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FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

**FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION
DURING FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXCHANGE PROGRAMS**

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Project rationale.....	4
1.2 Significance of the topic.....	6
1.3 Theoretical context of the research.....	6
1.4 Research setting	8
1.5 Objectives.....	8
1.6 Research Questions.....	8
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.1 Exchange Programs.....	10
2.1.1 The phenomenon of internationalization.....	12
2.1.2 The internationalization of Education.....	14
2.1.3 Internationalization, Interculturalism and Global dimension.....	14
2.1.4 The benefits of learning a language in the real context.....	15
2.1.5 International Exchange Programs in Mexico	17
2.1.6 International Exchange Programs at BUAP	18
2.2 Intercultural Communication.....	19
2.2.1 Intercultural contact	21
2.2.2 Communication in intercultural relationships	22
2.3 Culture Shock	23
2.4 Usual obstacles in Intercultural Communication	26
2.4.1 Alternative Languages encountered in Exchange Programs	26
2.4.2 Risk Taking and Withdrawal.....	28
2.4.3 Anxiety.....	30

2.4.4 Self Comparison.....	31
2.4.5 Seeking similarities.....	32
2.4.6 Linguistic Interference: Target Language-Mother Tongue.....	32
2.4.7 Stereotyping.....	35
2.4.8 Ethnocentrism.....	36
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY.....	38
3.1 Research Design.....	38
3.2 Setting.....	39
3.3 Participants.....	39
3.4 Instrument.....	41
3.5 Data Collection.....	42
3.6 Data Analysis.....	43
CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS.....	47
4.1 Factors that influence intercultural communication during foreign language exchange programs.....	47
4.1.1 Academic factors.....	48
4.1.2 Interpersonal Factors.....	50
4.1.3 Intrapersonal Factors.....	53
4.1.4 Cultural Factors.....	57
4.1.5 Target Language in Use Factors.....	61
4.2 Factors that foster Intercultural Communication in an Exchange Program ...	65
4.3 Factors that interfere in Intercultural Communication in an Exchange Program	67
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS.....	71
5.1 Summary.....	71

5.2 Implications.....	73
5.3 Limitations of the study	74
5.4 Recommendations for further research.....	74
REFERENCES.....	76
Appendix I	80
Appendix II.....	82
Appendix III.....	84
Appendix IV	86

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1: Participants	40
Table 2: Found factors	44
Table 3: Participants Identification.....	45
Table 4: Participants programs.....	49
Table 5: Culture Shock Stages.....	61
Table 6: Helping and interfering factors.....	71
Figure 1: Benefits obtained in terms of Target Language	64

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project rationale

Learning a foreign language represents a complex process for language learners because it implies developing the writing, reading, listening and speaking skills and also developing the skills/competences to communicate in a real context. This complexity in most cases starts in a classroom. However, this process cannot be bounded only within the school since it also happens outside it. For example, in exchange programs in other countries where the target language is actually spoken. Students find it difficult to keep on developing their skills once they are out of the school.

The Benemerita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla (BUAP) has plenty of agreements with several international universities in the USA, England, Australia, Canada, France, Japan and Brazil just to name a few. Every year, students have the opportunity to apply for national or international exchange programs where they have the chance not only to know the academic life and educational systems in another context, but also to practice their skills and to take their professional career to the international level.

When studying abroad, students face different situations related to the new culture in which they are immersed. These factors may be considered by the students as either positive or negative. That influence might be taken as positive when students make an effort and speak in the target language willing to improve gradually, which is one of their main exchange goals ; on the other hand, the students may see these factors as negative, producing certain insecurity to such a degree that the student may avoid to take the risk of speaking, leading to a possible stagnation on the development of the language.

It is important to mention that the practice of the language is related to the activities of the exchange program. These activities are not only attached to take classes at the university, but also everyday informal conversations like going to the super market, asking for directions, getting on the bus, buying a coffee, talking to the landlord and of course socializing with the other students whether it is at the

university or in another place. Many of these students may be from different places of the world; therefore, their first languages might be different; as a result, there will be one channel of communication among them. In the everyday informal conversations mentioned above, the students make an effort in order to be fluent, spontaneous, and to apply in a real context what they know about the language in both form and function of the language.

This research will be focused on all those factors influencing the students during the exchange program in another country and how they impacted positively or negatively the development of the target language. The research will as well approach on how individual differences interact with proficiency gains, and how cultural and program related factors shape opportunities for contact with native speakers.

To be precise, this research aims to analyze the process of studying in a foreign exchange program in a different culture and language. It also aims to know how students face the challenge of being a foreign student, as well as to investigate the improvement of such students during and after the exchange with all the benefits that it implies. As a result, this research intends to encourage other students to experience the academic, personal and professional advantages that exchanges bring, besides the improvement of the target language.

This research will have a qualitative orientation since it aims to get deeper information on how the students felt influenced by the factors around them during their foreign exchange program and the impact of this influence on their language development as well as their constructed interpretation as individuals in this specific situation. The data will be gathered through interviews focusing on how the students experienced the process and how they faced it. This is to say that the research will focus on the why's and how's rather than how many.

1.2 Significance of the topic

This research paper aims to look into the experiences of exchange students in order to analyze the consequences that linguistic, cultural, social and academic factors had in the communication of the students in the real context of the target language. The analysis of these experiences will be a useful source of information for future students interested in an academic exchange or to study a master's degree abroad as well as for future research and theses with related topics.

The results will help the School of Languages, as well as their educational staff, to look for ways to support students to have more successful learning experiences regarding exchange programs in other countries. Additionally, this study will help the students, not only those interested in doing an exchange, but the whole student body of the School of Languages to be well aware of how important it is to seek for opportunities to practice the language in real contexts.

1.3 Theoretical context of the research

As the number of study abroad programs has continued to increase into the 21st century, so has the interest in and breadth of research on learning languages in their real contexts (DuFon and Churchill, 2006). The whole process of being an exchange student involves several vital factors that go beyond acquiring the grammar, vocabulary and developing skills. Such factors are related to adaptation to the new environment, culture and both academic and social life in which they will be performing for the next months. In terms of language, the students also need to communicate in a fluent way; with the terms, idioms, slangs and speed of the native speakers.

Moreover, the study of this process of exchange might be subject of research for several fields, such as sociolinguistics, since it will be focusing on the aspects, or in this case, the factors that an exchange student finds in a new different culture that take place in the development of the target language. Within this culture, the society

takes an important role, considering that all the activities that the student performs during this period of exchange are carried out in a society with different cultural norms which impact the students in aspects such as the use of the target language.

According to Mitchell and Myles (1998) the social context provides learning opportunities (formal or informal); also it leads to attitudes which appear in the learner as motivation which joins with other personal characteristics such as age, personality, capabilities and previous knowledge. This also leads to the fact that when individuals learn another language students are learning more than just grammar rules, vocabulary, etc; they are also venturing in another brand new culture that they must join if they are actually in that context.

Likewise, the Language Acquisition will have an important part in this research since it will explore how students, once they have been taught a language with all the process that this involves, perform this language in the real context, taking into account how they perceive and comprehend both the process and the language. DuFon and Churchill (2006) assert that when it comes to acquiring a foreign or a second language, there are almost no other contexts as profitable, rich and complex as studying abroad. On the one hand, the time enjoyed by learners in the host country context would appear to make the interaction easier in terms of linguistic gains. On the other hand, pre-departure individual differences interact in complex ways and are affected by studying in an abroad context, itself conditioned by cultural norms and factors related to program design.

In the same way, Krashen (1981) and Spolsky (1989) suggest that language and culture could be acquired more easily when students are immersed in the target language culture, with elements such as previous knowledge that help learners live within it.

1.4 Research setting

This research will take place at the School of Languages of BUAP. The school offers two programs in teaching in English and French as well as the Masters in Teaching English. The school also offers other languages in different levels for both the students of the university and the public in general.

The reason why this setting has been selected is due to the awareness about the process of language acquisition that the students gain all along their teaching programs. Not to mention, that languages are in constant practice not only during the target language class itself, but also in the courses which integrate the curriculum of their programs.

1.5 Objectives

The objectives of this research are, firstly to determine what factors influenced the intercultural communication in the everyday life of the students during the foreign exchange program.

Secondly, to determine if students who went on an exchange program felt that there were more positive intercultural factors around them while studying abroad.

Finally, to conclude if these students felt that there were more negative intercultural factors around them during the exchange program.

1.6 Research Questions

Having established the problem that concerns this research, as well as the objectives, this paper sets out to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the factors that influence the intercultural communication during the foreign exchange program?
- 2) To what extent do these factors help exchange students develop communication in a foreign language?
- 3) To what extent do these factors interfere in the development of communication in a foreign language?

To sum up, there will be an analysis of the process of exchange and how students faced all the situations regarding their development of the target language within Intercultural Communication.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Studying abroad implies a complex process that has to do with language learning and immersion in another culture. One example are exchange programs. In this experience students are exposed to both the target language and a new culture where they are forced to speak English everyday.

Speaking English in a new context can cause frustration, lack of motivation or fear. I want to study this phenomenon from the perspective of intercultural communication. This chapter addresses topics such as language learning in an intercultural context, exchange programs, and internationalization. Those topics will be discussed below.

2.1 Exchange Programs

Nowadays there are multiple ways to practice a language in the real context besides of travelling as a tourist. For instance there are the recently popular summer camps mainly in the United States of America. However, and talking specifically about Mexicans, one inconvenience with these camps is that most of the time the learner only gets surrounded by other hispanic people since they are in the labour area, so the opportunities to practice the second language are reduced considerably, also there are other opportunities for going to other countries, like the teacher assistantship programs, or the *au pair* program that is made for people (mostly women) that go to other countries to be a baby-sitter. Conversely, academic exchanges represent a different experience from all the named before. Mainly because having the chance to go as a student is not the same as going for working. Going as a student almost all the time involves to have a scholarship, which is a big aid for the students, in this way they do not have to worry about earning money for their living, also they are focusing on studying and performing different duties and adapting to new teachers and courses, not to mention that the environment is

different with students and co-workers. These programs provide an environment that promotes positive attitudes toward both languages and culture, and it is supportive of full bilingual proficiency for both native and non native speakers of English (Rhodes, Christian and Barfield, 1997).

Studying abroad is not new for universities. As it was stated before, exchange programs have been increasing a lot over the last years. There are multiple factors that contribute to the development of these programs, such as the ease of traveling, political changes, economic needs, cultural interaction, etcetera. Unfortunately in Mexico, academic exchanges are not as encouraged as in Europe for example. It has to be taken into account that the economic situation and closeness to other countries is a positive factor that disadvantages Mexican students. This makes the whole experience even more challenging, from the very moment of being accepted, to get a scholarship from either the university or the government (sometimes for other institutions), until the fact of going miles away for sometime overseas in order to gain knowledge and experience.

The immersion programs in the second language make possible the development of academic as well as they bring exceptional experiences, because intensive exposure to the target language through natural communication with native speakers provides enough knowledge about culture and language.

As Landis, Bennett & Bennett point out (2004), the study abroad participants “select themselves”, which means that they choose to go through all that process of selection motivated by certain goal that they want to achieve in several aspects of their life. In this sense, the students must be well aware of the requirements for this procedure; for those who choose a country whose language is different from theirs, they may take into consideration that they will have to fulfill certain expectations language-wise, but also they have to be conscious of all the outlays that an exchange implies because even though the university does the agreement with different institutions all over the world so their students have the chance to do an exchange there, this does not imply necessarily all the time a scholarship for the

students' expenses during their time of exchange. Due to this, the students have to look for grants on their own, which sometimes is no easy task, and sometimes they do not get them; hence a lot of students decide to desert the idea of going on exchange.

There are several contexts in which the studying abroad experience may occur, also this depending on the purposes that it has. Cushner (1994) affirms (as cited in Landis et al, 2004) that there are three basic types of Study-Abroad programs: First, those that are religious, fraternal or for service in nature; second, those that are utterly commercial; and finally, those which concern this research, the academic ones. These programs are officially recognized and accredited by institutions usually responsible to an accrediting agency, and are composed of students in academic study or faculty and students in research-oriented projects.

In short, the academic exchange implies several challenges that will benefit the students, these challenges which could be social, academic, personal or linguistic struggle, but that undoubtedly will benefit the students deeply.

2.1.1 The phenomenon of internationalization

First of all, it is very important to make the difference between internationalization and globalization, since only one of them concerns this research for their implications in communication, university studies and culture. According to Daly (1999) Internationalization refers to the increasing importance of international trade, international relations, treaties, alliances, etc. The term "International", of course, means between or among nations. The basic unit remains the nation, even as relations among nations become increasingly necessary and important. Globalization refers to global economic integration of many formerly national economies into one global economy, mainly by free trade and free capital mobility, but also by easy or uncontrolled migration.

Another important definition for *internationalization* is given by Knight (1994) who points out that the internationalization of Higher Education is the process of integration of international/intercultural dimension into the education, research and the institution's service. In other words, both imply the interaction between two or more nations, but globalization is focused on the economic area, and the internationalization is with other type of situations, including what concerns to this research. Also, the internationalization is a way in which a nation responds to the aftermath of the globalization. It can be said, then, that even though they are different terms attached to separate areas, they both are related, being the internationalization the reaction of the globalization.

International exchange programs have opened a whole new branch when it comes to internationalization ,whose importance and value have been increasing since the last decade of the XX century, inasmuch as the students are well prepared and they get to know a total new culture and system of education in which they can value their own culture and also get a wider perspective and approaches since this internationalization entails politic, economic, academic, socio-cultural and academic views. Simply stated, the students get to know another system in general, in which he or she will have to acquire and improve their skills competences to be more prepared for a potential new labour market, assuming that the one of the purposes of the international exchange is to start getting involved with the abroad context in order to go back to their countries at some point looking for better opportunities.

Knight (1994) stated that the most important reason for the internationalization is the one related to academics due to historical factors but overall to the development of universities, in this way she claims that the concept of universe must be inherent to the name of "university". Having established this, movility of professionals is highly necessary.

In retrospect, the main reason for a person, institution or a country to internationalize is to evolve according to the time they are living as a response to the changing needs.

2.1.2 The internationalization of Education

The term of “internationalization” has been adapted to the academic area , specifically in Higher Education, with the purpose of competing and being at the forefront of the best universities of the world, to play a significant role and not to lie outside the international rankings (Altbach, 2006; Lloyd, Ordorika, & Rodríguez-Gómez, 2011).

Within the process of internationalization, the students are not the only element involved as Navarrete and Navarro (2014) indicate. For the students this phenomenon denotes a rising opportunity of scholar exchange (student mobility); to teachers and researchers it means a possibility to propose or even do new research projects, to create or extend international academic networks ; to some academic managers, internationalization is the perfect scenario to implement the education proposed in otheir homeland; to business people it is the suitable condition to make agreements and to export and import projects in which they have certain interest; to other people it simply means the oportunity to know what education is like in other places. In any way, it could be seen that exchanges bring benefits for both specific and general objectives.

2.1.3 Internationalization, Interculturalism and Global dimension

As it was said before, there are a lot of terms that are involved in the process of exchange, alternatively, not all of them mean the same thing, however they are part of a whole. As it was noted before, the term *international* has to do more with the relations among the countries , nations and cultures, which gives as a result the institutions; all this diversity leads us the *interculturalism*. *Globalism*, on the other hand, gives the sense of worldwide scope, as Knight (2015) noted; in this way it could be said that globalism is present in every part of the world, but it affects every country in different ways: their history, culture, language, traditions, etc. Above all, this situation creates a complex *triad*: bran new opportunities, risks and challenges.

2.1.4 The benefits of learning a language in the real context

It is true that an exchange brings a lot of benefits in terms of social and academic development; however, this development is even more remarkable in terms of second language learning. It is true that the most effective way to learn a language is by being in the actual context. It has been already said that the number of students with the desire of going on exchange has increased mostly due to the multicultural interaction, also due to the ease of travelling and also because of the political changes in the world not to mention the economic needs since most of the students who go on an exchange have the desire to eventually get better job opportunities; but undoubtedly the improvement of certain language in order to perfect it in the real context is one big reason for doing such a thing, not only for academic or social purposes, but because it will be the students' new reality, their new way to communicate and even their way to survive since it is going to be their context, and the way in which the students will succeed on learning the culture will depend on it, according to Byram and Feng (2006).

Nowadays people have more opportunities to visit other countries with other purposes rather than just tourism. Ever since 2005 a lot of young people have been traveling thanks to the Teaching assistantship programs, also there are a lot of opportunities to go working on summer camps. Nonetheless, it is completely different, in terms of experience and language practice, going for working and to study.

In Europe sometimes is even mandatory to study for at least one semester in another country is sometimes even mandatory to get a degree. In addition, the Erasmus Mundus program makes it easier for the students to do such exchange. Of course, it has to be taken into account that in those places the economic factor and the closeness of the countries helps considerably, for this reason it might be more common for European students to go on exchange, than for Mexicans. However, taking the economic factor apart, one could say that the opportunities are the same

for everyone and what is more, the benefits are remarkable no matter the country one comes from, especially in terms of second language development, since oral proficiency achievements are evident according to DuFon and Churchill (2006).

As it was stated before, studying abroad, whether it is for a short or long period grants the opportunity to completely immerse oneself in a new language (and in this way in a new culture). Even if the student is already fluent in a second language, studying in another country increases considerably the language practice in the everyday life by being surrounded by native speakers not only from the host country but also from other countries with the same language. This environment helps to increase vocabulary in everyday life, that is to say informal, colloquial or even vulgar language. When the learner develops a social network in the host community, practicing the target language can still be difficult in some learning environments, and only the most tenacious and persistent language learners can succeed in obtaining opportunities for practice (DuFon & Churchill, 2006). Similarly, the host university will be taking another important part on the students' language development inasmuch as the classes would be taken in the second language in order to improve the formal language not only spoken but written; in brief, all the skills will ameliorate and it affords the possibility to master the language at social, professional and academic levels. Interacting with people from all these areas guarantees the establishment of local, national and international relationships which allows the students to gain respect for and from other cultures. Advanced learners seem to improve more in pragmatic (i.e. sociolinguistic) aspects of language during study abroad than they do in structural aspects (DuFon and Churchill, 2006, p.32).

As DuFon and Churchill (2006, p.18) stated, "studies of gains in oral proficiency made by study abroad learners have revealed that they improved their proficiency over the course of a semester or more abroad, even those who went only for few weeks. Although the gains are not clearly the same as for those who stay longer".

2.1.5 International Exchange Programs in Mexico

In this day and age when our country is going through a critical moment in terms of International Affairs, it is important to look for ways in which our nation creates ties with other countries. As it was previously stated, the internationalization of education is a vital factor not only for Mexico, but also for other countries, since the agreements and benefits obtained through it, impacts many other areas, such as economy (which is one of the most important for many) and the exchange of services and goods. Moreno and De la Torre (2012) asserts that the governments of the countries see in the students a possibility to expand horizons by getting to know other language, culture and new forms of negotiation worldwide, and in this way, have a new perspective of the labour market. In fact, the Mexican government addressed (2007-2012) the importance of the internationalization of education in the Sectoral Program of Education. There are several factors that the students take into account when going on exchange, such as the chance to learn and practice another language, the costs of both the university and life abroad, the versatility of the programs according to the time that they are allowed to be in another country, the academic reputation of the programs of the university, future job opportunities, not to mention the competitiveness that this experience brings to the students in a professional context (OECD, 2007:302, as mentioned in Moreno and De la Torre, 2012).

Doing an exchange, especially during the undergraduate studies, provides an experience that goes beyond the academic. It is also an opportunity to create a good image of the country before other nations. In this manner, the relationships possibly created could lead to future jobs; as it was previously stated, this helps the students to broaden their view in terms of work by getting to know how the working life in places in which the economic and politic system is different from theirs is.

In 2015, over 2,300 Mexicans chose different type of programs to study in another country. Canada emerged to be one the preferred destinies in regards of studies, since English language is one of the most requested, followed by French and German (SIPSE, 2016). On the other hand, Mexico is the target country chosen

by many international students. In 2005, for instance, from the total of students received, 9 % were Spanish, 2.7% Chilean, 2.3 from United States, .9% from Brazil, and the rest is divided into 22 different countries; with this can be inferred that the process of internationalization has been performing ever since (Moreno and De la Torre, 2012).

2.1.6 International Exchange Programs at BUAP

Every year BUAP, through the International Development General Management (previously known as Dirección General de Relaciones Internacionales e Intercambio Académico) offers twice the opportunity to go on exchange and academic mobility. The offers are available for both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The purpose of these exchanges around the world is to strengthen and support the internationalization of the university, in this way the presence of the university internationally is higher, and it will create more agreements; also, the certification and accreditation of BUAP's programs are accomplished through this.

Nowadays, about 500 students from different undergraduate programs apply for an exchange (national or international). A 9% of these students choose a national destination, and the rest prefer to look for an international opportunity. The most popular countries selected by the students are Spain, Colombia and other South American Countries. With these data, at first sight it can be inferred that students prefer going to countries where they speak the same language. The schools with the highest rate of students seeking for an exchange due to their professional profiles are: Administration and Management, Law and Communication (Regional Puebla, 2015).

For those students who are not willing to exit the continent to countries like Canada, USA, Colombia or Chile; there are agreements such as: ANUIES, BRAMEX

which offers exchanges to Brazil, or JIMA to Argentina, just to name a few. In the case of Asian universities, the agreements UMAP and COANHEC give the possibility to study in places like China, Japan or Korea; and this last-mentioned agreement also provides the chance to study in countries like Germany, Spain, Finland, France, Italy, Norway, Netherlands, The United Kingdom, Russia, Ukraine and some colleges in Oceania (Reto Diario, 2012). With the programs mentioned above, the dimension of the phenomenon of internationalization of the university can be seen.

2.2 Intercultural Communication

There are many terms that define culture and communication such as multicultural, intercultural or cross-cultural, just to name a few. However, sometimes they are misunderstood. What makes them different is the number of cultures involved and the type of interaction. In order to understand these topics, it is important to understand what culture is. Herskovits (1955), for example, says that culture is everything that is human made. In retrospect, culture is all that is part of a certain community: customs, traditions, rules, ways of living and thinking, and of course the communication, which implies the language. It is learned since the moment of birth and it is transmitted from generation to generation. It goes without saying that communication and culture are closely related. Gudykunst (2004) points out that communication is unique within each culture and at the same time, there are systematic similarities and differences across cultures. In brief, culture is an important fact that will influence the development of those who are on exchange or immersed in a foreign culture, and it does not affect their learning. Unlikely, it is part of the foreign language and it gives plenty of opportunities to improve more and also to get to know more about the new country.

It is important to know what are the elements that make culture so important, Samovar and Porter (1991) affirm that the main elements are: a) History, which is passed from generation to generation as a way to preserve its origins; b) Religion, c) Values that dictate what an individual should or should not do; d) Social

organization, the system or structure in which the society works and that maintains the order; and finally e) Language, that enables the people to share beliefs, ideas and perceptions. One important factor that influences culture is perception, which is the way an individual interprets, in this case, the culture. Thanks to perception, a meaning could be given to many events (Samovar and Porter, 1991). This is to say, that the interpretation of a different culture is never completely unbiased, since this interpretation is being decoded with the individual's perception influenced by their own culture.

Now that the meaning of *culture* has been already settled, it is time to move on to *cultural communication*. Gudykunst (2004 p. 35) declares that cultural communication is a process through which cultural difference is expressed and constructed and thanks to it a community and the people that comprise it construct, enact and negotiate a communal sense of communicative conduct. Cultural communication is a complex human practice that encompasses two interrelated aspects of social life. The former being the use of particular means and meanings of communication that can be found in particular times, places and social milieus. The latter, the role of communication in performing the cultural, or communal, function : the workings of communication in constructing the communal life of a community and in providing individuals the opportunity to participate in , identify with, and negotiate that life. Simply stated, intercultural communication is the one that occurs between people from different nationalities, cultures and academic background (Gudykunst, 2004).

Cross-cultural communication is certainly important since it is that ability that enables one person to interact with people from different cultures and backgrounds in order to achieve successful relationships. Thanks to cross-cultural communication one can realize what people and other cultures are by having them face to face, and overall through the language which is the own source of communication. However, cross-cultural communication deals more with a comparison between two or more cultures. Conversely, Intercultural communication implies, by force, face-to-face interaction; hence, for the purpose of this research, it is clear that Intercultural

communication is the main element, since thanks to it the students have the opportunity to get more involved with the new experience by being surrounded by students in the same situation of being foreigners. When the learner is enjoying the experience of studying another language in the real context, and overall feeling the motivation through the bonds made with the people surrounding them (native or internationals) the progress will be more significant and will have more impact in their own view of second language development. Samovar and Porter (1991) defines Intercultural communication as the event where an individual from certain culture produces a message that is decoded by an interlocutor from a different culture. This is to say, that the interaction where intercultural communication occurs deals with different views, perceptions and knowledge of the world of each participant, just as in an international exchange. This is why intercultural communication is what best orients this research.

2.2.1 Intercultural contact

Once intercultural interaction has been established, it is important to mention that, according to Samovar and Porter (1991), there are two types of interaction that exist within intercultural communication: Domestic and International, being the international the one directly attached to the research. The Domestic interaction is found in the place where the individual belongs, where certain “sub-cultures” are found. Each sub-group shares many characteristics; such as traditions, ways of talking, beliefs, religion and political posture. These characteristics influence the form in which a person acts and reacts to the interaction with other cultures.

Samovar and Porter (1991) suggested that the key to achieve an effective intercultural communication is to understand the aspects that exist in both cultures and co-cultures: traditions, beliefs, religion, political posture, argot, history and perceptions; noting that the view that perception we have of the culture and co-cultures is being analyzed from our own cultural perspective.

The international contact is found in multicultural contexts i.e. where many nationalities interact within a given cultural setting. However, no matter how frequent this is or is not in Mexico, it is in these situations where we could be talking about international contact, and talking about exchanges, the concept of contact grows stronger, since just for the fact of being surrounded by people from all over the world, international contact is enhanced.

2.2.2 Communication in intercultural relationships

The relationship formation stands for an interest directly connected with communication, no matter what kind of relationship (Gudykunst, 2004). The reason for this is because thanks to relationships and the interest the performer puts into them, intercultural relationships will, or will not, happen effectively.

Gudykunst (2004) affirms that there are some important aspects that impact the intercultural communication, such as:

Differences and stereotypes. There are two main differences when it comes about intercultural relationships. First, the cultural difference between those who are involved. The learners will learn how to interact with those differences and what is more, to learn from each other. Also they face the fact that the relationship may not be common in the society so it might be stereotyped. Stereotypes are often used to dominate, underestimate or dehumanize some people of outgroups. One function of the stereotypes is to create order out of the chaos of social reality. They give guidelines for cross-cultural interactions and expectations for the behavior of others.

Cultural identity. People with strong and insecure cultural identification tend not to interact cross-culturally. As a consequence their intercultural relationships are almost null. This may be because for either pride, arrogance or shame (for those who lack cultural identity) they are not willing to exchange ideas, points of view or to enter into a casual conversation. Social identity theorists have argued that the desire

to maintain a positive self-image motivates people to favorably evaluate the groups to which belong to (Abrams & Hogg; Tajfel & Turner as cited in Gudykunst, 2004).

2.3 Culture Shock

As it has been already stated, there are several benefits for those who decide to learn the language in the real context. Alternatively, those students also face some issues when entering this new environment, such as the “culture shock” . This term was first introduced by Kalervo Oberg in 1960 to describe the anxiety resulting from not knowing what to do in a new culture. In Merriam Webster’s Dictionary (1932) it is defined as a feeling of confusion, doubt or nervousness caused by being in a place (such as a foreign country) that is very different from what one is used to. Also it says that it is a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation. Pedersen (1994) establishes that *culture shock* is the process of initial adjustment to an unfamiliar environment. It involves the adjustment in its emotional, psychological, behavioral, cognitive and psychological impact on individuals.

This process is composed of four stages:

First stage: Excitement and euphoria of foreign travel. This stage is also known as the “honeymoon stage”. During this period is the learners have the excitement and curiosity of a tourist. By this stage, as Santoro Bellini states (1998) the learners joyfully responds to the new environment and will enjoy noting the differences in language, people, food, culture, fashion, customs, traditions and all that is now surrounding them. The urge to discover everything is present and the whole trip seems to be an excellent decision. Mostly the learner is not thinking about the time left but in the present.

Second stage: Commonly known as “the frustration stage”. Personal, social and cultural differences intrude more and more into the individuals’ image of self-security. During this stage the learner might be feeling certain tiredness of not understanding not only the language but gestures and signs, this will lead to some feelings of discontent, impatience, anger, sadness and incompetence (Guanipa, as quoted in Nam Long, 2009).

Sometimes the family bounds pass through a face of split. The learner starts facing the difference in specific things like the daily routine and the complainings about local customs and conditions show up as well as the self-blame for any difficult even if it is not a really important problem, therefore, it is considered to be the most difficult stage. This stage is very important in terms of language since it is when the learner starts to seek (willfully) people who speak the same language and sometimes they even look for people from the same country. The also designated *rejection period* by Santoro Bellini (1998) “can be triggered by the realization that, as an outsider in a new culture, language or misunderstandings of cultural cues can often make the simplest task seem like a daunting challenge. Furthermore, because the high expectations set during the Honeymoon Period appear much farther out of reach, the individual feels disillusioned”.

Third Stage. Victims gradual recovery. The learner’s frustrations begin to decrease and he/she begins to learn more about the local traditions and customs. Once he realizes it is going to be his environment from that moment, empathy is present here. The language skills increase and he start making friends as well as to reintegrate the family relationships. In the most extreme cases, this stage is characterized by the anger.

Fourth Stage. This period may be labeled as *acceptance stage*, which not necessarily implies that the learner has fully understood the culture, but he or she realizes that it is not completely necessary to understand the whole culture in order to develop with autonomy. The process of integration to the new culture continues, but in an politer way. According to Guanipa (cited in Nam Long 2009) the learners

are able to see pros and cons in both cultures making them experienced a feeling of belonging and allows them to set some goals. This could be called assimilation or adaptation, the new reality has been finally accepted.

Pedersen (1994) claims that there is a fifth stage where the learner has achieved the independence and where he has adopted the biculturalism, where the learner feels comfortable with both cultures. Guanipa (retrieved from Nam Long, 2009) also states that there is a fifth stage, which she denominates *re-entry shock*, this happens once the learner is back to the native country and finds that certain things have changed.

It is important also to note that this phenomenon does not affect every single person that goes to study, visit or work to another country, but it happens inside everyone that goes through unfamiliar events and unexpected circumstances (Pedersen, 1994). The culture shock is an active process of dealing with change rather than a noxious event which distinguishes Affect, Behaviour and Cognitions (ABCs) when people are exposed to another culture. The Affect has to do with the culture change that leads to psychological adjustment; Behaviour is changed through learning, and results in the acquisition of specific skills that have behavioural outcomes corresponding to sociocultural adaptation and finally the Cognitions responds to sociocultural adaptation, which is the development and change of a specific identity (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001).

As Pedersen stated (1994), there are some points that must be taken into consideration about this culture shock:

- It is a process and not a single event
- It may take place at many different levels simultaneously as the individual interacts with a complex environment
- It becomes stronger or weaker as the individual learns to cope or fails to cope
- It teaches the individual new coping strategies which contribute to future success

- It applies to any radical change presenting unfamiliar or unexpected circumstances.

Entering this new culture from one moment to another causes some unpleasant feelings in the student, these feelings make the student sometimes reflect about both their host and their own country. This is to say that the students start to evaluate both the good points and bad aspects about their new context as well as what they just left behind. They start facing their decisions and evaluating whether it was a good or a bad one. But one of the main things that goes through evaluation during these moments is the ease for communication. When entering a new country where the language is not the same they will have to fulfill new needs at the same time they care for the ordinary ones, This is to say that with everyday needs they will have to add now the fact that they will have to communicate them in a language that is not theirs, and even when they are proficient at the language, the factor language-culture/culture-language will represent a big challenge.

As it was already established, this culture shock is one of the reasons the learner starts looking for people whose mother tongue is the same as his/hers, since it is a way to “hole up”, for some of them until they go home again and for other until they get used to the new environment.

2.4 Usual obstacles in Intercultural Communication

This section, discusses some of the issues that represent common obstacles within the intercultural communication during the exchange in a foreign country. The obstacles encountered might be at a social, personal, cultural or linguistic level.

2.4.1 Alternative Languages encountered in Exchange Programs

When talking about culture, is it also mandatory to consider that language is closely attached to it. In fact, it is not possible to address one without the other. Every culture has its own way of communicating. During an exchange program, the process of

immersion involves also the recognition of the different ways of talking, and how they differ from the speaker's native language. These differences go beyond the formal or informal styles that we have been taught in class, since there are plenty of diversities within them. Also they differ when talking about the very same language, for instance, in Portugal people use the pronouns *Tu* and *Você* for the second person, making the difference for those with whom one can have more confidence, whereas in Brazil *Tu* is never used. They make the difference of formal and informal between *Você* and *O Senhor* or *A Senhora*.

As Samovar and Porter (1991) noted, one of the functions of the language is to preserve certain social status among the members of a culture. As an example of this we have the Spanish Language where we can see the difference between *Tú* and *Usted* for those belonging to a more familiar environment. Something similar occurs in Portuguese as already mentioned in the example above. Finally, an example in Japan is even more rigid when making social status differences through language as one of the participants mentioned "the rules of respect and the difference in the way to make relationships within the language can be seen in the different registers that are used among their superiors, colleagues, family, friends, and so on".

As it was previously mentioned, within a culture, there are several co-cultures that have their own ways of thinking and behaving. Also, each sub-group has developed a certain "code", that is only theirs. This is one system in which they have added new vocabulary that distinguishes them; although it may be understood by other, sometimes it can be considered as offensive or intrusive to use it. This is known as **Argot**. Jandt (2007) notes that argot helps developing the identity. He also defines the link that exist within certain sub-group. On the other hand, we also find the **slangs**, that are derived from argot, but little by little have joined the common informal communication of a language. The slangs are understood by everyone, nevertheless they are known to be casual (Samovar and Porter, 1991).

The slangs are target of fascination for the performers, since the casual conversations are more frequent when doing an exchange and adding this kind of words to the students' normal speaking implies a better domain and understanding of the language.

2.4.2 Risk Taking and Withdrawal

Asides from the culture shock and its stages, the practice of the second language could represent a real anguish for the learner. It can even cause psychological and panic crisis according to Adler (1987), who also mentions that it reflects feelings of estrangement, anger, hostility, indecision, frustration, unhappiness, discomfort, homesick, being angry for not understanding; just to name a few.

Marín Cervantes (2013) indicates that the theoretical concept of risk taking includes several aspects of ambiguity and unexpectedness. In general terms, risk taking refers to the willingness to be risky in certain circumstances. It has been proposed that a tendency to take risks is associated with a greater language learning success (Skehan, 1989) and thereby, when this risk taking is taken to the next level, which is performing in the real context, the success and the satisfaction are even greater. The individual needs to be aware that in order to master one language, mistakes will be made and despite of the fact that these mistakes are unavoidable it is important to be willing to learn from them, because they are helpful for the form and function of the language, but overall with the pronunciation. As Kusumaningputri (2012) holds, when performers are not encouraged to feel and think that making mistakes is normal and that it is part of learning process, many situations will become anxiety-provoking areas. As anxiety becomes higher, risks takers will not be mediated. There are several studies about risk taking within the classroom, however it takes more courage to take the risk in the actual context. Since in the classroom the teacher will be willing to help and correct, and even though the rest of the students might laugh or judge, it is assumable that they will have mistakes as well. However, taking a risk in the context means that people may or may not correct, also

there is the risk that the learner will not be understood or depending on the culture the mistake could be taken even as an offense. This is why some learners are not willing to “expose” themselves in a culture-language that they not fully know so they decide not to leave their comfort zone. Kahneman, Slovic and Tversky (as cited in Marín Cervantes, 2013), for instance, propose that taking risks can have an essentially negative outcome because the learner might be involved in a loss or failure situation. Hence, the concept of risk taking tends to be associated with an unfavorable condition that may hinder oral communication in a second language. It is also possible that risk takers sacrifice accuracy for the sake of speed in speech production (Dewaele & Furnham, 1992), which might lead the learner to produce poor linguistic output.

McClelland (as cited in Auer, 1984) developed a theory of achievement motivation which proposes that performers perceive the likelihood of achieving goals as constituting medium-risk tasks. In contrast, other performers will be attracted by low-risk tasks. This low-risk tasks will be easily achievable but as a result, unmotivating, since they do not represent a real accomplishment. This is to say the as long as the learner feels motivated enough he will settle certain goals in order to reach them, this goals will increase the risk gradually and thus the satisfaction will be proportional.

The theory proposes, as Auer (1984) stated, that succesful performers will be those who build the tasks that face them as medium-risk, and achievable. As a result, they are more likely to engage in the cumulative learning activities that lead to longer-term success. Unsuccessful performers, on the other hand, will tend to be those who set excesively high or low goals for themselves with neither of these outcomes likely to lead to sustained learning. Nevertheless, if the individual does not feel the desire to get into this circumstances in order to increase the level, whether for insecurity, lack of motivation or uncertainty, they are more likely to withdraw from this communication opportunities (Samovar and Porter, 1991).

It is true that during an exchange program, it becomes natural and even mandatory to speak in the target language. Not only for the academic factor (classes), but also for basic and necessary activities, like taking the transport, going to the grocery store, etc; yet, there are other activities in which the student can actually make a decision of joining or withdrawing. Making friends, going to extracurricular activities or traveling. In these events, that are not mandatory in academic terms, the performer is the one that chooses between immersing in the environment that eventually will lead to a constant practice of the language or to withdrawing just for insecurity or embarrassment about making mistakes.

Risk taking is crucial for second language development, because it means that the learner is getting out of his comfort zone, which in this case would be talking in his native language all the time; whether it is by talking with the family, establishing relationships with people with the same native language or even by trying to avoid every kind of contact with native speakers at all.

2.4.3 Anxiety

When entering a new country, and with this, a new culture, in most of the cases the individual may not know how to behave and what to expect in terms of traditions, attitudes, beliefs, values, etc (Gudykunst, 2004). This is why in many cases, culture shock occurs; the learner has many different expectations and when facing the reality it can be seen that it is completely different, either in a good or a bad way.

Talking with native people from the host country is another moment of high importance, specially the first time, since it is the first contact and confrontation with the real context. During this moment, it might be normal to experience a feeling of anxiety and uncertainty.

2.4.4 Self Comparison

It is very common that performers measure their progress by comparing themselves to other people. This may be helpful or not depending on the individual's personality. Performers who are consistently reminded that their second language is inferior to that of their peers may come to behave and perform at a much less proficient level, in this way they can perceive that they are being stereotyped as "good" or "bad" language learners, or in this case performers, "strong" or "weak" speakers of the second language by either the teachers, family, friends or whoever around them.

When the learners join an academic exchange program, they get into a particular relationship with the other exchange students with whom perhaps they go to same classes, travel and some other experiences that will make them have a different union from what they have back home with their friends or family; simply stated, they will be in the "same channel", since they all are in the same situation of being outsiders making an effort to succeed in an academic and social context where not only the language is different, but also the academic system, culture and other factors that have been previously stated. For all these reasons, the foreign learners will see themselves immersed in a closeness where they will be competing in certain manner with one other in their ability to adapt, perform and grow, consciously or unconsciously in the foreign country.

If the learners' attitude is positive and daring, this will work as a motivation to get better at their performance, and also they will look for the opportunities to practice regardless the errors they can make, willing to be corrected by their native friends in order to improve. However, in some learners this can result in resignation and limitation of their opportunities to perform their second language and conversely they will look for more chances to speak in their mother tongue and in like manner to avoid using the target language as much as possible. For this type of students the comparison could be reason of depression if the learner finds that his domain of the language is not as good as his peers'.

2.4.5 Seeking similarities

The obstacles in intercultural communication can make the students to seek for a comfort zone, away from the Target Language. At this point, the performer might start looking for people with whom they share certain characteristics in order to feel in a familiar environment. The most obvious characteristic that they can seek for is the language.

Being on exchange means that lots of social relationships will be done among different kinds of people. However, it is a fact that we can choose the people that we want to be around us. Samovar and Porter (1991) affirm that people in these cases tend to search for people with same or similar vision, habits, traditions or customs, so they feel identified to talk about things all of them might both understand and enjoy. The problem with this pursuit of similar acquaintances is that it may represent the exclusion of those who do not share the same characteristics, reducing the possibilities to grow the social network and to extend the communication interculturally.

2.4.6 Linguistic Interference: Target Language-Mother Tongue

Lekova (2009) mentions that in correlative bilingualism both language systems (native and foreign) exist together in the learner's mind and are independent from one another. In the case of subordinate bilingualism (Lekova, 2009), the second language is not mastered to the degree of the first language is. Here, the mother tongue dominates and influences the second language; which is to say that the two languages are separated in the learner's mind. Conversely, the native language is always superior and that is why it tends to manifest more commonly when there are some signs of confusion.

Crystal (as quoted in Skiba, 1997) holds that code or language, switching occurs when a bilingual person alternates between two languages during the speech with another bilingual person. Both of them (interference and transference) may be

found at different levels: fonologic, morphologic, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and even graphic. One example of this situation may be when the learner gets into a conversation where there are both native speakers from the host country and people whose native language is the same as his, or even when all the participants of the conversation have different languages and they have to communicate in a standard language, commonly English.

Berthold, Mangubhai & Batorowicz (1997) define (as quoted in Skiba, 1997) phonological interference as items including accent such as stress, rhyme, intonation and speech sounds from the first language influencing the second one. This is to say, that not only the language itself may stand for an obstacle when switching from L1 to L2., but also during this process the way the words are being produced might suffer alterations.

According to Lekova (2009) there are two types of interference when it comes about the matter involved: *interlanguage* and *intralanguage*; and two types according to form: implicit and explicit. Interlanguage. The most common interference happens when there are negative transfer of habits from the native language (in some cases from the first foreign language that is supposed to be in very good command) to the second language. This is more common when the foreign language is being taught at a very early age, for this reason the logical thinking of the children makes them fall into these kind of mistakes e.g. saying *I have six years old* instead of *I am six years old*, the confusion between *I like you* and *you like me* or all the transitive verbs that lacks the direct complement pronouns (me, te, se, nos) that Spanish has.

Intralanguage interference occurs when the learners make mistakes once the language has been already learnt and it has certain influence on them and some habits established in the foreign language. In other words, this interference takes place not during the process of learning but once the students have certain amount of knowledge of the language. E.g. saying *I do not have many money* instead of *I do not have much money* or the lack of subjunctive mode.

Interference is explicit when the learner makes mistakes in oral and written foreign language expression transferring language habits from the native to the foreign language and thus they ignore the norms of foreign speech. With implicit interference learners do not make mistakes because they avoid using grammatical and lexical difficulty constructing phrases without it, which leads to a conversation with no mistakes but the speech will be simpler and poorer that little by little loses its expressive and idiomatic aspects (Lekova, 2009).

When the learners are in the real situation of studying abroad, assuming that they are in a country where the language is different from theirs, they will find that it is really common to have conversations where language switching will occur, since not only they will be having conversations with native speakers, but also other bilingual students. Crystal (1987), quoted by Skiba (1997) asserts that there are several reasons for that switching to happen. The first would be that the speakers may not be able to express themselves in one language so switches to the other to compensate for the deficiency. Consequently, the speaker is pushed into talking in that language for a while. In a sense, this could be also for not leaving their comfort zone and also to follow the conversation more fluently. This type of switchings are more usual when the speaker is upset, tired or distracted. Next in order, code switching occurs when a person is wishing to express solidarity and empathy with certain person. These affinity is settled between them when the listener responds in the same way. However, these switching could also be used in the opposite way; this is to say, that the speakers could be using the language switching to exclude from the conversation those who do not speak the same language. These notions suggests that code switching may be used as a socio-linguistic tool by bilingual speakers.

Skiba (1997) concludes that language switching cannot be quite seen an inteferece since it supplements the speech where it is used due to a lack of ability of expression. In this sense the code switching serves as a manner to continue the conversation rather than interfering.

2.4.7 Stereotyping

Stereotyping happens more often than it could be thought. As a matter of fact, if we think of cultures like Japanese, French, German, Russian or Brazilian, we may have already some thoughts about what they are like, based on what we have been taught, mainly by mass media. We take these beliefs for granted and accept them as true, with the conviction that all the people of these cultures are exactly the same.

Samovar and Porter (1991 p. 286) define Stereotyping as “a form of categorization that mentally organizes the experiences and guides the behaviour toward a particular group of people”. This is to say, that humans have, in some way, the need to categorize everything they know (people included), so that it is easier for them to differentiate them.

Just as culture, stereotyping is something that is acquired after being born. It is not something innate, it is learnt in many different ways, and after this, it is developed all along with all that it is known about the world. Samovar and Porter (1991) claim that there are mainly four sources from where stereotypes are learnt and developed: family and friends; through the limited personal contact that one individual may have with people from other cultures; mass media, mainly television and cinema which have provided images of people from all around the world following this pattern of stereotypes and clichés; and finally, stereotypes arise from fear of people forming groups that differ from their own, this is to say the possible inability to comprehend people different from us.

When it comes about intercultural communication, stereotyping represents a problem for three main reasons, according to Samovar and Porter (1991):

1. The learner assumes that the stereotype applies to every single person belonging to that culture. For example, if one person thinks that every Chinese is shy, they might think that they will not have the desire to interact. As result, they may avoid communicating with them.

2. They do not let us see that there are other things to learn about cultures. They are oversimplified, overgeneralized, and exaggerated. Most of the time they are based on half-truths, so when an individual learns and realizes that they are not true, there might be a shock and maybe even lead to a stage where they do not know how to act, or what to do or not to do with these people.
3. Stereotypes tend to repeat and reinforce beliefs until they often become taken as “true”, not only by the person that has the belief, but maybe also by the people stereotyped themselves. At some point, every activity performed by the stereotyped person, may serve as a confirmation of this belief.

2.4.8 Ethnocentrism

Another obstacle that can exist in the intercultural communication has to do with the own perception that the performers have of their own culture. Nanda and Warrms (as quoted in Samovar and Porter, 1991, p.297) define Ethnocentrism as “the notion that one’s own culture is superior to any other”. It is the idea that other cultures should be measured by the degree to which they live up to their cultural standards to be like them. We are ethnocentric when we view other cultures through the narrow lens of our culture or social position, thinking that our own culture is richer in every aspect.

Ethnocentrism, as culture itself, is usually learned and adopted simultaneously to the growth in an unconscious level. It is inculcated from generation to generation by implication when we are taught to respect, follow, love, share, associate and feel identified with our costumes, traditions, history and beliefs (Samovar and Porter, 1991).

Culture and Ethnocentrism are closely related, Samovar and Porter (1991) state that anthropologists generally agree that ethnocentrism can be found in every culture, of course at different degrees. Ethnocentrism eventually leads to an undervaluation of other cultures and some intransigence to accept the fact that other cultures are as important, interesting and rich as theirs; and what is more, at a higher level, there

will be denial to interact and to be immersed in cultural exchange, deterring in this way any possibility of having effective intercultural communication.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, specific information about the participants, the setting and the instrument of the research is given. A step-by-step description of both the data collection and analysis regarding this research is provided as well. The qualitative nature of the research led to the application of an interview in order to get the information needed for the data collection.

3.1 Research Design

This research focuses on how the participants felt influenced by the factors surrounding them during their period of abroad exchange, and the impact of this influence on their language development. The study has a qualitative orientation and data is gathered focusing on how the participants experienced and faced the exchange in academic, social, linguistic, communicative, personal and interpersonal terms. Rodríguez, Gil and García (1996) assert that the naturalist paradigm in which qualitative research is based, acknowledges the presence of multiple realities coexisting; it tries then, to deepen into such phenomena and understand them, in order to give them meaning from those who experience those realities in their natural context. The setting, participants and groups are not reduced to simple variables; they are considered as a whole.

Hernández, Fernandez and Baptista (2010) support that the qualitative approach aims to comprehend the participants' perspectives about the phenomenon around them, to deepen in their experiences and opinions, this is to say, the way in which they subjectively perceive their reality.

3.2 Setting

This section aims to describe the setting, which is the place, time, and circumstances in which something develops or happens, in this case, the research, and more specifically, the data collection.

As stated before, the setting takes place in the School of Languages with students of both of its teaching programs: two from English and one from French. This institution offers not only the previously mentioned Undergraduate Teaching Programs, but also the continuation to these studies with the Master's Program in Teaching English.

As many other public or private universities, at BUAP there is a language centre that offers students the possibility to learn and develop skills in other languages; whether they do it to certificate a language as a requisit for their degree, or for their own will, interest and pleasure. This service is provided by the School of Languages, whose courses are destined for both students of the university and also general public; however the courses that are only for BUAP students are cheaper as an aid for them. The available languages at this institution are: English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin, Portuguese, Nahuátl and Spanish for foreign students.

3.3 Participants

Having established the qualitative nature of the research, in this section there is a description of the participants and all the factors taken into account that make them suitable for the purposes of this research.

The participants of this study are four students at the School of Languages that during their Undergraduate studies of Teaching (English or French), within the school, had the opportunity to go on an exchange to another country whose language is different from Spanish. There are two female participants: one 22-year-old, generation 2012 who was hosted by the Appalachian State University in North

Carolina in USA; one 27-year-old, generation 2009 who joined the Caen Basse-Normandy University in France; and two male: one 24-year-old, generation 2012 who studied at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil; and one 28-year-old, generation 2013 hosted by Aichi Prefectural University, located in the city of Nagakute, Aichi, Japan. As table 1 shows. Some of the participants have already finished their studies on English or French Teaching and some of them have not.

Participant	Sex	Age	Generation	Host University	Country	Length of the exchange program	BUAP und. Program finished at the moment of the interview.	Mayor Undergraduate Programs joined at University during the exchange
1. A	Male	28	2013	Aichi Prefectural University	Japan	1 year: 2014-2015	LEI/No	Foreign Languages and Latin American History
2. B	Female	22	2012	Appalachian State University	U.S.A.	4 months: 2015	LEI/No	English and Global Studies
3. C	Male	24	2012	University of Sao Paulo	Brazil	5 months: 2016	LEI/Yes	Linguistics and Modern Languages
4. D	Female	27	2009	Caen Basse-Normandie University	France	1 year: 2012-2013	LEF/Yes	Applied Foreign Languages , Iberian and Ibero-American Studies.

Table 1: Participants

All the participants spent at least four months, between 2012 and 2016, in the host country speaking a language (or languages in some cases) different from Spanish. Having already mentioned that all the participants were immersed in a context with different language, culture and kind of classmates, it is clear that they experienced intercultural communication to the highest extent.

One reason why these participants were selected is that since the participants are part of their Undergraduate Teaching Programs, they are taught about how the process of acquiring a language is, and what is more, they are well aware of it because they went through this process not only with the target language of their respective programs, but also with the foreign requisit language that the School demands.

3.4 Instrument

This section presents a description of the instrument used for the data collection. Also, there is an explanation about how the instrument was designed according to the needs of this research in order to obtain the necessary information.

The instrument selected for the purposes of this research, is the semi-structured interview, with the aim of getting deeper and contextualized information about the perceptions and thoughts of the participants. As Campoy and Gomes mentioned (2009), the interview intends to comprehend and understand rather than explain, promoting the approach of new topics while talking. The interviewer adopts an attitude of “genuinely interested listener” during the process; the answers then, are not evaluated, therefore there is no such a thing as “right” answers.

The process to create the instrument was through the elaboration of a personal journal by the author of this research, in which all the events that occurred during the international exchange program were told. There was a detailed description of his experience in academic, social, linguistic, communicative and

cultural terms; this description was written from a personal perspective and point of view. The journal was written in a chronological way, with every paragraph or any outstanding moment narrated, a potential question was brought. Finally, the questions were organized by topic and area, and their transcendence was evaluated.

A pilot interview was applied to participant B (the one that went to USA) before the final draft. It is important to mention that this pilot interview had the questions in disorder, they were not divided into segments by topic; so, the answers did not seem to have a logical sequence. However, this pilot helped to measure time and to highlight the importance of the organization of the sequence of the questions by topic, since there need to be a sequence and continuity with both the questions and the answers, as well as to make it easier to find patterns in the answers of the participants.

After having the questions reviewed, there was a total number of 18, which were structured and organized in four different categories: 4 about Information on the program and the university, 4 on language learning, 7 about interaction and intercultural communication, and 3 concerning obstacles, motivation and advantages, (see appendix I). Once the interview was ready (post-reviewing), it was applied to the participants, including participant 4 again. The questions were in Spanish for the comfort of the participants, see a translated version of it in appendix I.

3.5 Data Collection

This section describes the process of gathering the information. Once the participants were detected in a list of the students who had gone on exchange by the coordination of the school, the first thing was to contact them. After having enough number of replies, the reason for contacting them was explained to them and then, they were asked for their permission and cooperation to participate in the research. The next step was to arrange a meeting. The interviews were applied

individually with each one of the participants in a place that was chosen by them so they felt confident and comfortable; in two cases it was a park, another in a library and finally in the own house of the participant. The places were meant to be chosen to avoid interruptions and noise. The interviews were recorded in order for the participants to feel free to say as much as they wanted, as well as for their later transcription.

The length of the interviews were around twenty four and forty minutes and they were recorded in order to have all the information available for their subsequent transcription. Due to the semi-structured nature of the instrument, there were opportunities to have further information and questions led by the main question. In addition, the interview was applied in Spanish, not only because not all the participants are part of the Teaching English Program, as it was previously stated, but also to let them express freely as much as they want and in a comfortable way. The interviews were conducted in a satisfactory way and with no complications. The participants cooperated by giving as much information as they could, not to mention the empathetic environment that was created.

3.6 Data Analysis

Once data was collected, a transcription and an analysis of it were made. For an interview of around twenty minutes, the transcription took three hours approximately. All the ideas and thoughts of the participants were embodied in these transcriptions.

As stated before, the interview is divided into four sections: Program and university, Language learning, interaction and intercultural communication, and obstacles, motivation and advantages. In every section of the interview, an analysis was done following the procedure proposed by Izcara (2004) trying to bring the main ideas from the text and turning them into key words that may respond the research questions. The procedure is explained in detail in the coming sections.

With the aim of starting to distinguish some terms from others, each particular topic was underlined with a different color. Those who had a connection were underlined with the same tone. Having in mind that the main purpose of this research is to find out what are the factors that influence the intercultural communication of the students when they are on a foreign exchange program, every possible factor found in the interviews was noted equally.

After identifying the particular reference topic within the transcriptions, the simplification part came. In a new document, the topics mentioned before were listed in order of appearance. In this part, there was a discrimination of topics; this is to say, that those topics that only appeared in one interview and that seemed to be irrelevant were removed. On the other hand, an identification of repeated, similar and related elements was made in spite of reducing the list with the predominant and important topics (See Appendix II).

The next step was the categorization. At this point it was possible to turn every color into a category: Academic factors-red, Interpersonal factors-pink, Intrapersonal factors-green, Cultural factors-yellow and Target Language in Use factors-blue, see table 2 below.

Academic factors	Red
Interpersonal factors	Pink
Intrapersonal factors	Green
Cultural factors	Yellow
Target Language in Use factors	Blue

Table 2: Found factors

In order to have a more graphic view of the data found in the interviews, as well as the categories they belong to, a chart with the categories was made. The chart was divided into four columns, one for each category. Each column contains the topics

that integrate them with their respective titles (See Appendix III). It should be noted that more than one title was underlined with two colors; this results from the fact they were considered to have implications and impact in two categories equally; for example: *the fear to be mistaken for not using the language correctly* was underlined in both blue (target language in use factors), and pink (intrapersonal factors), since the fear might exist in the learner’s mind for different reasons, however, it also has to do with the domain and knowledge they have of the language. If the domain is bigger, the fear may decrease significantly thanks to the self confidence of the performer.

The next step took the form of an interview comparison. To make this, the instrument was taken and all the answers given by the participants were placed with the corresponding question, again, each answer was differentiated by color, but this time the purpose was to differentiate the participants and their answers (See Appendix IV). This comparison had the purpose to find a pattern, or alternatively, an “exception to the rule”. Every question was settled and next to them came the answers given by the participants with a different color, as table 3 shows:

Participant A (Japan)	Red
Participant B (USA)	Purple
Participant C (Brazil)	Green
Participant D (France)	Blue

Table 3: Participants Identification

After having all the answers together, one next to the other, it was easier to make a comparison and find patterns, so after analyzing each answer given by the participants, it was necessary to distinguish similarities between them in order to find a common denominator or a pattern. It came in the form of one single and simple answer that simplifies what the participants intend to express. Whenever there was an answer that completely broke the pattern, or was notably different from the rest, and was considered to be important, it was highlighted in yellow. Finally, the last step

was to make a chart that shows two columns: one with the data gathered that represent a help to develop the language during the foreign language exchange program, and other with those who were in some manner an obstacle. This chart has as purpose to have a more graphic view of the “pros and cons” that the factors may stand for in order to answer the research questions (See Appendix V).

In retrospect, after following these steps it was possible to distinguish how the participants’ answers were related to the research and to categorize them, in order to determine which factors had an impact on them during their exchange to have a successful intercultural communication.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

In this chapter, there is a description of the results found after analyzing the data obtained thanks to the application of the instrument to the participants, having in mind that the main purpose is to answer the following questions:

- 1) What are the factors that influence the intercultural communication during the foreign exchange program?
- 2) To what extent do these factors help exchange students develop communication in a foreign language?
- 3) To what extent do these factors interfere in the development of communication in a foreign language?

4.1 Factors that influence intercultural communication during foreign language exchange programs

In this section, there is a detailed description of the results found after conducting this research. The analysis of the data shows that there were several situations and factors related to the university and classes such as culture, the language, motivation and relationships created that are considered significant both for the development of the Second Language as well as for the effectiveness of the communication during this process of international exchange. In some cases, students find these factors as a motivation. In some other cases, the same factors are perceived as an obstacle. For example, the participants found certain motivation to increase their language level and immerse in a good way in the intercultural communication. On the other hand, some of the factors represented an obstacle to overcome such as lack of knowledge of academic subjects. In other words, the participants faced difficult situations due to cultural differences in which their language development was threatened. The contexts where the exchange programs of the participants took place were different from one another, they were in different countries, in different

continents: the Americas, Europe and Asia; this is why in some cases they had similar experiences, but in some others they faced different challenges due to the contrasting difference of cultures and environments.

The results suggest that the factors that influence intercultural communication during a foreign exchange program are related to five main categories : Academic, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Cultural and the Target Language in use. They will be described in the following sections.

4.1.1 Academic factors

The academic domain is one of the main influences during exchange programs. In this study, participants reported that at the beginning of the program they looked academic factors as a constrain or an obstacle. However, as time went by, this perception changed. The academic domain turned into a positive influence of exchanges in several ways. For instance, participant A in Japan stated:

“I considered that my performance was very good, after all it was reflected in my notes. I obtained good grades despite the fact that I took more advanced classes, but that set me the challenge to take all the possible advantage and advance faster, although I was dying because of the stress of not understanding a lot of things, but I made a big effort to develop the listening, grammar and writing skills”.

A description of the reasons why the academic area had an important role during the exchange of the participants is featured below:

First, the main purposes of the participants to do the exchange was to broaden their academic life by taking it to a real context by practicing what they were studying.

Second, besides practicing the foreign language, the participants went to the exchange with the duty of taking subjects that are part of their undergraduate

teaching studies in order to have them validated here in Mexico at the School of Languages BUAP, as part of their Mayor. However this implied another challenge, since all the participants joined programas that were not focused on teaching (as shown in Table 4), which was what they were studying in Mexico. That is why the participants faced several challenges such as impulse themselves to develop their critical thinking for those classes that demanded the analysis, evaluation and understanding of certain topic (mostly linguistic), in order to provide a significant opinion. Making an important contribution to the class made the participants feel that they were decently representing not only their country, but also their university.

Participant A	Foreign Languages and Latin American History
Participant B	English and Global Studies
Participant C	Linguistics and Modern Languages
Participant D	Applied Modern Languages, Iberian and Ibero-American Studies.

Table 4: Participants' programs

Third, for the participants, the pace and method of teaching of the Professor was another important point during this period, that also was a challenge to overcome since the participants reported that it was difficult for them to adapt to it, since there was not a special treatment for being foreign exchange students. Concerning these examples, the participants of the exchanges in France, and in U.S.A. respectively mentioned:

“ The way of teachig in France is way more different, for example, the classes are held in amphitheatres, so there were fifty or sixty students in there; the professor spoke, and you only listened and wrote. That is why the first classes were very difficult for me. The Profesor spoke very fast, he didn't care if you were a foreign student or nor, after all, that was University”. Participant D, France

“One challenge to overcome were the classes. I considered that they were very technical, for example, Pragmatics”. Participant B, United States

Another defiance that the exchange students addressed, in academic terms, was that on account of the lack of knowledge in some of the subjects that turned out to be new for them, the participants were confronted with the necessity to investigate and study on their own, activity which was not regular or common in Mexico, in words of the participants. Doing such activity was not only for the homework and assignments they had, but also to understand the whole class and to participate when necessary, whether it was for their own willingness or by direct question of the professor, which was frequent. For the participants, it was difficult to participate in the class, of course due to the nervousness of being a foreign students, but also for the language level and, as stated before, for the domain of the topic they had or did not have. Doing their own investigations and studies it was easier for the participants to keep an active role in the classroom, and now not only because it was compulsory or because the teacher forced them to, but also for pleasure. This also helped the participants to follow the pace of the Professor; whether their classes were more technical, dynamic, analytical or theoretical.

Finally, the participants could overcome these challenges since, as they stated, they obtained good results at the end of the classes, and what is more their study abilities got better and also their language skills, specially writing, due to all the formal texts that they had to do for the classes, and listening comprehension.

4.1.2 Interpersonal Factors

Another domain that influenced intercultural communication during exchange program was interpersonal factors. In any environment it is important the people around us, and even more in an environment of international students. They could represent a motivation or an obstacle to overcome. When talking about an exchange in a foreign country, and even more, in a country where the language is different

from ours, the people around take an even more significant role, since being away from the family and friends, a new process of socializing, meeting new people and establishing new relationships comes into force. Let us remember that Gudykunts (2004) noted that intercultural communication is the one that occurs among people from different nationalities, cultures and academic background.

The first aspect that took relevance in regards of these interpersonal factors is that making relationships is completely different among cultures. As Samovar and Porter (1991) noted, one of the functions of the language is to preserve certain social status among the members of a culture. Japan, Brazil and France, for instance, have many different social rules and traditions related to it; it goes without saying that there are many differences in regards of this topic, between these three cultures. Japan is well known for its honorific rules; they even have some vocabulary words that are meant to be used only with some people. They keep rigorous rules about talking and interacting with people of the opposite sex, different age or professional status. This confirms what Gudykunst (2004) stated about the differences between cultures taking an important role in intercultural communication's relationships.

“The forms of communication are different; the honorific language is different. I can't talk to the parents of my friends in the same way as to my friends. It is even more rigorous than in Spanish (...) The relationship that you establish with a woman is also different. “.

In contrast, Brazil is a Latin American country, which is known for the warmth and inclusiveness of their people, as reported by Participant C.

“It was the fact that the Brazilians are so extroverted, so..warm and affectionate, even more than our culture. They wanted to integrate you to their social circle. It was an invitation for you to feel secure, confident and comfortable”.

Little by little, the participants got used to the new environment in which they were. They learnt how the society works and accepted the fact that, at least for the

time they were there, they were part of that society, so they needed to join it. As mentioned before, this “joining” may have been even more difficult due to the fact the language was different from the participants’. At the beginning it is normal to have this feeling of “unblocking”, where the individual starts getting used to the language and to accept that they will be talking in that language the next months. Here we can start talking about the second aspect, which is when the participants change the reluctant attitude to a more open and flexible one, not avoiding the opportunities to talk, also because they realize that it is necessary for them to talk in some activities besides from school, despite the feeling of anxiety, discomfort or distress that are caused at the beginning, for example: buying groceries at the supermarket, going to the library, asking for directions, taking the bus or going to a restaurant.

The third factor is related to the activities that the participants did besides going to classes. This aspect is important since outside the classrooms, the students got the chance to socialize with people from different places even more, and in a more casual way to spare from the tension and stress of the school. Participants A and B reported that they enrolled in social and sport clubs (Ping-Pong and snowboarding), where apart from knowing a whole new discipline, they could have more chances to talk and to get familiar with technique vocabulary, in this case, words related to the sport they were learning. The other two participants got a job during their period of exchange. The first one, participant C, worked in a small eatery in Brazil, where there were some struggles with the client-waiter relationship, however it has been reported that this helped the participant to be a more extroverted person and even more confident with the level of the language. On the other hand, participant D had the chance to gain experience in the Mayor area: Teaching. The participant was a Spanish Teacher Assistant in an elementary school in France, where there were opportunities to go to some trips with the students. Thanks to this experience, participant D could learn “argot” from the teaching area, slangs, and also the importance of the correct pronunciation of the words, as well as the understanding of problems that a mispronunciation can cause:

“You realize that the pronunciation is completely important. It happened to me, especially for mispronouncing the ‘b’ and ‘v’; they (the students) made fun of me, because I said another word that had nothing to do...”

Lastly, the trips made by the participants were also a significant factor. During their stay in the country, the participants had the chance to travel to other places as tourists. These trips were also an important element for the interpersonal relationships, not only with those with whom they traveled, but also for the people they got to talk with and interact with more homegrown people. According to the participants’ testimony, the attitude of the people towards them depended on the place they were visiting. People in small cities, towns or not very touristic places tend to be politer and even show interest on them and on their culture, so the contact, and thereby the intercultural communication was more fluent and effective. There were no problems on helping the students in any trouble they had, most of the times when asking for directions. In contrast, when the participants traveled to big cities, and touristic and crowded places, people appeared to be more hostile. For example: in Paris and in New York, where the people always seemed to be in a hurry and not willing to help.

4.1.3 Intrapersonal Factors

This section will describe the intrapersonal domain which mostly is based on the perception of intercultural exchanges based on the character and personality of each participant.

In the first place, it is important to mention that a pattern on the main motivation for doing the exchange on the participants was found; they all were moved by the desire to practice and improve the Target Language with all their skills (especially the speaking and listening), since they all felt that remaining with what they learnt in the classroom was not enough for their development of the language; they wanted to be in the real context. Also, the participants mentioned that they were

attracted to the culture of the country, or countries, where the Target Language was spoken, therefore they wanted to get more involved with the culture that they got to know a bit in class, and in this way, being immersed not only in the Language, but also in the culture, and consequently, to have a whole international experience being part of an intercultural community during their university studies stage.

Another pattern related to the intrapersonal domain during the exchange program was the one regarding the first contact the participants had with the Language in the host country. They reported to feel insecurity and nervousness, in terms of language and due to the uncertainty about the place they were entering in, as expressed by the participant A from the exchange in Japan:

“It was very difficult because I was full of insecurities for making mistakes, or even for the embarrassment of mispronouncing any word”.

However, little by little the participants felt more confident to speak with people from different environments, except for the participant from the exchange in Brazil. Whereas the rest of the participants were dealing with the normal process of culture shock, and adapting to the new experience, participant C in Brazil was struggling hard. This situation may be illustrated by the following testimonies:

“The first times I didn’t say anything and remained silent for the fear of making a mistake. I was afraid of the language. It was a tremendous fear, so much that I remained quiet the two first months, but it was my choice (...) At the beginning I felt very incompetent and unsecure. I don’t even know if it was just for denying myself the opportunity, or if I was just playing the victim”.

This feeling of fear and incompetence had a big impact on every aspect of the participant’s life during the exchange. For example, it was reported to have had trouble in his classes, since the participant did not participate at all, at least at the beginning. However, the participant assures that additionally to these issues, there a tendency to be shy at school, so his personality is naturally introverted.

Another important aspect that is worth to mention is the use of Spanish and the role it played in intercultural communication during the exchange programs. All the participants reported that they tried to avoid using Spanish as much as they could:

“It caused me a bit of conflict, because I didn’t want to speak in Spanish in a foreign country. We tried (to speak in Japanese), but it was difficult, or we couldn’t communicate with one another because we didn’t have enough vocabulary, or we had different levels”. Participant A, Japan.

“I tried to speak in English as much as I could, because after all, that was why I was there, so there were really few opportunities in which I spoke in Spanish”. Participant B, USA.

“I tried to practice it (French), and the fact that I started meeting French people made me speak more, because there even were some of them who were studying Spanish, and they told me: “you can speak to me in French, and I answer in Spanish, so you can practice”. Participant D, France.

Although at the beginning the fact of speaking another language may have been difficult for the participants, they gradually realized that the only way to improve their language performance was practicing even more, and this included to speak more in the target language than in Spanish. This is to say, that the findings show that all the participants decided to take the risk of speaking in the target language in every possible chance despite all the nervousness and anxiety that this may have provoked. They assumed that was their main goal, so they went on with it, just as Samovar and Porter (1991p. 285), said:

“If the individual does not feel the desire to get into this circumstances in order to increase the level, whether for insecurity, lack of motivation or uncertainty, they are more likely to withdraw from this communication opportunities”.

The opportunities to speak in the target language included: the classes, the extracurricular activities, clubs, trips, and also the fact that thanks to the interview, another common denominator was found. Not only all of them tried to avoid speaking in Spanish in the country they were so they could have more chances to practice the Target Language, but also, they” did not have a lot of communication with their families in Mexico.

I didn't talk that much with my family. I think during my exchange I talked to them like three or four times, and that was all. Participant B, USA.

This demonstrates that they were trying very hard to improve their language skills and to leave their comfort zone. They took the risk and took it very seriously.

Finally, the motivation the participants found within conversations was very significant. On one hand, there is the fact that when we are talking about intercultural communication, conversations implicate interaction with people from any culture and any nationality. In a regular conversation at school, which the participants could develop with either native and non native speakers. And even then, the native speaker may have been from a different country, having different accents, and the non-native speakers may have had different levels of proficiency in the target language. This eventually led to a comparison between the level of the participant and the level of the rest.

Concerning level comparison, the participants reported to have experienced different feelings. At some point they felt that their level was below their colleagues' and this made them feel unsure, but at the same time it motivated them to get better. Also there were moments where they felt that they had a better level than other people, which also worked as a motivator.

“Listening to other foreigner speaking motivated me so much. I thought: “they speak so well. I have to achieve that level”, and there were other cases where I thought: “well, I am not that bad, they are even worse”. Participant D, France.

“Actually, it motivated me. I said: if they can, why can’t I”. And even more knowing that their languages are more distant to Portuguese than Spanish”. Participant C, Brazil.

After all, in all cases, these comparisons were a motor for the participants to practice even more and try to get better, instead of making them feel shy and unsure.

On the other hand, these conversations also brought with them some corrections on the grammar, on vocabulary, or in the pronunciation; sometimes done by native speakers, and sometimes by their foreign peers. As natural as it may be, these corrections made the participants feel shy, embarrassed, or even humiliated at the beginning, as participant A in Japan mentioned:

I felt embarrassed, because sometimes it was something, supposedly basic, and that I already knew. So it made me feel sad and offended. Kind of hurt my pride. But I got over it quickly. It was only the embarrassment of the moment. But once I understood that by making mistakes I would learn and improve, I even asked my friends to correct me.

As the participant mentioned, at the beginning it was a natural reaction to feel embarrassed and offended before these corrections, but for all the participants it resulted better to get corrected and have the chance to change their mistakes, than remaining with them. That is why after some time, they all actually asked their classmates and friends to let them know whenever they were mistaken in order for them to improve and correct their faults, even though for some people it was also uncomfortable to interrupt to make corrections.

4.1.4 Cultural Factors

The next factor found was the one related to the new place, which is the host country. How traditions, costumes, habits, and the people in general influenced the performers; this to say, all the cultural factors that caused certain impression and reaction in the

individuals. The interviewed students had the chance to go to another country, some of them even to different continents, with different languages, so it results obvious that they had to handle with the new culture in terms of society, education, relationships and cultural diversity. They had to adapt themselves to these intercultural aspects. All these elements, that eventually lead to intercultural communication, had an important role during the process of exchange.

The first aspect that got the participants' attention was the cultural diversity they found in the countries they were entering in, and even more being in a University where they found many other foreign exchange students. It can be said that the participants living in Puebla do not get the chance to see a lot of foreigners apart from vacation time in the main touristic places of the state. What is more, they do not get the chance to closely interact with them, since Puebla is not as intercultural as other cities in the world as, say Tokyo, Paris or New York, not to mention the big multiculturalism of the countries where these cities are. Hence, entering a place where students, teachers, passers-by and public servers are from all over the world, was something new for the participants and, moreover it was fascinating for them, since it broadened their perception of the world.

My first perception of the country was that it is a multicultural country. I got off the plane, got in the train, and I saw people from Europe, Africa, China, people from everywhere. And I thought to myself: "Where am I?". That was totally different from what I know. Participant D, France.

The second aspect attached to the culture factor, is the one related to the culture shock. As it was stated before, the culture shock is composed by four stages, which were undergone by the participants, in some of them in a higher level than others. The following table shows the four stages of the culture shock in context. The four stages suggested by Pedersen (1994), were demonstrated with the experiences of the participants (see Table 5).

<p>First Stage: Excitement and euphoria of foreign travel</p>	<p><i>“The university was very big and pretty. Speaking about the professors, they were very nice. They were from Peru, Argentina, and France...” Participant D, France</i></p> <p><i>“The language was what caused me a big shock, I did not understand. About the people, I was very impressed by the diversity they have. We have that stereotype about Brazilians being very esthetic, attractive, with nice bodies. And it’s true. When I arrived, I saw a big diversity in heights, color of skin, eyes and hair. Brazilian people are very warm”.</i> Participant C, Brazil.</p> <p><i>“I was amazed just by being there, see the people and the streets. They surprised me a lot, because everything is meticulously structured, very systematized to have order, and even inside the chaos of the big cities, to have them flow in the best way”. Participant A, Japan.</i></p>
<p>Second Stage: Frustration</p>	<p><i>“The extroverted personality of the people sometimes made me feel uncomfortable and anxious, since I feel the opposite of that. And even sometimes I felt I didn’t fit, and conjoined to my troubles with the language, I felt discouraged, because I couldn’t do much. Calling people was all a challenge because even the telephonic system is different. At the beginning it took me like 2 hours to make a call”. Participant C, Brazil</i></p> <p><i>“At class sometimes, I couldn’t participate due to my lack of vocabulary, so I couldn’t express all I wanted. I felt frustrated because some people didn’t speak English either, so I had</i></p>

	<p><i>to explain myself sometimes even with pictures, or sometimes I just could not ask". Participant A, Japan.</i></p> <p><i>"Speaking about the pronunciation, there were things that I was told in Mexico that they were pronounced in one way, and when I got there they turned out to be pronounced differently. That confused me". Participant B, USA.</i></p>
<p>Third Stage: Victims gradually recovery</p>	<p><i>"The fact of having a good relationship with people helps. They are a bit cold at the beginning, but once you get into their 'circle', they are very kind to you". Participant D, France</i></p> <p><i>"They wanted you to be part of their 'circle'. Sometimes my mistakes were motive for laughs and joy, because it was funny for them. They wanted you to feel confident. They are patient because they understand you are through a process of learning". Participant C, Brazil.</i></p> <p><i>"The needs I had made me communicate with any person". Participant A, Japan.</i></p> <p><i>"I had to repeat the things or speak louder for the people to understand me". Participant B, USA.</i></p>
<p>Fourth Stage: Acceptance</p>	<p><i>"The university was not as I expected, but once I was there I just assumed it and accepted it, because what was important was to be there and develop the language". Participant A, Japan.</i></p> <p><i>"I realized that things do not have to be only one way". Participant B, USA</i></p>

	<p><i>“After the third month, the ‘batucadas’ started. That was when I started to create more social bonds. During one of these parties I felt so much joy and a feeling of belonging that I didn’t care about what I was saying, I just tried to speak. They helped me to be more extroverted and include myself into conversations”. Participant C, Brazil.</i></p> <p><i>“I took the resolution to start recording the classes, so I listened to them later to understand them at my own pace. That helped me a lot”. Participant D, France</i></p>
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Table 5: Culture Shock Stages

In conclusion, at some point all the participants experienced culture shock in some way, due to different aspects; however, they all had certain impact in the intercultural communication as it was already shown.

4.1.5 Target Language in Use Factors

Finally, as previously stated, all the participants were in a country with different language; this represents the challenges of intercultural communication that go beyond the academic; for example the level and domain of the target language, the accent, the speed, fluency or accuracy.

The first aspect that interferes with intercultural communication is the low proficiency level of the target language. This is to say, that once they were in the real context, they had areas of opportunity with their skills. They all even mentioned to have a certification on the language they were to practice, as one of the participants mentioned:

“I did the B2 certification, but I actually felt that I had B1, because I could understand and produce it, but I wasn’t that confident. Besides, here at school, where can you practice French? Only at school”. Participant D, France.

Notwithstanding these certifications, they all reckon that they had still more to improve, not only in terms of vocabulary and grammar, but also in terms of pronunciation. Some of them reported to have felt insecurities and even fear of speaking and not being understood due to their pronunciation and/or their mistakes in general.

“I think you can always tell when someone has something to say about what you are saying. Sometimes they made some gestures, not being rude, but like trying to understand; so I asked what happened, and they told me and corrected me”. Participant B, USA.

The second aspect that attaches to this factor is the interference they had with the target language and the mother tongue. At this point, it is important to restate that, according to Lekova (2009), in correlative bilingualism both language systems (native and foreign) exist together in the learner’s mind and are independent from one another. In the case of subordinate bilingualism, the second language is not mastered to the degree the first language is. Here, the mother tongue dominates and influences the second language; which is to say that the two languages are separated in the learner’s mind. Conversely, the native language is always superior and that is why it tends to manifest more commonly when there are some signs of confusion. The participants of this research were not excluded from this fact. The participant from the exchange program in Brazil; for instance, mentions that the confusion was even bigger for the similarities Portuguese and Spanish have. However, this likeness caused a lot of trouble as well, due to the false cognates. Sometimes he naturally said things just because they sounded like Spanish, ignoring that they had different meanings. Let us remember that Skiba (1997) noted that interference occurs at fonologic, morphologic, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic and even graphic levels. Participant B from USA mentioned:

“When I spoke in Spanish, it happened to me (the interference) when I did the switch (to English), and I forgot words, or even in Spanish sometimes I forgot how to say things, so I ended up saying it in English”.

Unlike the other two participants, the participants in Japan and France suffered a bigger interference, since they had to deal not only with their target languages (Japanese and French), but also with English. Crystal (as quoted in Skiba, 1987) stated that the phenomenon of interference occurs when a bilingual person alternates between two or more languages during the speech with another bilingual person. This can be demonstrated since when the participants were having a conversation with people with different level of the target language, they found a common channel to communicate in a more fluent way in English; or even when talking to strangers, when the natives did not understand what the participant was trying to say, they asked them to speak in English.

“With people from Japan or Italy, I could speak in French, however there were some others from Greece, for example, that only spoke English at the meeting. So, I saw that English is the international language”. Participant D, France.

“There were many students from different countries, and we all communicated with one another in English, because we all knew it, or at least they could speak it a little”. Participant A, Japan.

Finally, another important aspect related to this factor is the benefits that participants obtained in terms of Target Language improvement. It has been already noted that being part of an academic international exchange has benefits in many areas (academic, social, or personal). However, one of the biggest benefits that they have, and, as it was proved, the goal the participants had in mind from the very beginning, is to improve their skills of the target language. As DuFon and Curchill (2006, p.18) quoted, “studies of gains in oral proficiency made by study abroad learners have revealed that they improved their proficiency over the course of a semester or more abroad, even those who went only for few weeks. Although the gains are not clearly the same as for those who stay longer”. The following diagram shows the aspects in which the participants felt some improvement. See Figure 1.

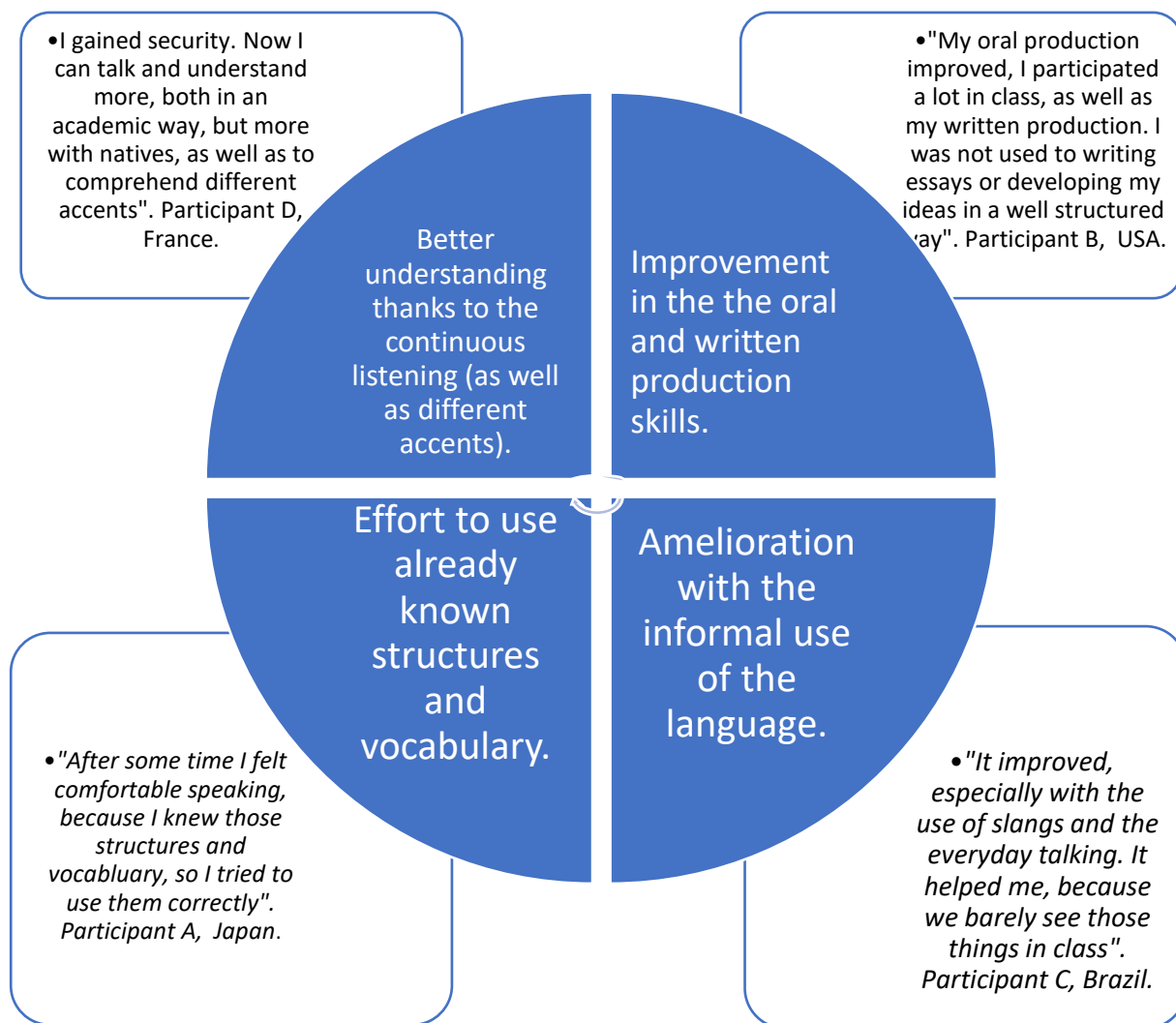


Figure 1: Benefits obtained in terms of Target Language.

To conclude, the use of the Target Language was one the most influential factors in the Intercultural Communication during the exchange program, since it was the medium for exchanging ideas. This is to say, that it was the channel for communication.

4.2 Factors that foster Intercultural Communication in an Exchange Program

The factors that influenced the intercultural communication during the exchange program have been already described. Now it is important to know in which way these factors took a positive role for the benefit of Intercultural Communication. The data revealed that all the factors helped the participants to achieve their goals and to succeed in the intercultural communication. In general terms, all the positive factors worked as a motivation for the participants to make an effort and in this way improve their communication.

The academic factor helps to some extent the participants to see themselves in a situation where they had to keep track of their classmates in terms of knowledge. Although at the beginning this could have been, more than a trouble, a challenge to overcome, that ultimately helped them to succeed in their classes, enabling them to participate and have better results, and also they got to learn new things. At last, they obtained good results, and they got to develop some skills that they were struggling with, such as writing. For example participant B in USA mentioned:

“I had to be prepared, listen, and study on my own so I could participate, and contribute with something significant and valious, not just talking idly”.

The interpersonal factors helped the participants to socialize and interact with people from all over the world. This gave the chance for intercultural communication to happen, since both at university and outside it (when travelling, for example), the participants had the opportunity to know and have a close interaction with people from different cultures, not to mention that the native people were willing to include them in their society, sometimes because they were interested in knowing more about Mexiacn culture.

The relationships the participants created, sometimes got so close they felt confident to ask for corrections about the way they were speaking, or what is more, sometimes they were corrected by their colleagues spontaneously.

In terms of intrapersonal factors, one of the biggest motivations that the participants reported to have in regards of communication, was listening to other people, native or foreigner, speaking in the target language in a correct way. For instance, participant D in France mentioned:

“I was very motivated by listening to others because they spoke so well, and impulsed to improve my accent. There were others that made me think that I was not that bad”.

The cultural factors had a big importance for intercultural communication with the participants. As it was previously mentioned and showed through the chart, the culture shock with their stages brought different reactions on the participants, as previously shown in Table 5 . However, besides from the frustration stage, it can be said that every phase brought a big motivation for the participants to join the intercultural communication: the excitement of being in a new place, the adaptation to the new environment and finally, the acceptance of everything about the culture, traditions, costumes, food, rules and perceptions.

“People agreed on talking to me, no matter if I was a foreigner. That made me feel confident to make a conversation or to let them know my doubts. They invited me to go out with them, and that made me interact with even more people in different situations and different contexts, using and even learning new vocabulary. If I was in a cafeteria, a bar, or at the cinema, I learnt a lot of things, in contrast to my partners who did not have those opportunities because they were not invited. That affected them because they had countable chances to speak, and also they had a little less interest for the language, the society and the culture. And that was extremely important for me”. Participant A, Japan.

Finally, as the diagram in Figure 1 showed, the constant use of the Target Language brought a lot of benefits for the participants. These benefits and the results they obtained thanks to them, were noted by the participants. As a result, the participants were motivated to keep on going in order to improve more and to fully get immersed in a successful intercultural communication.

4.3 Factors that interfere in Intercultural Communication in an Exchange Program

As it was demonstrated in the previous section, many of the aspects that caused a struggle to the participants at the beginning, and that demanded a bigger effort to them, at the end brought a big benefit, and helped them to develop in intercultural communication; for example: the lack of knowledge in the classes, that at the beginning stopped them from understanding and participating, made them study and endeavoured, so eventually they got better at class and could both understand and participate. Another example of this transformation of challenges, or struggles to motivations, was the embarrassment that the corrections caused to the participants. At first, they even felt offended when they were corrected, and even when sometimes they preferred to remain quiet, finally they realized that this was the way in which they were going to progress and get better at the language, so at some point they chose to ask their friends to correct them with no pity, so they could see what their mistakes were, and changed them.

On the contrary, there were actually some facts that interfered with intercultural communication. Although they were less than those that motivated the participants, it is important to mention them. In regards to Interpersonal factors, the first fact that interfered in some way with intercultural communication, was that people is not so polite at big cities, as participant B in USA affirmed:

“In New York, for example, people are very closed, so we had to be very careful about choosing a person to ask for some things. In the streets if you wanted to ask something some people answered politely; but some others simply said that they didn’t know, when it was clear that they did know. So we got used to the fact that people are like that in big cities”.

Another fact that caused certain interference was the spontaneous relationships they created with Spanish speakers. This was not something they looked for, but after some time they eventually found at university some other people who speak Spanish. This represented a challenge for the participants, not because

they did not want to have more friends, but because they did not want to spend a lot of time speaking Spanish. They wanted to spend as much time as they could speaking the target language.

“It was a bit terrible because I didn’t want to spend a lot of time speaking in Spanish. We were six Mexicans, and we all lived close to each other, so we got together very often. Of course during those meetings everything was in Spanish. It caused me conflicts to myself because I didn’t want to speak Spanish in another country”. Participant A, Japan.

The next category is attached to both intra personal and cultural domain, specifically, the second stage of the culture shock: frustration. The participants reported to have felt at some point, that they could not totally express at certain moments because of the lack of knowledge of the Language. This made them feel nervous, but overall, anxious for needing to communicate and not being able to do so. For one participant in particular, this led to a period of abstinence of talking. At this point, it is important to remember that Samovar and Porter (1991) affirmed that if the individual does not feel the desire to get into these circumstances in order to increase the level, whether for insecurity, lack of motivation or uncertainty, they are more likely to withdraw from this communication opportunities.

“I was very scared of the language, so much that I spent the first two months silent. It was a desition taken for the loneliness I was feeling, and that I couldn’t express what I wanted in Portuguese. I wanted to go back to my mother tongue so I didn’t have to interact with that society. It was hard for me, but it was my choice”. Participant C, Brazil.

Finally, the domain that brought the most intereference in the individuals was the Target Language use. First, the participants believed to have some level thanks to the certification they did before doing the exchange. However, once they entered the host country, they realized that they did not have that level, and they needed to practice and develop more the language (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency and accuracy) in order to understand and being understood. Second, the

different level of the target language the other students had also brought some issues.

Between the Mexicans, or even with some other foreigners, we all had different levels of Japanese. Some of them had higher levels, and some others were beginners, so sometimes the communication was difficult.
Participant A, Japan.

And to conclude, the interference with Spanish also caused some struggle among the participants, when doing the switch from Spanish to the target language, and vice versa. When this occurred, it was very common to mix the words from one language to another, as they reported.

The following chart (see table 6) shows, in a more graphic way, what were the facts that helped the participants, and which ones interfered.

Help	Interference
Classes requiring different abilities Good Notes Own research to understand the class Politeness and inclusion of the people surrounding Interest of the people about Mexican culture Corrections in language by the colleagues Closeness to students from different countries Motivation when listening to other foreign students Motivation to get more involved in the cultures they were having contact with Culture Shock Encompassing society Easiness to practice the language through different activities Increase of the informal use of the language Improvement of both formal and informal Language Avoid using Spanish	Lack of knowledge in their classes People not very polite at the big cities Close contact with Spanish speakers Anxiety when they could not express Feeling offended and embarrassed when they were corrected Culture Shock Different levels of target Language among international students Feeling of not being understood due to the pronunciation. Certified level vs. Real context Interference

Table 6: Helping and Interfering factor

To conclude, the presence of these factors during the process of international exchange had impact on intercultural communication, and although the experiences of the participants were different, at last these domains served to motivate and helped them in some way or interfered. In any case, they were challenges to overcome.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, a summary of the results and their main highlights are presented after having directed the interviews as well as having presented the results found within the research. Furthermore, there is a detailed explanation of the implications of the study, which is the clarification of what this research achieves and what for; the limitations and possible problems found during the whole process of research. Finally, some directions for further research related to this topic are provided.

5.1 Summary

The purpose of this research was to deepen into some students' experiences of international academic exchange, in order to examine how they faced and dealt with an intercultural environment, as well as to know what the factors that surround them during this process are, and once the factors were detected, it was important to know at what level, during the exchange, they served as a motivation and help, or in contrast, they were an obstacle to the efficiency for intercultural communication, and how all these impact the students who went on exchange (who served as participants for this research) once they got back to Mexico.

The theoretical framework of this research was based on studies about Culture, Intercultural Communication, Culture shock, Internationalization, Academic Mobility and Exchange, and Second Language learning and performance, with authors like Samovar and Porter (1991), Pedersen (1994), Gudykunst (2004), Krashen (1981), and DuFon and Churchill (2006). Thanks to these theoretical bases, it was possible to confirm what the results demonstrated. This is to say that it was possible to have both the theory and its demonstration with evidence for the research.

Due to the qualitative approach of the research, the semi structured interview was the instrument selected for this purpose. The participants were chosen, having in common that they all studied at the School of Languages (three from the Teaching English Program, and one from the French one) and they all went on an academic

international exchange during their studies. The individual interviews were recorded, transcribed, analyzed, categorized and compared. The focus of the analysis was on the questions and answers.

Once the analysis was performed, the results of the four participants allowed to answer the first of the research questions. Five factors were found to influence intercultural communication during the period of exchange of the students. These factors happened to be: Academic (those related entirely to university), Interpersonal (attached to the relationships that the participants established during this process), Intrapersonal (own perceptions, thoughts and motivations of the participants), Cultural (related to the traditions and habits of the new context), and those factors that have to do with the challenges and difficulties of performing the Target Language in the real context.

This research also found that some of the factors had a positive impact on the participants from the very beginning, such as the frequent use of the Target Language. The awareness of this fact can make possible Exchange students look for exchanges in which they are with native speakers to develop their fluency. On the other hand, there were other factors that were a constant obstacle for the development of the communication, like the use of Spanish with other Hispanic students. However, there were some factors that may have been a challenge, or even a trouble for the participants at the beginning, but eventually, they fostered and helped the participants. For example, the lack of knowledge the students had in certain classes that made them study more on their own, and after all they felt confident to participate. In any case, every factor and every situation had repercussion on intercultural communication, and of course, in the participants' target language development once they came back to Mexico.

5.2 Implications

This research pointed out what are the benefits of immersion in an intercultural environment by going on an international academic exchange, with all that this implies: challenges, defiance, and of course rewards. For the students who are interested on these kind of exchanges, it is important to know, and to be prepared for it. After being accepted on an exchange program, the students may only think about all the good and exciting things to come, as well as the benefits that this will bring for them. However, it is also important to take into account that there will be some difficulties and situations to overcome, so they succeed at getting immersed in intercultural communication, not to mention the academic, professional and personal advantages that come with this. This research tends to give a broad view of the experiences of studying abroad in an exchange, not only for students interested, but also for teachers to help the students to be prepared so they can take as much advantage as they can.

In order to promote exchanges throughout the University, every year people responsible for the Department of International Development General Management (previously known as Dirección General de Relaciones Internacionales e Intercambio Académico) go to the different schools that conform BUAP and give a small conference to promote the exchange programs. In this event, which is open to every student who wants to attend, the leaders make known some of the agreements they have with Universities all over the world, as well as the main requisites to be chosen for such programs and some scholarships they could apply for. However, with this event the students do not have the chance to learn more about what comes after they get accepted, and what is more, to know more about how is it like to go on exchange. Therefore, a panel with students from the university who actually went on exchange to different parts of the world, would be a good idea, since in this way there would be a direct contact between both the possible candidates and the former students. With this panel, the students (like the participants of this research) would be able to share their experience with their pros and cons, as well as to explain how they faced both positive and negative factors during the exchange, so the interested aspirants are aware of what to expect. This information trade would help the new

exchange students to have a broader view of how an exchange program is, and they would be more prepared to it.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The conclusions of this research are based on the results found with the four participants that went to another country on exchange for either one semester or a whole year. However, the experiences that they have, may be different. It is clear that situations will vary according to the participants' personality and background, the school facilities, and overall the country chosen for the exchange. It is important to remember that talking about international exchanges, is talking about interaction worldwide. Many countries can be involved, so the characteristics of them are different from one another. The experiences of a student in a Latin American country, will be very different from a student in Asia, or Europe. Another limitation found, is related to the instrument itself. It was designed having in mind that this exchange was the first time abroad for the participants. Nevertheless, some of them had been in other countries before, and what is more, one of them was even in the same country before, as a result some questions, such as asking about the first impression of the country did not apply in this case. It is hoped, however, that the results of this research will be useful for the majority of the students at the School of Languages.

5.4 Recommendations for further research

The data collected in this research was analyzed focusing only on questions and answers. However, this data can be used for further studies. For example, also analyzing the discourse analysis, or maybe even having more than one instrument. For example, a focus group among the participants would bring more valuable information to the research and also would encourage more opinions among them, leading to some debatable topics. Additionally, the sample could have been more significant if more participants were included. For instance, more students that went to other countries over the world would have brought more significant data. Even two participants in the same country would have given a comparison on two different

perceptions of the same place, or participants from other countries that are on exchange here in Mexico at the School of Languages could show the impact that Mexican culture has on intercultural communication during their exchange. During the intervening time, it is hoped that this study will contribute to what was already known, and will provide some insights that can be useful, as previously stated, for students seeking an exchange program, and for teachers mentoring such students.

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Appendix I
“Factors that influence Intercultural Communication during Foreign Language Exchange Programs”

The purpose of this interview is to gather information about your experience during your exchange program. The information of this interview will be used only for research purposes and it will remain confidential as well as your name.

Thank you for your cooperation!

AGE:
YEAR OF EXCHANGE:
LENGTH OF THE PROGRAM:
COUNTRY:
LANGUAGE OF THE HOST COUNTRY:

Program and university

1. How did you choose your country?
2. Why did you decide to pursue an exchange program?
3. What is important for you when selecting a university to make an exchange program?
4. How was your first impression of _____ (country) and the university where you made your program?

Language learning

1. What was your _____ (target language) level when you left Mexico?
2. How was your performance in the academic activities and what were the motivations and challenges for the courses you took?
3. Do you think that your _____ (target language) level has changed/improved? How?
4. When you got back to Mexico, how did you feel regarding your _____ (target language) development?

Interaction, intercultural communication

_____ (target language) -English-Spanish?

1. How was your first contact with the _____ (target Language)? Can you describe the situation? What happened?
2. How did you feel when expressing yourself in everyday activities like going to the supermarket or taking the bus?

3. Were there certain moments during the exchange program where you felt that you could not totally express yourself? Can you describe them? How did you feel?
4. In which situations did you communicate in _____ (Target language)? And in English?
5. In which way did the treatment of the locals to you influenced the development of your _____ (target language)?
6. What other activities did you have asides from university? Can you describe the environment during these activities?
7. How much time did you spend speaking Spanish? In which situations?

Obstacles, motivation and advantages

1. How does listening to others motivated you to talk more in English?
2. Were you corrected in your language skills by locals or other people at any point during your stay? If so, how did you feel about it?
3. Did you ever feel any interference of the mother tongue and the target language? Can you explain?

Appendix II SIMPLIFICATION

1. Naturaleza de la licenciatura
2. Requisito de titulación de la facultad de lenguas
3. Conocer cultura que se promueve en las aulas
4. Mejorar y desarrollar habilidades de la lengua meta
5. Practicar el idioma
6. Motivación fomentada por amigos
7. Estar en un contexto académico
8. Deseo de formar parte de una comunidad de alumnos internacionales
9. Falta de un total desarrollo en país de origen
10. Beca
11. Impacto y encanto con primer contacto con el país
12. Diversidad cultural
13. Orden y disposición de la ciudad
14. Aceptación y Adaptación
15. Contacto real con el idioma
16. Choque cultural
17. Contacto real con el idioma vs Nivel certificado
18. Disgusto por infraestructuras universitarias
19. Comienzos de comunicación
20. Actitud inicial renuente
21. Nivel del idioma al llegar al país
22. Contenido de clases de lengua meta en Facultad (México)
23. Clases que exigían habilidades y destrezas (no relacionadas al idioma) que no estaban desarrolladas en el alumno
24. Necesidad de investigar independientemente para comprender la clase
25. Ritmo y técnicas de las clases diferentes a las de México
26. Uso del idioma con sus variantes culturales
27. Autorreto a tomar más clases
28. Participación activa (voluntaria)
29. Dificultad para participar por el contenido de las clases
30. Límite de participaciones por falta de conocimiento del tema de la clase
31. Autovictimización
32. Capacidad de comprensión oral
33. Ser el único estudiante de intercambio internacional
34. Maestros incentivando a participar a través de preguntas directas
35. Deseo de saber nuevas cosas
36. Oportunidad de practicar varios idiomas
37. Las clases eran muy técnicas
38. Reflejo del desempeño (bueno) de clases en las calificaciones
39. Esfuerzo por desarrollar habilidades académicas y del idioma
40. Disponibilidad de los maestros a apoyar.
41. Motivación por aprender más y desarrollar habilidades
42. Temor a equivocarse al hablar por no usar correctamente la gramática
43. Dejar de lado el temor para poder ser corregido ante equivocaciones
44. Mejora del uso del idioma tanto oral como escrito
45. Más autoconfianza
46. Temor a pronunciar mal

47. Sensación de no ser entendido debido a mala pronunciación
48. Mejoría en un contexto informal
49. Uso constante formal del idioma
50. Necesidad de comunicarse con otros
51. Enfrentamiento ante distintos acentos de la lengua meta
52. Esfuerzo por usar estructuras y vocabulario conocido
53. Disposición de servidores públicos a ayudar con correcciones.
54. Personas locales solo hablando su idioma.
55. Forma de ser de las personas locales (en algunos casos extrovertidos y en otros introvertidos)
56. Interés de los locales por las culturas latinas.
57. Adaptación a los modismos y forma de actuar de los locales
58. Aceptación de que hay distintas formas de pronunciación.
59. Ser único hispanoparlante en clases.
60. Inglés: idioma estándar entre alumnos internacionales.
61. Confianza entre amigos para resolver dudas del idioma.
62. Interacción durante salidas obligaba a hablar más en el idioma.
63. Facilidad de interacción entre otros alumnos internacionales en la misma situación.
64. Actividades extracurriculares
65. Diferencia en el trato según el género.
66. Sociedad incluyente
67. Diferencias culturales en cuanto al trato a extranjeros en grandes ciudades (lugares turísticos) y lugares menos concurridos.
68. Primer meses en abstinencia de practicar idioma
69. Resistencia a hablar español. Auto limitar su uso lo más que se pudiera
70. Cercanía con compatriotas traías como resultado el uso frecuente del español.
71. Distintos niveles de lengua meta entre los hispanohablantes.
72. Decisión propia de alejarse de mexicanos.
73. Frecuencia de comunicación con familia no mayor a una vez por semana
74. Escucha frecuente de la lengua meta ayuda para la comprensión oral
75. Motivación al ver que otros alumnos internacionales tenían buen nivel de la lengua meta.
76. Correcciones a petición para poder mejorar
77. Falta de tacto de los maestros para corregir
78. Sentimiento de pena y ofensa ante correcciones
79. Aceptación de errores y correcciones
80. Resultados ante clases que representaban un reto
81. Adaptación a la lengua meta
82. Interferencia al hacer cambio de idioma.

Appendix III CATEGORIZED TOPICS

ACADEMIC FACTORS	INTERPERSONAL FACTORS	INTRAPERSONAL FACTORS	CULTURAL FACTORS	TARGET LANGUAGE IN USE FACTORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Naturaleza de la licenciatura -Requisito de titulación -Contenido de clases de lengua meta en Mx -Habilidades y destrezas (no relacionadas al idioma) no desarrolladas -Necesidad de investigar para comprender la clase -Ritmo y técnicas de las clases -Dificultad para participar por el contenido de las clases -Capacidad de comprensión oral -Preguntas directas de maestro 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Motivación fomentada por amigos -Aceptación y Adaptación -Comienzos de comunicación -Actitud inicial renuente -Necesidad de comunicarse -único hispanoparlante en clases. -Confianza entre amigos para resolver dudas del idioma. -Interacción durante salidas obligaba a hablar -Facilidad de interacción entre alumnos internacionales -Actividades extracurriculares -Cercanía con compatriotas uso del español. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Conocer cultura -Mejorar y desarrollar lengua meta -Estar en un contexto académico -Formar parte de comunidad internacional -Disgusto por infraestructuras universitarias -Autorreto a tomar más clases -Participación activa (voluntaria) = <u>Autovictimización</u> -Aprender nuevas cosas -Más autoconfianza -Resistencia a hablar español. -Decisión de alejarse de mexicanos. -Frecuencia de comunicación con familia no mayor a una vez por semana -Pena y ofensa ante correcciones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Impacto y encanto con el país -Diversidad cultural -Orden y disposición de la ciudad -Choque cultural -Uso del idioma con sus variantes culturales -Disponibilidad de los maestros a apoyar. -Disposición de servidores públicos a ayudar con correcciones. -Personas locales solo hablando su idioma. -Locales (extrovertidos o introvertidos) -Interés por las culturas latinas. -Adaptación a modismos y forma de 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Practicar idioma -Falta de práctica en Mx -Contacto real con el idioma - Nivel certificado -Oportunidad de practicar varios idiomas -Errores no usar correctamente la gramática - Dejar de lado el temor para poder ser corregido ante equivocaciones -Mejora prod. oral y escrito -Mala pronunciación -Sensación de no ser entendido debido a mala pronunciación -Mejoría en uso informal -Uso constante formal del idioma -Distintos acentos -Esfuerzo por usar estructuras y vocabulario conocido

<p>-Clases técnicas -Buenas calificaciones</p>			<p>actuar de los locales -Diferencia en el trato según el género. -Sociedad incluyente -Diferencias en grandes ciudades y lugares menos concurridos. -Falta de tacto de los maestros para corregir</p>	<p>-distintas formas de pronunciación -Inglés: idioma estándar -Primeros meses en abstinencia de practicar idioma -Distintos niveles de lengua meta -Escucha frecuente de la lengua meta -Correcciones -Aceptación de errores y correcciones -Adaptación a la lengua meta -Interferencia al hacer cambio de idioma.</p>
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Appendix IV

Help	Interference
<p>Classes requiring different abilities</p> <p>Good Notes</p> <p>Own research to understand the class</p> <p>Politeness and inclusion of the people surrounding</p> <p>Interest of the people about Mexican culture</p> <p>Corrections in language by the colleagues</p> <p>Closeness to students from different countries</p> <p>Motivation when listening to other foreign students</p> <p>Motivation to get more involved in the cultures they were having contact with</p> <p>Culture Shock</p> <p>Encompassing society</p> <p>Easiness to practice the language through different activities</p> <p>Increase of the informal use of the language</p> <p>Improvement of both formal and informal Language</p> <p>Avoid using Spanish</p>	<p>Lack of knowledge in their classes</p> <p>People not very polite at the big cities</p> <p>Close contact with Spanish speakers</p> <p>Anxiety when they could not express</p> <p>Feeling offended and embarrassed when they were corrected</p> <p>Culture Shock</p> <p>Different levels of target Language among international students</p> <p>Feeling of not being understood due to the pronunciation.</p> <p>Certified level vs. Real context</p> <p>Interference</p>