

The Language Training Market in the Context of Globalization

The globalization of training is increasingly calling into question the geographical frontiers, the dimensions of the key players and the pedagogic modalities of the language training industry in France.

The French language training industry is on the eve of a major transformation, which is beginning to have a profound impact on traditional organizations. The improvements in distance learning technology have allowed new offshore training providers like *goFLUENT*, *Telelangue* or *Proformation* to offer training by telephone or Visio conference at low prices, from any geographical zone on the planet. Employing trainers in countries with low labour costs and sketchy legislation, these French companies are growing fast, gaining market share in France and going international. In addition, distance learning and e-learning 2.0 technologies are converging, enabling editors such as *Auralog*, *Digital Publishing* or *Englishtown* to offer integrated blended learning using their own offshore trainers and platforms, while distance learning providers are now offering complimentary online content.

On the demand side, France's large multinational corporations are globalizing fast, centralizing their training systems through Corporate Universities. They are looking for distance learning providers that are able to roll out integrated systems at the global level, with accompanying services provided by local suppliers.

The main clients - employees and businesses - are increasingly at ease with web 2.0 tools and distance technologies and appreciate the practical and flexible features of this form of training, which is individualised, does not require sophisticated logistics and is available at low cost, compared to traditional face-to-face training. Moreover training can be delivered outside working hours, is easily re-scheduled and requires minimal travelling time. The French public authorities and institutional bodies are also encouraging this trend: the reform currently going through the *Assemblée*

Nationale includes several measures in favour of distance learning.

Today, face-to-face training represents between 80 and 90% of language training, but if distance learning providers learn from the lessons of the past and focus on offering quality services and employing professional trainers, distance learning could represent at least 30% of the market within the next 3 to 5 years.

The consequences of such a major transformation are likely to weigh heavily: 25% of language training jobs in France could go offshore, providers who don't include blended learning as a major part of their offer will find it difficult to survive or will be forced to specialise in niche markets, prices are likely to remain low, further squeezing margins. The trend towards concentration of the industry, already under way, will accelerate.

Traditional providers, nearly half of whom are financially fragile today, are struggling to adapt, with mixed results. Some schools are joining or creating networks and developing partnerships. Businessmen, specialised in back office management, are buying up schools and creating their own networks. A few traditional players

have developed their own distance learning platforms: market leaders such as the *Telelangue* and *Westmill*. While *Formalanguages* merged with *Demos'* international network in 2007, others are planning to follow suit.

In light of these developments, the large public and private networks, such as *Inlingua*, *Berlitz*, the *CEL* (Chambers of Commerce that account for 20% of professional language training in France) or the *Greta*, traditionally catering to local markets and face to face training, will have to make some key strategic choices.

Traditional publishers (Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, Pearson Education, Macmillan, etc.) are also faced with strategic choices. They were little involved in the e-learning 1.0 or distance learning revolutions. But how long will they be able to main-

tain their role of blended materials and resources providers, without launching their own distance learning solutions?

Finally, this major shift in the market is going to have a powerful impact on trainers based in France, since they will find themselves increasingly collaborating or in competition with offshore trainers. They will need to focus on

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areas where face-to-face training has a clear edge over distance learning, acquire a 'blended learning' culture (another rapidly-developing trend) and master the tools that go with it. Oth-

ers will need to specialise further, concentrate on job-specific professional training, high level coaching or advanced workshops, which the market is increasingly demanding and which cannot be satisfactorily delivered through distance learning. But for this to happen, training buyers will need to recognize the specific added value of face-to-face training within a blended learning environment and be prepared to pay the price for it; schools will need to invest more in training and equipment for their teachers; and trainers themselves will need to embrace these changes positively.

~ Andrew Wickham

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Andrew began as a language trainer then moved to training management, set up and ran a training company, and finally moved to project management of industrial blended learning systems. He currently teaches cross-cultural communication and has just completed a comprehensive market survey of professional language training in France.

The Language Training Market contin.

Offshoring, Nearshoring et Homeshoring: Les formateurs virtuels arrivent en France

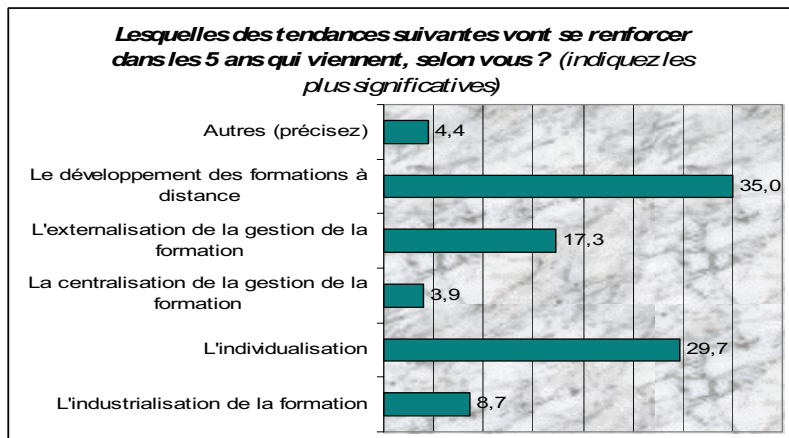
Le **Offshoring** en formation langues signifie généralement la délocalisation des formateurs à distance dans des pays où les coûts salariaux sont largement inférieurs à ceux qui prévalent en France. Le ratio peut atteindre 1 : 4 dans certains pays comme les Philippines, la Chine ou l'Inde, lorsque les formateurs sont natifs du pays. Dans le cas de salariés ou formateurs indépendants de langue maternelle basés dans leur propre pays (américains, australiens...), le gain est surtout obtenu grâce aux charges sociales beaucoup moins élevées ou supportés par l'indépendant lui-même. Un formateur américain, par exemple « coûte » entre 20 et 30 \$/heure (16 à 23 €). En France, le même formateur coûtera entre 23 et 35 €/heure

Le **Nearshoring** désigne la délocalisation dans des pays proches tels que l'Espagne, le Royaume Uni, l'Irlande, les pays de l'Est, où les gains sont moindres, mais néanmoins réels.

Le **Homeshoring** désigne un modèle différent, où le formateur, presque toujours un indépendant, travaille de chez lui et non pas dans un centre d'appels ou de formation, ce qui permet à l'employeur d'économiser sur les coûts immobiliers. Le modèle d'*Ecsplícite*, par exemple, est basé sur le Homeshoring, alors que *goFLUENT* fait travailler ses formateurs dans ses propres centres de formation à l'étranger. Les problématiques pédagogiques, logistiques et de gestion de ressources humaines de ces deux modèles sont très différentes. A noter que le homeshoring se développe également en France : certains organismes de formation font appel à des formateurs à statut indépendant, particulièrement nombreux dans le Sud de la France. Ce sont souvent des expatriés à la retraite, cherchant à compléter leurs revenus.



Question aux responsables de formation (102 réponses)

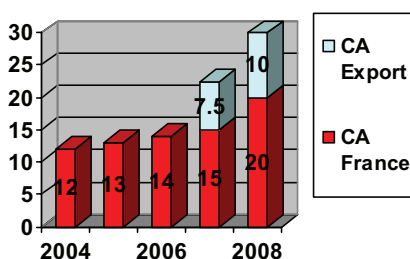


Une étude inédite de la société *Linguaid* lève pour la première fois le voile sur le secteur de la formation professionnelle langues et révèle que ce sont des sociétés françaises qui mènent le bal de la mondialisation.

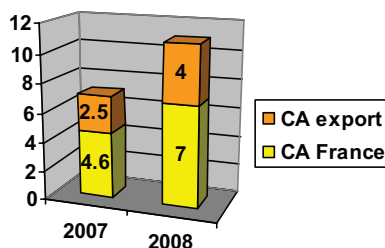
L'étude, soutenue par la Fédération de la Formation Professionnelle, la librairie *Attica* et la revue *Vocable*, est maintenant disponible par abonnement annuel à l'adresse suivante:

www.etude-langues.fr

Telelangue croissance du CA (déclaré)*



goFluent croissance du CA (déclaré)



Ecsplícite et Proformation croissance CA 2004 à 2008 (d)

