

Foreign given names in Spanish youth: evidence of a globalized society

Carmen Luján-García (Las Palmas de Gran Canaria)

ABSTRACT

This paper provides evidence of the impact of the Anglo-American culture on Spanish language and society. Societal phenomena such as globalization, migration and the media are observable in every area of Spanish people's daily life. This study reveals the extent of the popularity of foreign given names, mostly English, in Spanish society. English given names seem to be currently associated with such values as high fashion and social prestige. Study of variables frequency, gender and age reveal that the choice of English first names is becoming very popular. A comparative analysis of English given names in the 1960s and in the 2010s in Spain is carried out. The dataset was collected from the Spanish Institute of Statistics (INE) and the results report that English first names occur quite frequently among people aged 25 years or younger and therefore represent a new tendency. The paper includes discussion of adaptations of some of the examined English names to Spanish.

KEYWORDS

first names, English, Spanish, globalization, anglicisms

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and migration are two important processes that have caused worldwide societal changes in economics, politics, culture, and technology in the past decades. A great deal of literature has dealt with the impact of these two phenomena specifically on current Western societies (Blommaert, 2010, Fairclough, 2006, Pennycook 2007, Phillipson, 2003, 2009). As a result of globalization and migration, the role of the English language has become more prominent in many European countries. English has become the language of fashion in recent decades, the evidence of which is provided by a number of pieces of research that reveal English as the most frequently used language in many different areas; for example, rather than appearing in the local languages, a preponderance of shop signs in European countries are in English so that they can serve as a resource to attract prospective customers (Dimova, 2007, Griffin, 2004, Luján-García, 2010a, McArthur, 2000, Schlick, 2002). The media represent another field in which the use of English is becoming more and more common (Gerritsen et al., 2007, Martin, 2006). Various English loanwords are also appearing in the field of advertising (Bhatia, 2006, Durán-Martínez, 2002). According to Bhatia (2006, 601), "... in the era of rapid globalization and super-branding, advertising messages all over the globe will conform to extreme homogeneity in terms of the use of language, the display of logo and the content of the message. English will naturally be the chosen language of global advertisers".

All global advertisers agree about the importance of using English as a symbol of prestige and high fashion, because English seems to attract prospective customers.



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The area of fashion and beauty is another field where the use of anglicisms is quite common (Balteiro and Campos, 2012). Something similar is in evidence in other areas as well, such as the translation of film titles (Luján-García, 2010b). Computers represent another field wherein a number of anglicisms are used daily. Such terms as *software*, *hardware*, *reset*, *online*, *internet*, and *web* are used by speakers of various other languages, whether the speaker is a computer specialist or not (Pano, 2007, Bolaños and Luján, 2010). As Balteiro (2011) and Rodríguez-González (2012) report, the field of sports also tends toward the use of anglicisms. Examples are *crack*, *sponsor*, *derby*, *play-off*, *sprinter*, and *basket*. Even some specific areas such as the one of toys leaflets addressed to young children has been studied (Luján-García, 2011) and the number of toys with English names is quite considerable.

The area of analysis in this research paper is that of first names. The choice of children's names has traditionally tended to be subject to societal changes, fashion changes, and other trends. Scholars have found that the choice of first names has varied throughout time. Galbi (2002, 277) researched the most popular given names from 1300 to 1800 in the United Kingdom and found that "the causes of changes in individual names go beyond the scope of this report". The finding means that the reasons for the changes are not strictly linguistic but mostly social.

In the case of Spain, too, onomastic traditions have been subject to changes. For example, the presence of different races and ethnic groups living in medieval times in Spain and the coexistence among Jewish, Muslim, and Catholic peoples caused different types of names to arise as parts of regular life at that time. The elimination of that multicultural society diminished the contact of the Spanish language with other languages, especially Arabic. Consequently, Semitic names also tended to disappear, and Latin names became the most popular ones—first, among the highest social classes and then among citizens with less status (García-Gallarín, 2010, 57).

In recent decades, the situation seems to be changing. A number of foreign names is being used to name young Spaniards. Many of these foreign names are originally English and they have been introduced into European Spanish through different sources such as the Latin American migration (García-Gallarín, 2010, 90), and through the media—for instance, in the forms of television dramas, cinema films, and celebrities.

García-Gallarín (2010, 90) contrasted choices between the English name *John*, the Italian equivalent *Giovanni*, and the French equivalent *Jean*; and the results showed that according to data from Madrid Town Hall in 2006, *John* is the name of more than 800 men in Madrid, whereas around 400 men are called *Giovanni* and around 300 men are called *Jean*. The English version, *John*, is the most chosen one—obviously, after the Spanish version, *Juan*.

This paper contains a sociolinguistic analysis that reveals how societal changes that have taken place in recent decades affect linguistic changes such as parents' choice of English first names for children. My hypothesis is based on various factors: firstly, as aforementioned, the influence of Anglo-American culture and globalization. Secondly, other variables such as Latin America migration to Spain. Thirdly, the media and the popularity of TV serials, cinema films and celebrities. In addition to these societal changes, fashion plays an important role when it comes to name choice. Lieberman (2000, 93) reports that "names are an excellent example of fashions that change without

a ‘push’ from profit-oriented institutions”. Fashion is subject to permanent change, and thus name choice is, too. Being aware of the complexity of this topic and accepting the limitations of this research, this paper intends to show the process of change regarding name choice in Spain throughout the past decades, as well as parents’ growing tendency to choose foreign names. In this study, the focus has been mostly English given names.

The need for such research can be justified for two reasons: first, no studies that focus on the topic have been carried out in Spain, and second, well-known sociolinguist Stanley Lieberson asserts that this field, which has a sociolinguistic nature “has yet to receive the extensive study that this fascinating topic deserves” (Lieberson, 1984, 86).

2. OBJECTIVES

In general terms, this paper intends to shed some light on the increasing use of given names of English usage in Spain. As a consequence, three more specific objectives have been set.

- To find out which are the most common English male and female first names currently used by young Spaniards who are under 25 years old.
- To make a contrastive analysis between the uses of the 25 most common English male and 25 most common English female names in the 1960s and in the 2010s in Spain.
- To examine the process of adaptation of some English given names to Spanish.

3. METHOD

The method employed in this piece of research consisted of the consulting of databases of the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística* (INE, National Statistics Institute), a reliable source of statistical data in Spain.

The INE has compiled data about first names from the 1930s to the current decade. The organization produces such data as mean age of people living in Spain who have a specific name. Therefore, a researcher can learn whether parents in Spain choose certain given names more commonly during certain periods than they do in others.

The INE database provided this researcher with a dataset of the given names used in Spain and it was necessary to determine which of the names had an English usage to create a corpus. In order to ensure the usage of the long list of names provided by INE, the database *Behind the Name* (Campbell, 2014) had to be consulted. This database provides data of the real origin of the names, its current usage, the existence of equivalents for the names in other languages, among other details.

It is essential to clarify that many names have one origin or etymology, which usually dates back to Ancient languages (Scandinavian, Germanic, Classical Greek, Hebrew, Roman, Persian). The specific origins of the examined names have been included in Table 1 — for male names — and Table 4 — for female names. However, in this study rather than the ancient origin of the names, it will be the most immediate

origin and the established or traditional usage of the names in certain countries that will serve as the main criterion to consider a given name English, French, Scandinavian or the like.

This research field is not a simple one. However, in this work, the corpus has been compiled after a careful process that allowed to choose a set of given names. Most of those names come from English or English speaking countries (Ireland, Wales, Scotland) with just a few exceptions of some names that come from French, Dutch, Swedish, Jewish and the Bible, in addition to the English language (see tables 1 and 4). Other names that come from many different sources such as Italian, French, German or the Slavic languages have not been considered in this study, as will be shown in Table 2 — for male names — and Table 5 — for female names.

A second criterion which was considered to build this corpus was the average age of the people with this kind of names. Twenty-five years old was the maximum age set, so any name whose users were over 25 was discarded (see tables 3 and 6). The reason to employ this criterion was to demonstrate that the use of these names is a relatively recent event in Spain.

3.1. THE CORPUS

The following corpus, which is composed of 25 male and 25 female given names, has been taken from *INE*, according to information the institute has in its database on January 1, 2013. Table 1 displays the 25 most frequently used English first names and their variants among males living in Spain in 2013, the etymology, the average age of those men, the usage or more immediate origin of those names, and the existence of Spanish equivalents.

| | Name | Etymology | Frequency | Average age | Usage | Spanish equivalent |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|-----------|-------------|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Aaron | From <i>Aharon</i> Biblical Hebrew | 23,938 | 11.7 | English, Biblical Latin, Biblical Greek | Aarón |
| 2 | Eric | From <i>Eiríkr</i> Ancient Scandinavian | 21,157 | 13.1 | English, Swedish | Éric (Catalán) |
| 3 | Edgar | From <i>Eadgar</i> Anglo-Saxon | 9,305 | 20.2 | English, French | Edgardo |
| 4 | Nil (<i>adapted from Neil</i>) | From <i>Neil</i> Irish | 5,966 | 8.4 | Irish, Scottish, English | No |
| 5 | Ian | From <i>Yochanan</i> Biblical Hebrew | 5,881 | 13.1 | English, Scottish | Juan, Iván, Xuan |
| 6 | Brian | From <i>Brian</i> Ancient Irish | 5,153 | 24.0 | Irish, English | No |
| 7 | Rayan (<i>adapted from Ryan</i>) | From <i>Ríán</i> Irish | 3,993 | 3.1 | Irish, English | No |

| | Name | Etymology | Frequency | Average age | Usage | Spanish equivalent |
|----|---|---|-----------|-------------|--|---------------------|
| 8 | <i>Dylan</i> | From <i>Dylan</i> Welsh Mythology | 1,968 | 6.2 | Welsh, English | No |
| 9 | <i>Noah</i> | From <i>Noach</i> Biblical Hebrew | 1,672 | 5.1 | English, Biblical | Noé |
| 10 | <i>Joshua</i> | From <i>Yehoshua</i> Biblical Hebrew | 1,534 | 19.3 | English, Biblical | Jesús, Josué |
| 11 | <i>Derek</i> | From <i>Theutrich</i> Ancient Germanic | 1,534 | 23.5 | English | No |
| 12 | <i>Cristofer</i> (adapted from <i>Christopher</i>) | From <i>Christophoros</i> Late Greek | 1,431 | 19.9 | English | Cristóbal |
| 13 | <i>Steven</i> | From <i>Stephanos</i> Ancient Greek | 1,338 | 25.3 | English, Dutch | Esteban, Estavan |
| 14 | <i>Ethan</i> | From <i>Eitan</i> Biblical Hebrew | 1,337 | 7.4 | English, Jewish, French, Biblical | No |
| 15 | <i>Erick</i> | From <i>Eirikr</i> Ancient Scandinavian | 1,129 | 11.4 | English | Èric (Catalán) |
| 16 | <i>Brayan</i> (adapted from <i>Brian</i>) | From <i>Brian</i> Ancient Irish | 1,118 | 9.5 | Irish, English | No |
| 17 | <i>Jeremy</i> | From <i>Jeremias</i> Biblical Greek | 919 | 13.1 | English, Biblical | Jeremías |
| 18 | <i>Liam</i> (abbreviation of <i>William</i>) | From <i>Willahelm</i> Ancient Germanic | 919 | 8.5 | Irish, English | Guillermo |
| 19 | <i>Andy</i> (abbreviation of <i>Andrew</i>) | From <i>Andreas</i> Ancient Greek | 712 | 14.0 | English | Andrés |
| 20 | <i>Brandon</i> | From <i>Brandon</i> English | 597 | 11.4 | English | No |
| 21 | <i>Ryan</i> | From <i>Rían</i> Irish | 375 | 15.1 | Irish, English | No |
| 22 | <i>Marlon</i> | Unknown origin | 353 | 21.1 | English | No |
| 23 | <i>Owen</i> | From <i>Eugenios</i> Ancient Greek | 269 | 12 | Welsh, English, Irish | Eugenio |
| 24 | <i>Elliot</i> (variant of <i>Elliott</i> - surname) | From <i>Eliyyahu</i> Biblical Hebrew | 235 | 16.6 | English | Elías |
| 25 | <i>Destiny</i> | From <i>Destiny</i> English | 134 | 13.7 | English | No |

Table 1. The most common male given names mostly in English

Table 1, which shows a selection of 25 male first names, provides the frequency of men with those names in Spain. Most of these given names are commonly used in English and in some cases in some other languages such as Irish, Scottish, Welsh, French, Swedish and Biblical. The average age of these males is under 25 years old in all cases. The last column provides information about the existence or non-existence of a Spanish equivalent for these names. Fourteen out of the twenty-five examined names have an equivalent, but some parents still choose the foreign version of the name for their children.

The reason for choosing these names, rather than other given names whose frequency of use is higher is due to two facts: first, names that are frequently used in English and in several other languages such as the male name *Christian*, with a frequency of 21,941 boys with an average age of 19.1, or *Kevin* whose frequency is 14,717 boys with an average age of 14.4 years. These names have been discarded because they are frequently used in several other languages in addition to English as Table 2 shows. Therefore, it is not possible to ascertain that these male names have entered Spanish society exclusively by means of English.

| | Name | Frequency | Average age | Usage | Spanish equivalent |
|---|------------------|-----------|-------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | <i>Christian</i> | 21,941 | 19.1 | English, French, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish | Cristián |
| 2 | <i>Kevin</i> | 14,717 | 14.4 | English, Irish, French, German, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish | No equivalent |
| 3 | <i>Erik</i> | 9,241 | 10.9 | Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, English, Czech, Slovak, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Dutch | Èric (Catalan) |

Table 2. Some samples of male given names discarded due to their various origins

The second factor for having discarded some other names is because of the average age over 25 of the men with these names. Some examples are shown in Table 3.

| | Name | Frequency | Average age | Usage | Spanish equivalent |
|---|--------|-----------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | John | 3,676 | 53.6 | English, Biblical | Juan |
| 2 | George | 2,943 | 39.2 | English, Romanian | Jorge |
| 3 | Nelson | 2,339 | 33.6 | English | No |

Table 3. Some samples of male given names discarded due to the average age over 25

The corpus of female names is presented in Table 4. It shows the 25 most commonly used English first names and their variants among females living in Spain in 2013. The etymology is also included in addition to the frequency, the average age, the usage and the existence or non-existence of equivalents in Spanish for those given names.

Similarly to the case of the males, in some of the examined female names there is also more than one immediate origin, in addition to English. Some of these names are also frequently used in another English speaking country (Ireland), and in some other languages (Cornish, Swedish, Iranian, Arabic, Biblical).

| | Name | Etymology | Frequency | Average age | Usage | Spanish equivalent |
|----|--|---|-----------|-------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | <i>Jennifer</i> | From <i>Gwenhwyfar</i> Welsh Mythology | 19,571 | 21.8 | English | Genoveva |
| 2 | <i>Sheila</i> | From <i>Caecilia</i> Ancient Roman | 19,115 | 19.8 | Irish, English | Cecilia |
| 3 | <i>Jenifer</i> (variant of <i>Jennifer</i>) | From <i>Gwenhwyfar</i> Welsh Mythology | 8,077 | 22.8 | English, Cornish | Genoveva |
| 4 | <i>Coral</i> | From <i>Korallion</i> Greek | 6,091 | 21.7 | English | No |
| 5 | <i>Erica</i> (feminine of <i>Eric</i>) | From <i>Eiríkr</i> Ancient Scandinavian | 4,541 | 22.6 | English, Swedish | No |
| 6 | <i>June</i> | From <i>Juno</i> Ancient Roman | 4,404 | 13.2 | English | No |
| 7 | <i>Yasmin</i> (variant of <i>Yasmine</i>) | From <i>Yasamen</i> Persian | 3,866 | 10 | Iranian, Arabic, English | Yasmina |
| 8 | <i>Cynthia</i> | From <i>Kynthia</i> Greek Mythology | 3,185 | 20 | English, Greek Mythology | No |
| 9 | <i>Evelyn</i> | From <i>Avi</i> Ancient Germanic | 3,241 | 21.2 | English, German | Avelina |
| 10 | <i>Brenda</i> | Feminine of <i>Brandr</i> Old Norse | 2,868 | 25 | English | No |
| 11 | <i>Naomi</i> | From <i>Na'omi</i> Biblical Hebrew | 2,299 | 13.8 | English, Hebrew, Biblical | Noemí, Nohemí |
| 12 | <i>Sheyla</i> (variant of <i>Sheila</i>) | From <i>Caecilia</i> Ancient Roman | 1,469 | 16 | Irish, English | Cecilia |

| | | | | | | |
|----|--|---|-------|------|---|----------|
| 13 | <i>Katherine</i> | From <i>Hekate</i> Greek Mythology | 1,354 | 24.1 | English | Catalina |
| 14 | <i>Yasmine</i> (variant of <i>Yasmin</i>) | From <i>Yasamen</i> Persian | 1,374 | 9.4 | Iranian, Arabic, English | Yasmina |
| 15 | <i>Kiara</i> (variant of <i>Ciara</i>) | From <i>Ciar</i> Irish | 1,096 | 8.2 | English | Clara |
| 16 | <i>Chloe</i> | From <i>Chloe</i> Greek Mythology | 1,758 | 5.1 | English, Biblical Latin, Biblical Greek | Cloe |
| 17 | <i>Melody</i> | From <i>Melos</i> ("song")+ <i>Aeido</i> ("to sing") Greek | 1,001 | 17.1 | English | No |
| 18 | <i>Emily</i> | From <i>Aemilia</i> Ancient Roman | 877 | 13.0 | English | Emilia |
| 19 | <i>Ashley</i> | From <i>Ashley</i> (surname) English | 645 | 7 | English | No |
| 20 | <i>Kelly</i> | From <i>Ceallach</i> Irish | 622 | 22.6 | Irish, English | No |
| 21 | <i>Kira</i> (variant of <i>Ciara</i>) | From <i>Ciar</i> Irish | 610 | 13.4 | English | Clara |
| 22 | <i>Amy</i> | From <i>Amata</i> Late Roman | 581 | 17.0 | English | Amada |
| 23 | <i>Kimberly</i> | From <i>Cyneburg</i> Anglo-Saxon | 552 | 13.3 | English | No |
| 24 | <i>Agatha</i> | From <i>Agathe</i> Ancient Greek | 549 | 12.9 | English, Ancient Greek | Ágata |
| 25 | <i>Keila</i> (variant of <i>Kayla</i>) | From <i>Hekate</i> Greek Mythology | 535 | 17.1 | English | No |

Table 4. The most common female given names mostly in English

Regarding the existence of equivalents in Spanish for these foreign names, fifteen out of the 25 chosen given names have an equivalent in Spanish. The rest ten names have not a Spanish equivalent. Despite the existence of those equivalent names, some parents still prefer to choose the foreign version of the name. Reasons for this choice will be discussed, but there may be a component of looking fashionable and trendy. A foreign name like *Emily* looks cooler than the Spanish equivalent *Emilia*.

Similarly to the compilation of the corpus of male names, despite their high frequency of use, some female names have more than one immediate origin and are used in various other languages, in addition to English (see Table 5). Some examples of female names that were discarded because they have many immediate origins:

| | Name | Frequency | Average age | Usage | Spanish equivalent |
|---|---------------|-----------|-------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | <i>Erika</i> | 14,908 | 17.3 | Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Finnish, English, Czech, Slovak, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Dutch | No |
| 2 | <i>Jesica</i> | 6,264 | 25.5 | English, French, German, Swedish, Norwegian, Danish, Italian | Yessica |
| 3 | <i>Sarah</i> | 3,480 | 19.2 | English, French, German, Hebrew, Arabic, Biblical | Sara |

Table 5. Some samples of female given names discarded due to their various origins

Some other female names that were discarded because of the average age of the women was over 25 are presented in Table 6.

| | Name | Frequency | Average age | Usage | Spanish equivalent |
|---|--------|-----------|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 | Janet | 2,016 | 37 | English | Juana |
| 2 | Gladys | 1,999 | 44.7 | Welsh, English | No |
| 3 | Denise | 1,459 | 31.8 | French, English, Dutch | No |

Table 6. Some samples of female given names discarded due to the average age over 25

Therefore, the compilation of this corpus had to be carefully carried out considering different aspects: the immediate origin of the given names, the average age of the people with these names and the highest frequency of use. The next sections will examine in detail variables such as frequency of use, gender, and ages of people with those foreign names.

4. RESULTS

First of all, an analysis of the most frequently occurring given male and female names in Spain compared with some of the names in Tables 1 and 2 will be carried out according to frequency of use.

4.1. FREQUENCY OF USE

The frequency of use of the following names of people living in Spain in 2013 is based on INE statistical data. For a wider view of the Spanish panorama regarding first names, it is necessary to contrast the 10 most common names in Spain with the selection of the most frequently used English names included in this study.

| Name | Total count of names in the entire population |
|---------------------|---|
| <i>Antonio</i> | 739,523 |
| <i>José</i> | 672,826 |
| <i>Manuel</i> | 638,001 |
| <i>Francisco</i> | 550,394 |
| <i>Juan</i> | 381,245 |
| <i>David</i> | 356,516 |
| <i>José Antonio</i> | 319,396 |
| <i>José Luis</i> | 307,045 |
| <i>Javier</i> | 300,699 |
| <i>Jesús</i> | 290,359 |

Table 7. The most common male first names in Spain

Table 7 and Figure 1 each display the 10 most frequently used male names in Spain and the frequency of use of those names in Spain. *Antonio* is the first name of 739,523 male inhabitants of Spain, which is a very high frequency. However, we can see how that frequency diminishes slightly with other names such as *José*, *Manuel*, *Francisco*, *Juan*. *Javier* and *Jesús* are still widely used for Spanish males, but the frequency is lower. In the case of the given name *Juan*, Alonso and Huerta (2000, 27) report that “*Juan* is one of the most settled first names in the folkloric, popular and marginal tradition in Spain”.

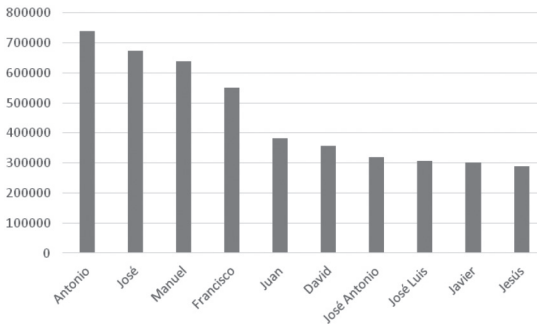


Figure 1. Frequency of the most common male first names in Spain

Table 8 and Figure 2 reveal the frequency of the 10 most frequently used English male names in Spain. It is beyond doubt that the frequency of those names is much lower compared with the frequencies of the first names in Table 7. *Aaron* is the given name of 23,938 males in Spain — average age 11.7 — followed by *Eric*, which is the given name of 21,157 males and the average age is 13.1. *Edgar* is in the third position, since 9,305 boys are called by that name, and the average age of these boys is 20.2. The list continues to show a series of names, whose frequency diminishes.

The least frequently used names in this Table are *Dylan*, *Noah* and *Joshua* each of whose frequency is lower. Despite the clear differences when it comes to frequency, the number of men called by English names is still considerable. In this section of the results, the contrast between the use of these names in the 1960s and in the 2010s will report on the noticeable differences that have taken place through the past decades in terms of the use of English first names.

| Name | Total count of names in the entire population |
|---------------------------|---|
| Aaron | 23,938 |
| Eric | 21,157 |
| Edgar | 9,305 |
| Nil (adapted from Neil) | 5,966 |
| Ian | 5,881 |
| Brian | 5,153 |
| Rayan (adapted from Ryan) | 3,993 |
| Dylan | 1,968 |
| Noah | 1,672 |
| Joshua | 1,534 |

Table 8. The most common English male names in Spain

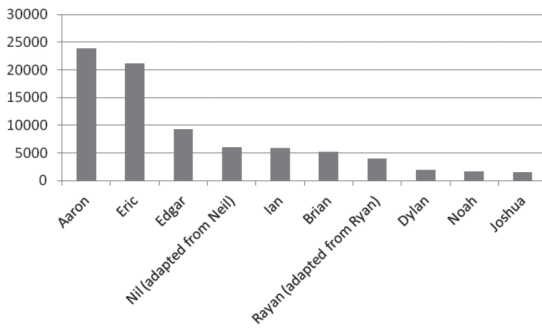


Figure 2. Frequency of the most common English male first names in Spain

Regarding the feminine gender, the data in Table 9 and Figure 3 reveals that *María Carmen* is the most popular female name, used by 674,181 women in Spain. *María* is in the second position, since 651,441 females are called by this given name, and *Carmen* is in the third position, with 431,498 women. The least frequently used name in this list is *Ana*, which is the first name of 258,430 female inhabitants in Spain. These are names with a long tradition in Spain, since they have been used for many generations. My own name is *Carmen*, and my mother is also called the same way. It is quite common that those names in Table 9 are inherited from mothers to daughters. The same happens with the male names listed in Table 7 (*Antonio*, *José*, *Manuel*, *Francisco*, and so on), which are names frequently inherited from fathers/mothers or grandfathers/grandmothers to sons/daughters and grandchildren.

| Name | Total count of names in the entire population |
|----------------------|---|
| <i>María Carmen</i> | 674,181 |
| <i>María</i> | 651,441 |
| <i>Carmen</i> | 431,498 |
| <i>Josefa</i> | 311,761 |
| <i>Isabel</i> | 287,762 |
| <i>Ana María</i> | 279,380 |
| <i>María Pilar</i> | 269,734 |
| <i>María Dolores</i> | 269,287 |
| <i>María Teresa</i> | 259,988 |
| <i>Ana</i> | 258,430 |

Table 9. The most common female names in Spain

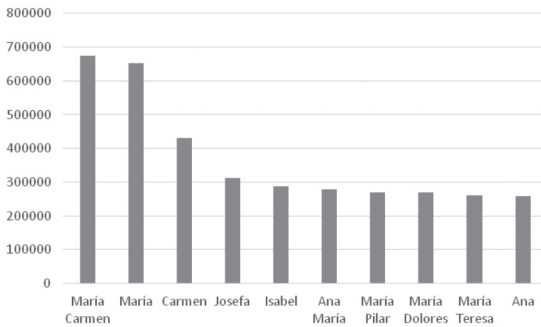


Figure 3. Frequency of the most common female first names in Spain

Table 10 and Figure 4 show the frequency of use of the 10 most frequently used English names by Spanish females. *Jennifer* is the most popular one, with 19,571 female Spanish inhabitants who are called *Jennifer*. *Sheila* is in second position (19,115 females in Spain). *Jenifer* is in third position (8,077 women with that name). The last two given names in the list—*Evelyn* and *Brenda*—are each used by around 3,000 women in Spain. Similar to the analysis carried out for Tables 7 and 9, it is obvious that in Spain—as would be expected—Spanish names have a higher frequency of use, but more and more often, English names are coming into use.

| Name | Total count of names in the entire population |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Jennifer</i> | 19,571 |
| <i>Sheila</i> | 19,115 |
| <i>Jenifer (variant of Jennifer)</i> | 8,077 |
| <i>Coral</i> | 6,091 |
| <i>Erica (feminine of Eric)</i> | 4,541 |
| <i>June</i> | 4,404 |

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------|
| <i>Yasmin (variant of Yasmine)</i> | 3,866 |
| <i>Cynthia</i> | 3,185 |
| <i>Evelyn</i> | 3,241 |
| <i>Brenda</i> | 2,868 |

Table 10. The most common English female names in Spain

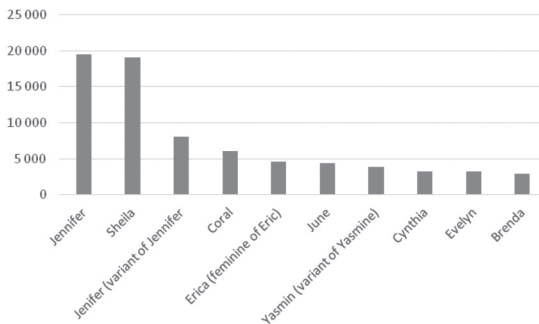


Figure 4. Frequency of the most common English female first names in Spain

4.2. VARIABLE GENDER

The variable gender will be analyzed by comparing the frequency of use between the sample of male and female names. Table 11 provides an overview of this comparison.

| Male name | Frequency | Female name | Frequency |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------|
| Aaron | 23,938 | Jennifer | 19,571 |
| Eric | 21,157 | Sheila | 19,115 |
| Edgar | 9,305 | Jennifer (variant of Jennifer) | 8,077 |
| Neil (adapted from Neil) | 5,966 | Coral | 6,091 |
| Ian | 5,881 | Erica (feminine of Eric) | 4,541 |
| Brian | 5,153 | June | 4,404 |
| Rayan (adapted from Ryan) | 3,993 | Yasmin (variant of Yasmine) | 3,866 |
| Dylan | 1,968 | Evelyn | 3,241 |
| Noah | 1,672 | Cynthia | 3,185 |
| Joshua | 1,534 | Brenda | 2,868 |
| Derek | 1,534 | Naomi | 2,299 |
| Cristofer (adapted from Christopher) | 1,431 | Sheyla (variant of Sheila) | 1,469 |
| Steven | 1,338 | Yasmine (variant of Yasmin) | 1,374 |
| Ethan | 1,337 | Katherine | 1,354 |
| Erick | 1,129 | Kiara (variant of Ciara) | 1,096 |
| Brayan (adapted from Brian) | 1,118 | Chloe | 1,758 |
| Jeremy | 919 | Melody | 1,001 |
| Liam (abbreviation of William) | 919 | Emily | 877 |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|---------------|
| <i>Andy (abbreviation of Andrew)</i> | 712 | <i>Ashley</i> | 645 |
| <i>Brandon</i> | 597 | <i>Kelly</i> | 622 |
| <i>Ryan</i> | 375 | <i>Kira (variant of Ciara)</i> | 610 |
| <i>Marlon</i> | 353 | <i>Amy</i> | 581 |
| <i>Owen</i> | 269 | <i>Kimberly</i> | 552 |
| <i>Elliot (variant of Elliott)</i> | 235 | <i>Agatha</i> | 549 |
| <i>Destiny</i> | 134 | <i>Keila (variant of Kayla)</i> | 535 |
| TOTAL MALES | 92,967 | TOTAL FEMALES | 90,281 |

Table 11. Comparison of frequency between English male and female first names

Table 11 shows a comparison between male and female first names in English. The frequency of male names is slightly higher (92,967 males with English names) than the frequency of female names (90,281 females with English names). This is the case for names such as *Aaron* (23,938 boys with this name) and *Eric* (21,157 males) whose frequency is higher than the first two female names in the list; *Jennifer* (19,571 females with this name) and *Sheila* (19,115 girls).

However, that tendency changes when it comes to the last names in the list. The frequency of use of English female names increases in terms of the number of uses of male first names in English. The last name in the male names list—*Elliot*—is the name of 235 males, and the last name in the female names list—*Keila*—is the name of 535 females.

In the end, it seems that the frequency of English names is quite similar in the case of the two genders. It would not be accurate to assert that parents seem to be fonder of giving English names to boys than to girls. Considering our corpus, there is a slight difference between both genders. There is a higher frequency of boys (2,686 boys more) with English names than girls.

Another study, carried out by well-known scholars Lieberson and Bell (1992), examined gender differences in terms of first-name choice by parents in the United States. The researchers concluded that there are striking gender differences such as parental choice of more fashionable or trendy names for girls, whereas boys' names "... are approached in terms of historical continuity and stability. It means that parents in North America tend to be more conservative when choosing their boys' names, whereas girls' names tend to be viewed as objects of fashion and expressions of attractiveness" (Lieberson and Bell 1992, 548).

Differently from the US, in the case of Spain it can be stated that no striking differences in terms of parents' choice of English names for their sons and daughters may be observed. It cannot be asserted that parents are more liberal or conservative when they choose names for their male or female children. Notwithstanding, in general terms, parents seem to feel more and more attracted by this kind of names with an English usage, as the next section of this paper will demonstrate.

4.3. VARIABLE AGE

This first part of this section will be devoted to obtain accurate data about the average age of these people considering the direct average age of the people with these names and also the weighted average, by considering the frequency of use of these names. This data is presented in tables 12 and 13.

In the case of males' direct and weighted average age, the data obtained is quite similar, since 13 years old is the average age of the male corpus. It implies that these English names have been chosen to name boys in Spain approximately around a decade ago, what means that this is a relatively recent phenomenon.

| Name | Frequency | Direct average age | Weighted average age |
|-------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Total | 92,967 | 13.8 | 13.44 |

Table 12. Direct and weighted average age of males with English names

| Name | Frequency | Direct average age | Weighted average age |
|-------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Total | 90,281 | 16.32 | 19.19 |

Table 13. Direct and average age of females with English names

The direct average age of females is 16.32 years old. However, the weighted average age of the corpus of female given names is 19.19. This last figure is more reliable, because it considers not only the average age of the females with those names, but it also considers the frequency of use of those names. Thus, it means that the weighted average of these girls is almost 20 years old. This fact once more supports the idea that the use of these foreign given names, mostly English, is a relatively recent event in Spain.

Notwithstanding, it is important to note certain gender differences, since the choice of these English names seems to have taken place earlier for the girls than for the boys. In the case of the men, this seems to be a newer tendency.

The second part of this section will compare the frequency of use of the English first names in two isolated decades: 1960s and 2010s²⁰. The reason for having chosen those two decades is that, as Rodríguez González (2012, 267) states, it was in the decade of the sixties of the past century when Spain opened to the rest of the world with economic development and the beginning of the tourist industry, and when a number of anglicisms started to be incorporated into the Spanish language. That change became even more noticeable in the 1970s. And the adoption of anglicisms into the Spanish language has increased considerably up to now, as shown in the introduction. Table 14 shows the comparison of frequencies of the examined male names.

²⁰ It is important to clarify that the figures shown in Tables 14 and 15 display only the frequency of use of the list of names during the decade of the 1960s and half of the decade of 2010s, in which we currently are.

| Given name | Total decade: 1960s | Born in Spain | Born abroad | Total decade: 2010s | Born in Spain | Born abroad |
|---|---------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Aaron | 27 | 16 | 11 | 3,838 | 3,829 | 9 |
| Eric | 315 | 26 | 289 | 3,960 | 3,947 | 13 |
| Edgar | 259 | 25 | 234 | 562 | 558 | 5 |
| Nil (<i>adapted from Neil</i>) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,502 | 1,496 | 6 |
| Ian | 189 | 1 | 188 | 1,435 | 1,429 | 6 |
| Brian | 76 | 0 | 76 | 262 | 262 | 0 |
| Rayan (<i>adapted from Ryan</i>) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2,252 | 2,177 | 75 |
| Dylan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 718 | 709 | 9 |
| Noah | 0 | 0 | 0 | 177 | 177 | 0 |
| Joshua | 10 | 0 | 10 | 52 | 52 | 0 |
| Derek | 39 | 0 | 39 | 266 | 266 | 0 |
| Cristofer (<i>adapted from Christopher</i>) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 43 | 0 |
| Steven | 0 | 0 | 0 | 67 | 67 | 0 |
| Ethan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 302 | | 7 |
| Erick | 13 | 1 | 12 | 400 | 400 | 0 |
| Brayan (<i>adapted from Brian</i>) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 236 | 236 | 0 |
| Jeremy | 19 | 1 | 18 | 152 | 152 | 0 |
| Liam (<i>abbreviation of William</i>) | 12 | 0 | 12 | 284 | 284 | 0 |
| Andy (<i>abbreviation of Andrew</i>) | 16 | 0 | 16 | 119 | 113 | 6 |
| Brandon | 0 | 0 | 0 | 67 | 67 | 0 |
| Ryan | 0 | 0 | 0 | 80 | 70 | 10 |
| Marlon | 19 | 0 | 19 | 30 | 30 | 0 |
| Owen | 9 | 2 | 7 | 77 | 77 | 0 |
| Elliot (<i>variant of Elliott</i>) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 25 | 0 |
| Destiny | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 14 | 0 |
| TOTAL MALES | 1,003 | 72 | 931 | 16,920 | 16,480 | 140 |

Table 14. Comparative use of male given names between the 1960s and the 2010s in Spain

In terms of quantity with regard to the number of English names, Table 14 reveals clear differences between the decade of the 1960s and the decade of the 2010s. This sample of given male names reveals that in the 1960s, around 1,000 males had English names, and from that total, most of them (931) had been born outside Spain. By contrast, in the 2010s this amount has increased substantially, and almost 17,000 men in Spain have English names. From that total, 16,480 Spanish males — since they have been born in Spain — have English names, whereas only 140 men have been born abroad. It is important to highlight that the decade of the 2010s is still in progress, and there is still half of this decade to come (5 years more), therefore, this current figure will surely be increased by the end of this decade

In terms of analysis of the naming process, as Lieberman wisely states (1984, 85), “the naming process... may well represent changes of the sort found in fashions, with

names first being used by highly visible and glamorous people. This in turn spreads out to the masses until they lose any glamorous appeal and become clichés”.

Each of the compiled names in Table 14 shows the remarkable increasing tendency to choose these given names for Spanish’ children. It is worth mentioning the cases of Aaron with 27 men in Spain in the 1960s, and from which total, 11 men had been born abroad. In the 2010s, the figure increases to 3,838 men with that name, and from that total, 3,829 — most of them — are native Spanish. The case of *Eric* should also be highlighted, as in the 1960s, there were only 315 males in Spain with that given name, from which 289 had been born abroad. In the 2010s, the amount is 3,960 men with that name, from which 3,947 are Spanish, and only 9 men have been born abroad. *Eric* is an English and Swedish name, thus the influence of English has most probably been more important in Spanish parents than Swedish. *Nil* is another given name whose frequency of use has changed from 0 in the 1960s to 1,502 Spanish men with that name. This given name, whose origin is English, Scottish and Irish, is an adaptation from *Neil*.

Eventually, the case of *Destiny* must also be underlined, since it is not only a new introduced name in Spanish, but it is also used by parents to call boys and girls. The current total count of men called *Destiny* is 134 whose average age is 13.7, and it is also used to name girls and the evidence of that fact is that there are 33 girls in Spain with that name and the average age is 12.6.

Figure 5 shows a comparison regarding the use of some male given names in the 1960s and the 2010s.

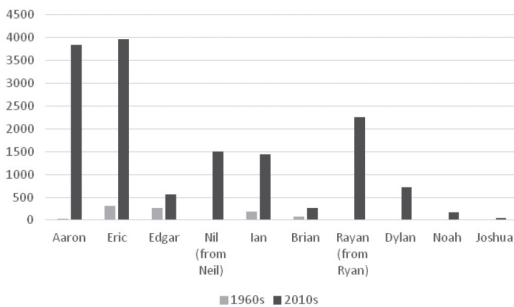


FIGURE 5. Comparative frequencies of the 10 most common English names of males in the 1960s and the 2010s

Now a similar analysis of female names will be carried out, having Table 15 as the main point of reference to determine the evolution of the following 25 chosen female names.

| Given name | Total decade: 1960s | Born in Spain | Born abroad | Total decade: 2010s | Born in Spain | Born abroad |
|------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|---------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Jennifer | 98 | 15 | 83 | 234 | 227 | 7 |
| Sheila | 55 | 21 | 34 | 906 | 906 | 0 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------|-----------|
| <i>Jenifer</i> (variant of <i>Jennifer</i>) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 55 | 55 | 0 |
| <i>Coral</i> | 313 | 296 | 17 | 488 | 488 | 0 |
| <i>Erica</i> (feminine of <i>Eric</i>) | 36 | 12 | 24 | 211 | 211 | 0 |
| <i>June</i> | 24 | 0 | 24 | 1,027 | 1,027 | 0 |
| <i>Yasmin</i> (variant of <i>Yasmine</i>) | 42 | 1 | 41 | 953 | 940 | 13 |
| <i>Evelyn</i> | 168 | 13 | 155 | 346 | 346 | 0 |
| <i>Cynthia</i> | 36 | 3 | 33 | 156 | 156 | 0 |
| <i>Brenda</i> | 40 | 4 | 36 | 167 | 167 | 0 |
| <i>Naomi</i> | 22 | 0 | 22 | 240 | 233 | 7 |
| <i>Sheyla</i> (variant of <i>Sheila</i>) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 110 | 110 | 0 |
| <i>Yasmine</i> (variant of <i>Yasmin</i>) | 5 | 5 | 0 | 300 | 282 | 18 |
| <i>Katherine</i> | 35 | 1 | 34 | 38 | 38 | 0 |
| <i>Kiara</i> (variant of <i>Ciara</i>) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 204 | 204 | 0 |
| <i>Chloe</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 924 | 915 | 9 |
| <i>Melody</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 50 | 50 | 0 |
| <i>Emily</i> | 22 | 2 | 20 | 214 | 202 | 12 |
| <i>Ashley</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 204 | 199 | 5 |
| <i>Kelly</i> | 18 | 0 | 18 | 32 | 32 | 0 |
| <i>Kira</i> (variant of <i>Ciara</i>) | 18 | 6 | 12 | 143 | 143 | 0 |
| <i>Amy</i> | 26 | 1 | 25 | 104 | 104 | 0 |
| <i>Kimberly</i> | 0 | 0 | 0 | 43 | 43 | 0 |
| <i>Agatha</i> | 9 | 9 | 0 | 100 | 100 | 0 |
| <i>Keila</i> (variant of <i>Kayla</i>) | 10 | 1 | 9 | 66 | 66 | 0 |
| TOTAL FEMALES | 977 | 390 | 587 | 7,315 | 7,244 | 71 |

Table 15. Comparative use of female given names between the 1960s and the 2010s in Spain

Generally speaking, the figures in Table 15 are quite revealing, since in the 1960s, a number of 977 women had any of the English names in this corpus in Spain, and from that total amount, 587 females had been born abroad. In the middle of the 2010s, there are already 7,315 females who are called with some of these names, and 7,244 of these women are native Spanish, and just 71 women have come from foreign countries.

In a deeper analysis, in the case of *Jennifer*, in the 1960s, there were only 98 females with this name in Spain, whereas in the decade of the 2010s, that number has increased to 234 females whose name is *Jennifer*. There is another variant of this name, *Jenifer*, which also deserves some attention. In the 1960s, there was nobody with this name in Spain, and in the 2010s, it is used by 55 females. *June* also deserves some attention, as in the 1960s there were only 24 women with that name, and all of them came from other countries. In the 2010s, the figure has increased to 1,027 females who are called *June*, and all of them are Spanish, young Spaniards. A similar situation is shown by the given name *Chloe*. In the 1960s, nobody was called *Chloe*, and in the 2010s there are 924 girls whose name is *Chloe*, and from that total, 915 are native Spanish. *Sheila* and its variant *Sheyla* are names that have gradually spread in Spain. *Sheila*

was the name of 55 women in Spain in the 1960s, and 34 of them came from abroad. In the 2010s, there are 906 Spanish women called *Sheila*. Its variant *Sheyla* was not used to call any woman in Spain in the 1960s. By contrast, in the 2010s, there are already 110 Spanish females who are called *Sheyla*.

Figure 6 shows the ten most common English names of females comparing the decade of 1960s and 2010s.

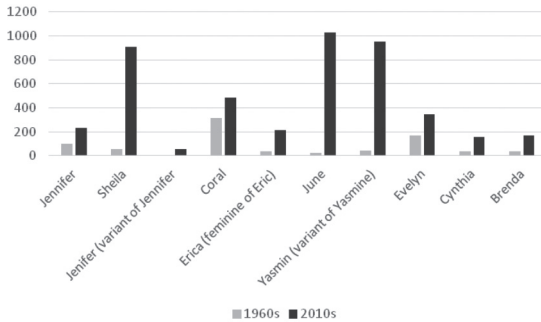


Figure 6. Comparative frequencies of the 10 most common English names of females born in the 1960s and the 2010s

The rest of the names included in Table 15 reveal how the frequency of their use has increased considerably throughout the past four decades. The comparison between the frequency of use of male and female names in the specific decade of the 2010s shows a clear difference in terms of quantity. There are 16,480 Spanish males with English names as opposed to 7,244 Spanish females. In that sense, it could be asserted that English names are currently being more frequently used for boys than for girls in Spain.

The facts presented in this section lead to reflection on the extent to which societal changes that have taken place throughout those decades—the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010—affected and are continuing to affect the choices of certain given names for male and female children. Both globalization and the spread of Anglo-American culture across the globe are reasonable explanations for the increased tendency to use English names in Spain. In addition, the Latin American immigration to Spain during these decades have also played a role for the spread of these foreign names. Latin American societies have also been strongly impacted by the influence of American English due to their proximity to US and the admiration many citizens in these countries feel for this country. Fashion and sense of modernity associated with English are also two important reasons to explain this phenomenon. Probably, such parents associate those names with such values as fashion, prestige, modernity, and glamour; and they have probably taken the names from celebrities, celebrities' children, other famous people, characters in TV serials and soap operas, characters in films, and so on. For instance, the name *Ethan* is the first name of the main character in the popular *Mission Impossible* series of movies starring Tom Cruise. The first in the series

premiered in Spanish cinemas in 1996 and was seen by 3,141,962 moviegoers in Spain. The second in the series premiered in 2000 with 3,372,446 viewers in Spain. The third was released in 2006 and had a lower number of viewers—1,324,539 (*Ministerio de Educación*). Considering those figures, it could be stated that the *Mission Impossible* series of films has been quite popular in Spain, and so, it is likely that the first name of the leading character, *Ethan*, who is a superhero, has encouraged parents to choose that name for their male babies. This does not mean that each celebrity name becomes popular among Spanish babies, but in the case of *Ethan*, there could be a connection between the popularity of the film and the extensive use of this name among Spanish boys.

Related to that matter, Lieberman (1984, 79) ascertains that “if parents name their daughters after glamorous movie actresses, then there will be shifts in first names that reflect the decline of aging stars and the rise of new ones”. In other European countries, the situation does not seem much different from Spain’s. In 2008, Fischer’s research shed light on the use of English names in different European countries, concluding that “it could be suggested that Germany, Austria and Denmark are susceptible to the English name *Emily*, and possibly also to the Anglo-American culture generally” (Fischer 2008, 115).

When parents living in Spain, who are not native speakers of English, choose foreign, mostly English, names for their children, it could be stated that they seem to have a positive attitude toward Anglo-American culture. These parents have the freedom to choose Spanish or any other foreign given name for their children, but they choose English names. This is a situation that did not use to happen some decades ago, as shown in the previous lines.

4.4. ADAPTATIONS OF FIRST NAMES

Some of the names analyzed in this research have been adapted to spellings that use the Spanish phonological system. There are reasons why the spellings of those names get adapted. First, some of the English names are difficult to pronounce in Spanish. Another possible explanation is that there may be a certain level of insecurity about how the name is spelled, as we are referring to foreign names. To illustrate, the names *Jennifer* and *Jenifer* are variants of the same name, so it could be that parents are not confident about how to spell the name. More examples of the spellings of an adapted female name are *Sheyla* and *Sheila*, and *Yasmin* and *Yasmine*, both versions of which are included in the examined list. Both variants have the same pronunciation in Spanish, and parents may be doubtful about which spelling to use. The use of the variants *Christopher*, *Cristopher* and *Cristofer* — not all of which are included in this research; *Jhوناتan* and *Yonatan* — not included in this study — are also examples of that lack of security about how to spell a name or simply lack of knowledge of the original spelling.

A third reason could be that the English spelling of the name does not reflect its pronunciation for speakers of Spanish, for example the name *Ryan*, *Brian* or *Neil*. So, a new version—one that better fits Spanish native pronunciation of that name—arises: *Rayan*, *Brayan* and *Nil*. In the cases of *Brayan*, *Rayan* and *Nil*, I would consider those adapted names as pseudo-English names, since they originally come from Ireland, England or Scotland, but they have undergone a process of adaptation to the Spanish phonetic system. Therefore, they seem not to be purely English names.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Further research on this topic can lead to more conclusive evidence. Despite the limitations of this study, however, the following conclusions may be drawn.

Analysis of variable gender reveals in principle that no noticeable differences—in quantitative terms—may be established between the choice of English names for boys and girls. Some parents seem to choose foreign first names for boys and girls. However, an analysis in depth of the choice of those English names in the decade of the 2010s shows that there is a higher frequency of boys than girls with this kind of names in Spain. This seems to be an increasing tendency for both genders, but it is more remarkable in the case of the males.

When it comes to variable age, the weighted average age of those people with the examined given names is 13 years old in the case of the boys and around 20 years old in the case of the girls. It means that the choice of these names seems to have been started earlier in the case of the girls than in the case of the boys.

Most of these first names started being chosen in the second half of the 1990s and in the 2000s. It supports the hypothesis that this is a relatively recent phenomenon in Spanish society. This period of time coincides with the development of globalization in Spain and the massive immigration movement coming from Latin America to Spain. As Martínez Buján (2002) reports, it was in the period of 1997 and 2001 when the immigration from Latin American countries to Spain reached its climax.

The contrast between the decade of 1960s and that of the 2010s—which is still in progress—shows that in the 1960s, many of these first names were hardly chosen or not even used in Spain; plus, in many cases, the people who had one of those English names had not been born in Spain. By contrast, in the 2010s, the situation is quite different. The number of uses of English first names included in the list rises considerably, and most of these people with those names are native Spaniards, as they have been born in Spain.

In summary, social factors have had an influence on the choice of one given name instead of another. As Lieberson (2000, 69) aptly asserts, “Social factors begin to influence the selection of names in ways that formerly were impossible”. There are external societal influences—social, economic, political, and technological—as well as influences from other nations and cultures that have effects on the name choices. We could consider globalization, immigration and the media as factors influential enough to make certain trends and, consequently, certain given names fashionable and attractive.

Western societies seem uniform from many different perspectives as a result of globalization and migration. Fashion, clothing, trade, commerce, business, music, sports, food, and many other areas seem similar to each other throughout the otherwise different Western countries.

Some decades ago, in Spain, parents used to choose Latin and religious names or their ancestors’ or relatives’ names: grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts. At present, that tendency still continues, but to a lesser extent. Fashion and prestige are two powerful values that make some parents choose a name such as *Sheila* instead of *Cecilia*, the Spanish equivalent of *Sheila* or *Yasmine* / *Yasmin* instead of Spanish *Yasmina*. Even

when babies were baptized in Spain a few decades ago, most priests made parents choose at least one biblical name to stand next to another name that was not biblical. Nowadays that habit is no longer common. Parents can freely choose first names for their children.

To conclude, this piece of research contributes to shed some light on the impact that Anglo-American culture, migration and the media currently have on Spanish language and society. This study focuses on the area of choice of foreign given names to name Spanish young generations. This is a sociolinguistic issue that is worth analysing in the years to come, therefore, it would be interesting to carry out duplicate research one or two decades from now to determine whether the tendency to use foreign names in Spanish society increases or decreases. I dare to say that as long as the United States continues to be the world's most powerful country, the English language and Anglo-American culture will continue to be the "coolest" and most fashionable models to imitate—even when it comes to choosing first names for our babies.

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