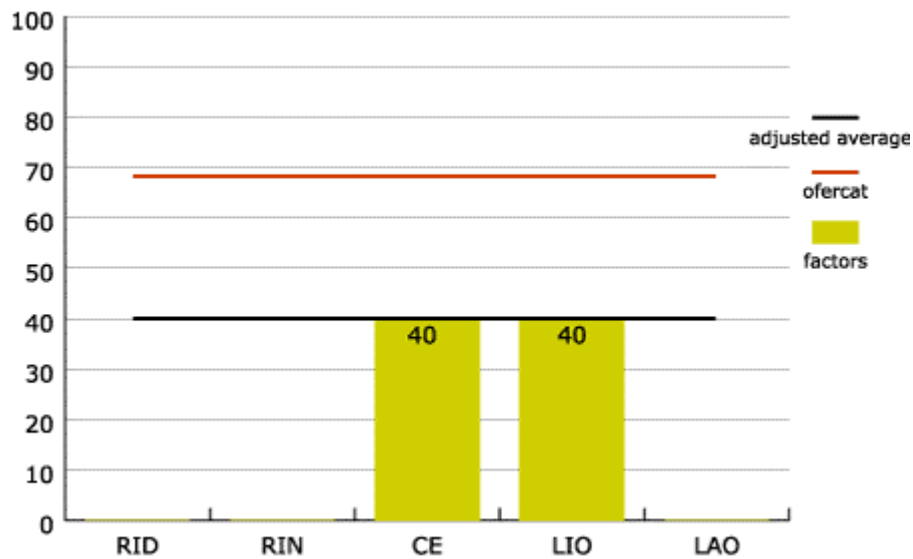
Figure 8. Society and leisure



## 7. The Provision of Catalan in the Media and Health and education

In the case of the Media only two factors are observed: firstly, written communication [WRC], in other words, the daily and weekly papers, with both local and county-wide distribution, as well as the papers and magazines with general distribution; and secondly the language of oral identification [LOI], that is to say, the audio-visual media —radio stations and TV networks—here too with local and county distribution as well as general distribution. Thus, both in one case and the other, the mean score is at around 40% Catalan. Where the press is concerned, this (in any case not very high) result is due to the local papers and the two general dailies in Catalan. Turning to the audio-visual media, there are local television stations and the Autonomous regional television (Catalonia), as well as local television stations and the local programming of the nationwide networks, all making a contribution to this result.

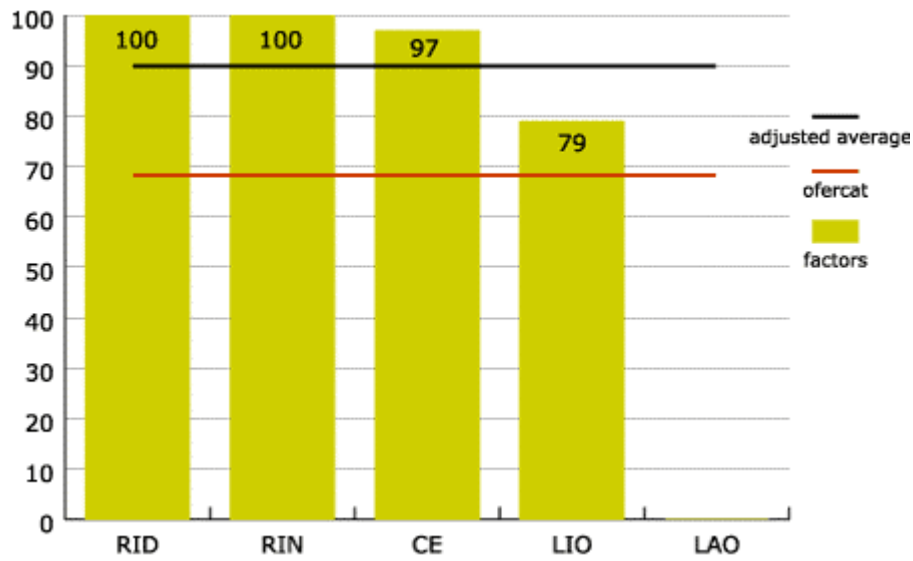
Figure 9. Media



The Education subsector includes all levels, from the kindergartens to higher and adult education, both public and private. In this section, where the Autonomous government of Catalonia has all the competencies —in some cases shared with the local councils— the written signs and labels are virtually 100%. On the question of Oral identification [LOI], in this case the observations were not based telephone calls —as in the other ambits— but rather on the language in which classes were given, according to the data supplied by the Education Department, Rovira i Virgili University and the centres for adult education. The language of teaching at secondary level, higher or tertiary level and in adult education are the reason for this indicator being a little lower than others [79%], although still quite high.

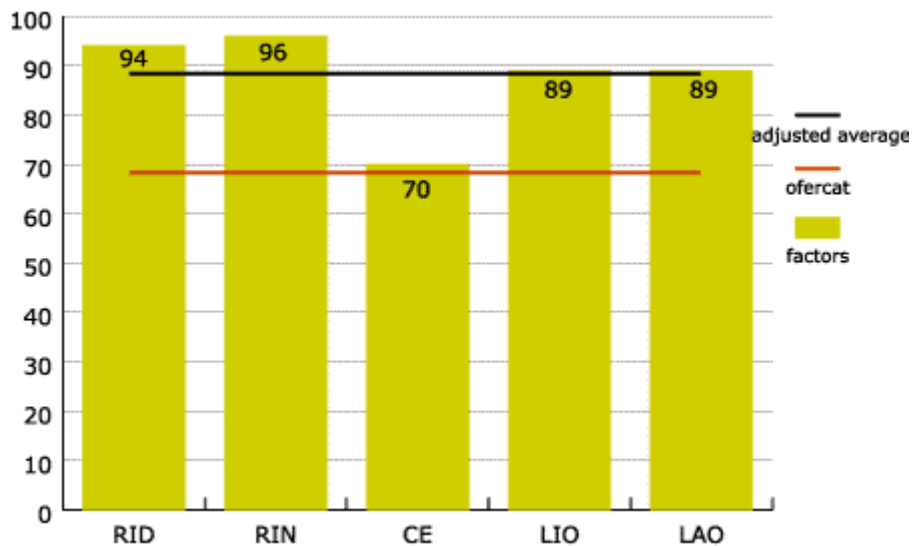


Figure 10. Education



The Health subsector includes both the public and the private, and while the Autonomous administration has full powers here, the mobility of the staff and the proliferation of private clinics, provides an explanation for the fact that while the signs and labels index scores 94% for identifying notices [RID] and 96% for Informational notices [RIN], written communications [WRC] reach only 70% and oral language scores 89%.

Figure 11. Health



## 8. Conclusions at local level

L'Ofercat allows us to obtain specific data and determine specific objectives relating to the sociolinguistic situation, which can then be used to programme actions to further language normalisation in the light of the existing situation and giving priority to the most deficient sectors.

When we compare the Tarragona results with those of the other areas where Ofercat has been used we find an intermediate situation, less Catalan than Tremp and Manresa, slightly more than Lloret de Mar and the Barcelona Old City (Ciutat Vella) and quite considerably more than the Barcelona suburb of Santa Coloma de Gramenet. If we analyse the results by sectors, we will see that the Tarragona results are noticeably less than those of Manresa and Tremp in two specific sectors: Public administration and Economy, and slightly so in the realm of Society and Leisure. Where the Public Administration factor is concerned, the results here that bring down the mean index score are Central Government and the Courts and court offices which, given that Tarragona is the Provincial capital, are present in force. In contrast, the rest of the settlements where Ofercat has been applied (with the exception of Barcelona's Ciutat Vella), the predominant administration is local government, while the other levels of administration are scarcely present or not present at all.

Given the results of the study, now is the time to take advantage of them, and use them as a guide for future actions and future campaigns to increase normalisation in the municipal area of Tarragona. The work of the Centre for Language Normalisation of Tarragona (CNLT) will need to orientate its work over the upcoming years to correcting the shortfalls and weak points that the study has revealed. Of course the staff need be aware of the areas which are strictly their area of competence, and the areas which are the competence of other bodies working to the same end.

By sectors, Local administration is the only level of government at which the Consortium for Language Normalisation (CPNL) has powers, and the results of the study show very clearly the work done since the CPNL was set up, in 1989, with an average of 96%, indicating that it is a sector that is completely language normalised. Regional government (i.e. of the Autonomous region of Catalonia) scores 98% and has its own network of language normalisation, so that the CPNL has no need to intervene. As for the other two administrative levels, the State (central government) and Justice (the law courts) with 52% and 41%, respectively), we see here that there is a clear need to intervene, although the sectors lie outside CNLT's area of operation.

The Economy and Society and leisure sectors are those where the CPNL can intervene, and, given the results they register (66% and 73% mean score, respectively), it is evident that action by the CNLT over the coming years has to concentrate, above all on the Economy sector, which is slightly below the average for Tarragona (68%). In fact, in the fourteen years of CPNL's existence, the work carried out by the area of Dinamització i Assessorament (Vitalisation and consultancy) has aimed efforts mainly at these two areas and we imagine that without those efforts the indices in these two sectors would be lower. But there is still work to do, and it would be good if in the future second observation, the score obtained by Economy were to reach at least the overall mean level for the city.

Of the three remaining sectors or subsectors, the Media, Education and Health, the CNLT can intervene in the first, but only where the companies in question are local and, in this case it does intervene actively. But it can do little to influence the linguistic decisions of other companies where they have opted for one language or the other.

The other two subsectors achieve indices of 90% and 89%, respectively, so that they are not priority areas for intervention.

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