BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

Facultad de Lenguas

**RETURNING HOME FROM THE USA: ELT STUDENTS STRATEGIES
TO OVERCOME REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK**

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Presented by

Verónica Arizmendi Hernández

Thesis Director:

Mtra. Maria Leticia Temoltzin Espejel

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This thesis has been read by the members of the committee of

Verónica Arizmendi Hernández

And it is considered worthy of approval in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree of

Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés

Thesis Director
Mtra. Maria Leticia Temoltzin Espejel

_____

Committee Member   Committee Member
Mtra. Sandra Juárez Pacheco   Mtra. Jeannete Sandre Cuautle

_____   _____

DEDICATORY

With all my love for all the people who were part of this amazing process. I consider myself that I can reach my goals, that the time that I did not spend with my friends, family and specially my daughter was worth, because the results are gratifying and are dedicated to them. I am very fortunate and glad, doing my thesis changed the course of my life.

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ABSTRACT

Migrants and international students have expectations and goals when moving to another country. The first shock is difficult and exciting at the same time. However, little by little, individuals adapt and become part of the new society, but when they come home there are unexpected feelings. They have diverse needs to re-adapt to their home country and this experience becomes harder since people were not prepared for that. Thus, this thesis aims to understand the experiences of 13 Mexican ELT students in the US, the perceptions and the manner in which they struggled to readapt once they return to Mexico. To examine how the participants employed the coping strategies to re-adjust their lives more easily.

My study is a phenomenological qualitative research. The data collection was taken from 20 semi-structured questions and was carried out individually at the Faculty of Languages. After the data collection, seven coping strategies were identified in the study. These strategies show the success to overcome the re-integration. There are influenced by the participant's gender, attitude and the reasons for coming home.

It was pointed out that the returning process was more difficult that moving to the US for the majority of the participants, due to the previous cultural context already acquired in the foreign country. Then, the results of this study indicate that there are different motivational needs and strategies to survive in the home country which were explained and synthesized by the 13 interviewees.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Returning home or coming back after living overseas for an extended period of time can be difficult because individuals do not get prepared for it; as a consequence, there are social and cultural re-adaptations, the re-entry can be intensified because people are unprepared for it (Brislin, 2008). This re-adjustment or re-entry is called reverse cultural shock which involves the realignment of one's familiar environment (Toomey & Dorjee, 2019).

Before explaining the re-entry process, there is a need to comprehend some other processes involved. First, people who move overseas face a completely new context and language better known as Culture shock and happens due to Migration and Mobility because the decision of living abroad for a while, in other words, people's expectations in the US. According to Suarez (2019) the US has sheltered people from Mexico for decades; Heymann (2009) mentions that Mexico has a strong impact on migration statistics. By going abroad, people face culture shock, Bochner (2003) mentions that it is the impact when coming into contact with a familiar culture to a different one and consists on better expectations to be achieved in a host country. Thus, people look for a better status, future and a professional growth; therefore, they move to the United States of America to achieve these life perspectives. There is the moment in which people adapt and accept the new

context, what is called Acculturation and this influence affect the people what is known as Enculturation; these relations explain our Cultural identity and Cultural synergy. Now, the expecting moment of returning to Mexico; the re-adaptation is harder due to the struggle with a different context: the own one.

By seeing how reverse culture shock is presented, the study aims to understand the challenges associated into the home country and the strategies that these people used to overcome this shock. In order to do so, this first chapter focuses on the rational and significance of the study. Also, a brief description about the context and participants are stated in this chapter. The aims and the objectives of this research are stated too, after, two research questions are stated, and they will be answered in chapter 4.

1.1 Rationale for the topic selection

Even when there is plenty of information related to the migration phenomena, there is not enough information specifically about the reverse cultural shock. As a consequence, people who are prepared to return home are not necessarily prepared to go through a reverse cultural shock (Bochner, 2003).

Consequently, the process of returning home is not easy to the returnees because one's home country and language change during their stay in the host country. Furthermore, within the familiar environment, there are unexpected feelings and emotions that returnees need to face. In fact, Sussman (2009) suggests that this shock is psychologically harder and more stressful because the individual is forced to readapt, and it is much tougher than they had thought.

In short, a study based on the reverse cultural shock is needed; thus, through this thesis, some returnees' experiences are explored with the aim to understand the challenges that these people need to face into the home country and the strategies that they used to overcome this reverse cultural shock in order to assist and help people with the process of reintegration.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Actually, there are some authors who have researched cultural shock; for instance, Gaw (2000) states that the cultural shock process is inevitable when people have an abroad experience due to the unknown host country and language, during this stage one's symptoms are: "stress, isolation, anger, anxiety, frustration, discrimination and confusion" (p. 84).

Apparently, culture shock is unsettling, but people can overcome it; however, the re-entry is even harder because returning home is another period of stress, "it can be extremely intense, since people do not expect difficulties" (Brislin, 2008 p.18). It is important to mention why people come back home, one of the main reasons is the deportation from the US, another is because individuals return to have an interaction with their backgrounds, they miss their roots. According to Bochner (2003) people are more likely to accept, enjoy, comprehend, work with whom they share characteristics such as: values, religion, language, nationality and among others, precisely due to these reasons; people return and although the re-entry is extremely difficult it brings positive changes that will be exposed with the data collected.

The participants of this study suggest some strategies used during their re-entry process, Barney (2001) establishes a strategy on how to compete and how performance successfully,

it is necessary to take into account that it is normal that individuals feel strained when returning; however, they need to make an effort to adapt. Jonas (2000) defines strategies as those things are going to be achieved, in other words a strategy consists of important actions to realize our context. The strategies identified in this study helped our participants to re adjust and create a new identity. That is what the objective of this research is to discover the challenges abroad in the US and the strategies used by returnees in order to cope with their reverse culture shock in Mexico. I also want to point out how important is that people know about reverse culture shock.

1.3 Context of the Research

This study is carried out in a Public University located in central Mexico. Nationally, this University is in the top 5 and currently has 76 careers, one of them the Faculty of Languages which the 13 participants of this study belong to. The decision of carrying out the research here is because all the participants returned to make a connection with their backgrounds or due to the deportation. Also, the participants were born in Puebla, just one of them comes from Guerrero, their age ranged from 25 to 38 years old.

The characteristics of these participants are that they started an ELT major because of the good English level they had. Most of the participants moved to the United States due to migration and, therefore; lived overseas for more than 5 years. Nevertheless, the other participants studied a short-program abroad in the US at least for 1 year, so that; they all had a reverse cultural shock when returning to their home country, Mexico. This return experience was lived differently, but it is important to see how each one have been able to cope with it.

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1.4 Aims of the Research

Re-entry is in fact an inevitable process in such a globalized world where migration is a common phenomenon, so there is a need to comprehend it, take advantage to know how it works and then overcome it. The main aim in this study is to explore the participants strategies to overcome the reverse cultural shock they experienced when coming back to Mexico. Jofre (2001) defines "strategy regarding the traits (characteristics) of individuals and populations to deal with the primordial objective of surviving. From this perspective, strategies to survive do emerge and evolve endlessly" (p.1).

In order to find out such strategies, the researcher reviews some of the psychological effects of exposure to culture contact. The study suggests that contact does not necessarily lead to negative reactions. However, there is no doubt that cross-cultural interactions are inherently stressful, and an analysis of any potential adverse reactions must be included in the discussion. After describing the aims of the study and explaining what a strategy is; the objectives are presented in the following section.

1.4 Objectives

The present section mentions the objectives reached in the study. Based on the strategies by Jofre (2011), N'Zurilla (2007) and Arthur (2003) this study has two main objectives. First, this study aims to find the manner in which participants responded and coped with their culture re adjustment. That is, how they adapted to living in Mexico after reentry. Additionally, this study aims to list the coping strategies that they implemented regarding returning home. In order to reach these objectives, the research is guided by the research questions that are presented in the following section.

1.5 Research Questions

The research questions that guide this study are:

1. What are the participants' perceptions about reverse culture shock and what are the strategies they implemented in order to cope with it?
2. To what extent, did the strategies help the participants to reach acculturation in their home country?

In order to answer the research questions, this study is conducted with the main topics that support the literature review. Then, the methodology, instrument design and findings arise. The data analysis is gathered with interviews and questionnaires. After that, the list of coping strategies that participants reported is included. This makes us visualize a person's ability to overcome a hard and difficult process.

The first chapter focuses on a brief explanation about the study; the importance of the topic, important authors who researched the returning process, the context of the study, participants, aims, objectives to be achieved and finally, two research questions which are the scope of the methodology and the study itself and show the results obtained from the data. The next chapter includes the literature review which discusses and examines the topics associated with this study.

CHAPTER II

Literature review

Chapter II focuses on the topics related to reverse cultural shock, this shock is the process of facing one's culture and language after being in a foreign country for a limited period of time; there is a re-adjustment and individuals must accept the new changes one more time which can be really hard. From my point of view, this shock is challenging and interesting, so the participants who are part of this study talk about their strategies used to overcome this shock and how they overcame it. Reverse culture shock is the main topic and there are many processes before facing this shock starting by migration and mobility. At the end of the literature review, there is a general point of view about Strategies which will show how human beings develop and implement them in order to overcome their reentry experience. Besides, the literature review presents how immigrant students struggle with their identity and belonging when they are in touch with a new culture. As it was said before, the reverse culture shock is experienced after some before processes that are 6: The first one is Migration which refers to individual decisions to go to another country, then Mobility which explains people who go overseas for a limited period of time in a short-study program. After that, the process of Culture shock which is the process of facing other

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cultures; when people struggle with this shock there is an acceptance to the host country, this is called as Acculturation, following with the influence of another culture which may affect people; this is Enculturation. These influences change our Cultural identity because this is the understanding of ourselves in relation to others and it is similar to Cultural synergy because it describes how we try to understand other's cultures; then, our main topic that is reverse culture shock which is the re-entry process. Finally, Strategy descriptions and meanings will be shown.

2.1 Migration and Mobility

For a considerable period of time there has been an interest in migration. Wiener, (2009) establishes that crossing cultures or move to another city change your affections. Mexican migration to the USA is present mainly in what people's beliefs, ideas, feelings, illusions and strong decisions about the youth thinking about their future. They abandon their families and home language thinking in the benefits of a better education or a higher status. Besides, the socioeconomic and cultural components develop and construct new hopes for them. Thus, thousands of young people consider being part of the American dream. They wish and allow themselves to generate strategies and bonds to achieve their goals by migrating.

According to Bornstein & Cote, (2006) many adults decide to move to another city to improve their economic situation, ethnic persecution, or for being motivated of new experiences and adventures. Bhruga, (2003) holds that migrants have the decision whether to leave or stay in the new place which it is a personal choice.

Besides, according to Manning, (2013) Migration involves the task of learning new customs and the new language. Going through the necessity to have a social initiation,

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joining and finding a place or take up a role within the new community. This process is known as "acculturation" or "socialization" which will be discussed in this chapter as well.

On the other hand, there is a high number of individuals studying abroad and returning home because the international study programs are becoming more common and popular, there are everywhere which present new risks and challenges to go abroad, so people decide to study in foreign universities, especially because the competition and progress are increasing, so individuals from different cultures interact with each other. "Mobility has changed our ways of being and makes us think "beyond societies" (Urry 2000).

Student mobility refers to international students who take a full degree abroad or students who study in a short-term program. Also, student mobility can include research or fieldwork as part of the program. With the high number of individuals studying abroad and returning, it is important to identify the struggles and challenges study abroad participants face upon return, which is considered the toughest part of the experience (Sussman, 2000, Szkudlarek, 2010).

Gaw (2000) described some feelings presented when students return home: "depression, alienation, isolation, loneliness, general anxiety, speech anxiety, friendship difficulties, shyness concerns, and feelings of inferiority" and academic problems or later concerns about the studies. (p.101)

In sum, migration and mobility bring development in the human society because individuals go further backgrounds. Loeb and Gielen, (2003) argue that migration is accompanied by excitement, fear, heartaches, tensions but also exchange of attitudes, skills, values and ideas. People start to innovate, create new ideas, values and opinions due to the

exchange of both cultures. These exchange attributes the growth in adaptations to different environments and carry these new changes from one place to another, they are most predictive of successful adaptation (Sam & Berry, 2006).

2.2 Cultural Shock

The studies of cultural shock started with the anthropologist Oberg (1960) and the sociolinguistics Gullahorn (1963) They described *cultural shock* and *reverse cultural shock* as a "qualitatively as intercultural adjustment" (p.85).

Nowadays, more people go abroad because of different reasons. The feelings are different depending on each person, for example some of them may feel anxiety and nervousness when facing the cultural differences. Most people react negatively at first because of the misunderstanding of a new culture. However, the way they overcome this experience can vary.

Cultural shock is a process which people who are in touch with another culture face. Dodge, (1990) holds "*Cultural Shock* is a stressful experience as a result of being in touch with a different culture". Then, interactions during a process of cultural shock can be difficult, stressful and awkward. Individual's feelings of frustration with the incapacity to cope, identify with, it is common the tendency of suffering from psychological distress due

"It reflects some of the feelings and experiences of travelers who suddenly find themselves in a strange, or unfamiliar place" (Bochner, S, 2013, p.). However, Oberg (1960) suggests

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that a person can have an efficient adjustment because the individual is experimenting a social learning and accepts the new culture more easily because the individual developed new attitudes and habits; and had behavioral transformations.

Oberg, (1960) lists 4 stages to *cultural shock*. The first stage is the honeymoon stage when one moves to another culture, this stage lasts from a few days to six months. It involves feelings of excitement, fascination and discovery. The second stage is the hostile and emotional stage, this stage is referring to one who is missing the culture in which he/she came from and tries to spend time with others from their home culture. The third stage is the recovery stage, in this stage one increases their communication with people around. They are becoming more competent in the language and the last stage is adjustment, at this stage the individual has accepted the new culture and tries to be part of it.

2.3 Acculturation

Acculturation is the complex interaction between two cultures. The consequences due to this interaction affect families, education and identity. Some studies are sociological, psychological, and anthropological studies (Berry, 2003- 2006, Castro, 2003 and Padilla, 1980).

Akhtar, (2011) names that it is the process of adapting and transforming individual identity which involves changes, excitement and discovery. This definition includes the process where a person adopts the social conventions and way of behavior of a different group, this concept is also called "socialization" and it refers to the adaptation of a person to function appropriately in a different context. As mentioned before, Acculturation is focused on changes Sam, (2000). People who try to re-adapt may produce certain changes in their,

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behavior, habits, attitudes, thoughts and values in other words they change their cultural identity.

Vijver (2006) establishes that it has to do with changes that an individual experience as a result of contact with one or more other cultures. Moreover, Berry (2001) describes acculturation as the self-satisfaction to adapt to the host culture at the expense of losing your own cultural heritage and identity. More recently acculturation has been defined as, "the extent to which individuals have maintained their culture of origin or adapted to the larger society" (Farver et al., 2002, p. 12)

To sum up, acculturation relates to how people adapt themselves to another cultural context psychologically and sociologically, it includes immigrants and their families, friends, ethnic identity, society, prestige, recognition, social status, gender. According to Iman (2008), some variables that point out acculturation are age, residency, education, and so forth.

Another concept that is closely related to this process is 'Enculturation', which refers to a process of socialization in a society, it is very similar to acculturation. However, it works differently. Acculturation refers to certain changes felt in both cultures: language, clothing, customs and practices, also the learning the aspects of another culture. As an example, people who moved to another country had to adapt and change in order to survive in the new context. Enculturation shows how an individual assimilates, accepts and adapts values, norms, customs, etc. It is a learning construction of one's own culture. An example is the influence of parents and home.

2.4 Enculturation

Enculturation is the process by which individuals of an ethnic group unintentionally, unconsciously, and naturally, acquire cultural values, knowledge, behaviors, manners, and identities (Gob, Lee, & Yoon, 2008; Grovtevant, Gunnar & Hellerstedt, 2006; Kim & Omizo, 2006; Constantine & Miville, 2006). Enculturation is defined as a process that occurs when a person is "socialized into his or her own cultural group" (Aponte & Johnson, 2000, p. 20).

In my own words, all people learn from their culture. This process it is formal and informal depending on their experience, observation and interaction. During life, individuals learn, discover and adopt qualities, beliefs and behaviors from parents, relatives, teachers, friends, etc. Enculturation means the process by which humans learn and transmit their culture across generations and it starts since individuals are children (Kottak, 2011, p.27)

Research literature has illustrated that enculturation is linked with psychological perspectives, because they present people who are strongly influenced by their environment. For instance, the religious variations, values, different cultural beliefs and cultural behavior.

In essence, the enculturation phenomenon can be used to understand and explain both the psychological similarities and differences that are seen among intra- ethnic group members and inter- ethnic group members (Grovtevant, et al., 2006; Kim & Omizo, 2006).

2.5 Cultural Identity

Culture is complex because everyone has a culture; all people participate in the world and have a role through social relationships taking into account: race, ethnicity, language,

status, gender, customs, values and other characteristics related to their identity. Shah, (2003) describes culture as features which bring people together in a community.

According to Kramsh, (2006) Cultural Identity is formed by the relationship between the language spoken of a social group and the identity of the community. It also includes their social practices, accent, the discourse patterns and their vocabulary; all those aspects help people to identify themselves as members of a certain community and to identify members of other communities. Besides, the cultural identity has significant changes due to intercultural experiences (Patron, 2007).

Pierce (1995) defines it "as the various ways in which people understand themselves in relation to others". The cultural identity of a person can be identified through the differences with others and the similarities with others, and finally those aspects indicate the membership of a community.

Regardless of racial, ethnic, values, customs, backgrounds, etc. Individuals may feel connected with the new culture: music, food, clothes, habits, and so on. For instance, people who moved to another country try to understand the new cultural differences of that country. This is called 'Cultural Synergy'. Human beings apply some strategies for changing identity which assist in removing barriers to create an intergroup harmony (Ward, 2001).

2.6 Cultural Synergy

Adler, (2013) describes Cultural Synergy as the process where members of different cultures try to understand each other's culture. There is the case of Mexicans who decide to move to the USA. Individuals will have to adjust to the new environment and the new

culture. Organista & Karasaki, (2003) suggest this as "the process of adjusting to lifestyle changes" (p. 139).

Suarez-Morales, Dillion, & Szapocznik (2007) describe it as "attempts by individuals at resolving the differences between their culture of origin and the dominant culture" (p. 216). The integration of both can be positive toward maintenance of the original culture and as well as interaction with members of the host society (Sam, 2000).

This understanding will be exposed and affected by some factors and show how a person' process works.

- Intercultural experiences. If people have travelled to places with different cultures, it is also important if they have a relationship or close people from other cultures.
- The previous knowledge they have about the new culture. Immigrants have some information about the place they want to live, although it is not good at all.
- The linguistic ability, the fluency in the language.
- Human values (learned and then developed).
- Personality (sociable, active, serious, among others) From our point of view, this factor is very important because a person can establish new relationships in the new context (he/she accepts the new culture)
- Contexts/situation in the new culture.

McDonough and Cedrone (2000) emphasize that Cultural Synergy is involved of motivation to create a safe environment "being sensitive to cultural differences that the results are growth and development" (Moran, 2011, p.241)

Moran, Philip Harris & Sarah Moran (2011) point out that Synergy "implies a belief that we can learn from others and others can learn from us." (Moran, 2011, p.232).

2. 7 Reverse Cultural Shock

Cultural Shock as discussed above as the contact with a new environment and the resulting consequences to an individual's perception. It also has an impact on the person's life and social behavior, not only on the language also because of the cultural differences, local traditions and conventions. During the time, people start immersing, adapting to the new environment in which they are ready for the next phase which is acculturation. Changes that result from the interaction with the second culture (Aponte & Johnson, 2000).

Finally, when it is time to come back to their own country, people have to face another process known as *"Reverse Cultural Shock"* this means that they relocate both physically and sociologically to the regions' ways. (Patron, 2007) That is one of the biggest challenges that a person can have, it is "re-adapting" to their own realities, also known as "re-entry". One more time, identity transformations, cultural and situational contexts will be the result of humans who return home (Ward, Bochner & Furnham, 2001).

"Migrants may choose under very different circumstances to return to their homeland after a number of years" (Patron, 2007, p.18). Study-abroad students stay out for educational purposes in a foreign society for a limited period. It is essential to comprehend individuals' cultural identity and personalities abroad and upon their return home because these changes will provide a new future and decisions for them. (p.20)

Gaw, (2000) suggests that the two shocks are interconnected. "The two shocks are similar although reverse cultural shock contains the difficult process of re-entry, re-adapting and re-adjusting to home country after one has lived in a country" (p. 85).

An Individual who faces this process there are two elements that affect:

- ❏   An idealized view of home
- ❏   The family expectations

Nonetheless, one may find the things differently to what they left off. The expectations are others, everyone around has other interests, lives etc.

The feelings are not different to the first shock, one starts having feelings like frustration, loneliness, alienation, euphoria and difficulty to readjust to everything, for example the food, the people, the language, the music, the faces and the smells.

As said, *reverse culture shock* can be much harder to overcome than *culture shock*, because an idealized view of home creates more confusion and the difficult expectations that nothing has changed, or family or friends are interested in other things except to the story of being abroad. Many people prepare for difficulties they may experience when they go abroad, but do not often prepare for the cultural changes of their return (Storti, 2001; Sussman, 1986). Whereas the process of *reverse cultural shock* implies a process of *re-entry* to your own country which can mean leaving friends, roles, habits, routines, and a relationship. In other words, people may feel that going home means leaving small parts of themselves behind.

Szkudlarek (2009) cited 'the challenge of returning home is related to issues such as the unexpectedness of the difficulties encountered, a lack of preparation for reentry, and grief

for the lost expat life. Individuals can display considerable emotional distress as much as six months after their reentry" (p.3).

According to Hammer (2010) who is a coordinator for returned Peace Corps volunteers said "You're expecting an exciting new culture and you're almost prepared for it. But when you come back *"Re-entry"* implies you go home again and then you understand that your home is a strange place that you do not know.

Adler (2002) describes the re-adjustment process as "the gap between the way it was and the way it is, and the gap between their idealized memories and reality. Individuals are surprised because of their feelings and at the same time, their reality. (p. 244). So, returnees experience upon reentry is a real shock, because the expectations are not related with the reality and the idea of losing a life style in the host country. (Szkudlarek, 2010).

According to Arthur (2003) individuals do not feel they are at home, they are able to notice the contrast between foreign and home culture, they have loneliness, sadness and doubts raise. On the other hand, returning home is not always negative, because we form positive feelings about our home Burger (201).

People can take on many characteristics of another culture. These characteristics can include interpersonal communication (accent, language competence), physical (fashion, hairstyles) and behavioral (postures). "Sojourners struggle with how much to keep of the new identity they gained abroad when they return home" (Gaw, 2000). When people return home, they bring much of their new culture with them. And develop a new cultural identity, the views one's identity changes due to cultural experiences. Sicola's (2005) suggests that communicative behaviors and perceptions learned abroad continued to manifest

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themselves after re-entry. "All individuals crossing cultures face some common challenges as they pioneer lives of up rootedness and gradually establish working relationships with the new milieus." (Kim, 2001, p.5)

People have different feelings when going abroad, cultural differences between the new culture and the home culture are present. Moreover, the two shocks happen to anybody and are usual, although they become harder due to many factors and emotions. *"Crossing borders can be stressful and disturbing but it can also be exciting and valuable experience"*. (Furham & Bocher's, 2001). Finally, we will discuss strategies that individuals have implemented once they face a new context.

2.8 Strategies

Human beings have always developed and used strategies in order to survive (Jofre, 2011). Individuals learn how to implement strategies and this learning has to do with their personality. In any case, coping strategies are determined due to the interaction with the environment and the ability to adapt (Jofre, 2011). The success to cope with environmental changes depends on whether an individual is capable to respond to these changes, so the next paragraph discusses the explicit points that determine the success of a person to survive in new conditions.

Nickols (2016) argues that a strategy is a plan, a vision and a direction to survive and get something, this means that a person develops strategies with the objective of surviving. Second, the strategies also depend on how a person manages opportunities and barriers to establish goals during the daily life. Third, all people have experience, have knowledge of something. Naturally, our brain becomes capable to adapt to new changes, this is basically

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our instinct. Fourth, once an individual has a mental development and experience, the person will gradually apply and implement strategies throughout life to solve and avoid problems. As Jofre (2011) mentions "humans do formulate strategies to achieve particular goals beyond the primordial quest for survival" (p.2).

In the words of Nickols (2016) "strategy is a term that refers to a complex web of thoughts, ideas, insights, experiences, goals, expertise, memories, perceptions, and expectations that provides general guidance for specific actions in pursuit of particular ends." (p.7)

Furthermore, people use strategies with the objective of solving a particular problem successfully. D'Zurilla and Nezu (2007) state that "the problem-solving" refers to a process that enables a person to cope with problem situations and to find the most effective response available (p. 108). When a person works on survival strategies there are 4 stages:

- ❏ Definition and formulation
- ❏ Alternative strategies
- ❏ Decision making
- ❏ Implementation

Toluk and Olkun (2002) refer problem-solving as a cognitive process that selects the appropriate strategies, employ them, and work them systematically.

When people implement strategies, there is a stability; D´Zurilla and Nezu (2013) mention that self-efficacy is related to stability and individual's skills to control and produce good outcomes.

According to Dr. Nancy Arthur (2003) a Canadian researcher on Education reported an assistance for preparing students for reverse culture shock, to understand, to motivate and

to appreciate about life in the home country with coping strategies that can be established during the re-adjustment process.

This researcher said that returnees need to know about other's experiences to ensure an ability to cope with the re-entry process, to inform and give encouragement to support people who need to be prepared for their re-entry and interaction with their home country, "hopes and positive anticipation, fears and concerns about returning to family, friendship, and work roles" (p. 177).

In general, individuals attempt to have stability by formulating strategies and efforts in their home country to experience a new adjustment which will change their culture identity. Curiously, after some time, the person becomes more stable, there are constant changes that occurred due to integration between American and Mexican culture, this is because the strategies provided by the person were a guidance for creating actions that helped him/her to reach a certain state of acculturation and re- adjustment. As Nickols (2016) mentions, it is the attainment of goals and means in difficult moments.

2.9 Conclusion

In short, being in touch with another culture is not easy, however, people try to prevent and deal with it knowing more about the two shocks and integrating cultural differences. To highlight, the attempt to accept one's culture and language by using strategies brings positive results that will be presented in the following chapters. The literature review defined the main processes focused on reverse cultural shock and a general explanation about strategies developed and later implemented to cope with the returning process.

Finally, the next chapter will give a description about the research methodology, study method, participants, instruments, context and data analysis which are provided with detail.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Initially, chapter III describes the methodology used in order to answer the research questions of the study which is qualitative and uses a protocol interview based on a Phenomenological method. This chapter also describes the context where the research was carried out, the characteristics of the participants, the instruments used for the data collection. Furthermore, this chapter mentions the methods, and procedures used to collect the data. The behavior of each participant and how they were analyzed is also mentioned. Finally, this chapter includes the data collection instrument and its analysis to formulate conclusions.

3.1 Methodology

The study is basically based on a qualitative approach which "is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena" (Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge, 2009, p. 7). In

other words, it is based on the Phenomenological methodology in the sense of understanding the participants' own perspectives describing the world as experienced. Lincoln (2000) defines it as "a basic set of beliefs that guide action" (p.157).

This method was chosen because it is possible to apply it at least with 10 people. The characteristics of the phenomenological method is that it uses interviews and open questions in order to let participants describe their experience from their own perspective (Gran Canyon University, n.d.). The researcher gathers data through the use of individual interviews, and later, these interviews are transcribed for their analysis. Each participant's transcription will be presented in the appendix of this thesis in order to understand their utterances.

3.2 Context

The study was carried out in a Public University located in a central state of Mexico. This school is the Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla or Meritorious Autonomous University of Puebla (BUAP). It was founded on 15 April 1578 as Colegio del Espiritu Santo and turned into a public college in 1825 and into university in 1937. Nowadays, the University focuses on reaffirming academic programs for the education and professional future. It offers 76 careers that have an excellent scientific level, culture and sport areas. Within the 76 careers, it is the Faculty of Languages which has the main objective of training professionals in the following skills: linguistic, sociocultural, pedagogic and communicative skills, besides, the Faculty provides quality services in the management of a group in teaching in Spanish and foreign languages.

The career studied by the participants is English Language Teaching (ELT) and the decision of having participants from this context is due to the fact that they all have the

acceptable characteristics for this study. First, all of they lived in the USA for at least 1 year, later they came back to Mexico. Nevertheless, these characteristics influence the research because the participants had the need to re adapt to their own culture and language, they learned strategies to later implement them and finally overcame their reentry experience according to the focus of this study.

3.3 Participants

There are 13 participants, 8 men and 5 women. Their ages range from 25 to 38 years old and all the participants were born in Mexico. One of the participants has just finished the career and he lives in another state of Mexico but he offered to share with us his experience when going abroad and coming back; Also, most of the participants lived in the US since their childhood for more than 5 years and a few of them studied a short-term program for at least 1 year. Obviously, the reverse cultural shock was lived differently; however, it is very interesting to know how each participant learnt to exchange culture differences.

Actually, most of the participants are English teachers in private schools and others are studying a master's degree in education. In general, the features of each one has to do with own experiences which help us understand and reflect that it is possible to reach proficiency when immersing and re adapting oneself in the home country. In the point of view of Milstein (2005) there are positive effects such as: a learning experience, cultural readjustment and an enhancement of self-efficacy which the interviewees report in the instrument.

In the following chart the participants characteristics are presented and categorized with the time lived in the USA. See the following Chart (3.1):

Participant	Gender	Time in the US

Pedro	M	22 years
Jaime	M	10 years
Liz	F	10 years
Luis	M	2 year
Diego	M	20 years
Diana	F	3 years
Isael	M	4 years
Delia	F	15 years
Enrique	M	3 years
Paola	F	11 years
Aaron	M	11 years
Luz	F	24 years
Josue	M	3 years

Chart 1. The table number one includes the participant's names, genders and the time lived abroad which are reported briefly and based on the questionnaires and responses.

3.4 Description of the overall research design

The process to collect the data included listening and recording many stories, tones, sentiments and struggles. After the data was collected, it was analyzed and categorized. During the face to face interviews with participants, the researcher applied the instrument. Only one of the interviews was not face to face, but via Skype because of the participants was from Guerrero so he couldn't be present. Thus, his interview was different, although, in general, the participants shared their experiences in confidentiality.

3.5 Instruments

The instrument is based on a qualitative method of data collection and analysis. In order to gather the data, a questionnaire was applied, the researcher piloted the questions by herself. The questions are categorized in six sections:

1. Foreign experience: The first shock our participants faced when moving to the USA
2. Language ability: The skills acquired in the host country.
3. The re-entry process: The experience of coming back to the home country.
4. Strategies: The strategies implemented to cope successfully.
5. Attitude: The new identity created after living in both environments.
6. Learning experience: how the reverse culture shock has impacted our participants' life.

The interview consisted of 20 semi-structured questions, each question had the purpose of obtaining relevant information to prove the different process of living in such different environments. Besides, the interview protocol lasted between 45 minutes to one hour approximately with each participant. They were conducted at the Faculty of Languages, in the participants' jobs or other places located in the town of the city. The information gathered with these instruments was analyzed and categorized. This information is described in the following section.

3.6 Data Analysis

In this section, the data analysis is examined in order to find the manner on how the interviewees cope with their re-adjustment process and the results of implementing the coping strategies suggested by Jofre (2011), N'Zurilla (2007) and Arthur (2003). First, with the participant's permission, the interviews were recorded, and the researcher transcribed the responses of the interviewees in order to gain a broad understanding of the participant's

experiences. Then the researcher broke down the coping strategies that the participants implemented. During the analysis, the researcher noticed that the reverse cultural shock works different depending on the time each participant lived abroad. However, the participants showed agreement in the coping strategies. This will be reported in chapter IV. Finally, the dialogues and quotations will be presented to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the results.

As pointed out in chapter III, the researcher analyzed each response from the 20 open questions, they were collected, and the points emerged from the participants' given answers and the interviews were recorded and transcribed. By mentioning this, the results, findings and the answers to the research questions will be synthesized in the fourth chapter.

CHAPTER IV

Results

In this chapter the researcher summarizes the results gathered using the instruments designed for this research. In addition, the questionnaires provide the basis of the qualitative method which was carefully studied and examined for obtaining how reverse culture shock was lived and how these participants had a difficult transition when coming back home.

Moreover, the research questions are answered, and the major findings gathered from the results are reported. Also, in order to better comprehend the returnee ́s experience, the researcher highlights the strategies implemented by all the participants and she evaluates their surviving experience. Finally, the interaction of the participants between U.S. and

Mexico creates a sharing of knowledge which the researcher illustrates in the present chapter.

4.1 Coping strategies

Based on the analysis of the participants' answers, this section introduces and describes the coping strategies that the participants suggested they used. According to Jofre (2011), N'Zurilla (2007) and Arthur (2003) coping strategies can help individuals to survive, cope and re integrate more easily. Thus, the following table aims to classify the re-adaptation process and the strategies implemented during this experience.

Partici-pant	Readaptation	Coping strategies	Strategy quotations
Pedro	*"Having to deal with different facets of Mexican culture and society has been a struggle, if awkward at best"*	An individual formulates strategies to have stability. (Jofre, 2011)	*"I learnt to cope with it by deciding to study a major."*
Jaime	*"I felt bad. I didn't want to come back, I had a life in California. I had friends, a girlfriend, a goal and all of that was thrown out the window."*	A returnee implements strategies to survive. (Jofre, 2011)	*"Actually, I am doing my best to continue learning music and playing the guitar."* *"To work hard, get a job and help my family."*
Liz	*"I knew I was going to live in the*	A person faces difficulties and	"*I wanted to have a degree in something and*

	suburbs... *"There is a feeling of hopeless, seems like we cannot go beyond."*	establishes goals and actions. (Jonas, 2000)	*that was the main purpose of my return"* *"I decided to study a major, I loved the fact of learning and teaching."*
Luis	*"Everything around me looked new for me. Common situations became difficult, I did not like to be in Mexico, I really felt depressed."*	The sense of achievement the reentry. (Jokinen, Brewster and Suutari, 2008)	*"What it helped me to re adapt was the interaction with the people I love the most, watch TV in my mother tongue and visit places which I missed so much during my stay in the U.S."*
Diego	**"***...really difficult as both societies are really different from each other. Sometimes, I feel I do not fit in."*	To value the background, culture and language.	*"To appreciate your language and value it. My family has helped me."*
Diana	**"***I was not easy, but I could re adapt successfully, because I've lived here my entire life"*	To have interaction with others, to be busy. (Jofre, 2011)	*"To get involved with the local people, learn as much as I can, try everything that is new, so I can be a part of it."*
Isael	*"...tt was really easy because I have always valued my country and language and I did not spend so much time in the U.S.A"*	An individual gets prepared for changes. A positive anticipation, (Arthur, 2003)	*"Prepare myself mentally and be conscious about the new changes in my life."*
Delia	*"It was a long time when I returned, it happened the same thing, it was really bad. When I moved here, I did not have any friends, any school to go."*	A person who has goals and motivation can cope more easily. (Paik, 2002)	**"***To study a career. Teaching English, I was expecting to be a teacher, I love teaching, so it is been the best decision."*

Enrique	*"I felt sad just for the first weeks, however not so complicated because I was used to live in a Mexican society."*	How to compete and performance successfully. (Barney, 2001)	*"I work, that helps me a lot, I also go out with friends and family, in that way you can feel more comfortable with the place you are in. it is something that really helps you to survive in Mexico."*
Paola	*"Being in Mexico was really hard, because it happened the same, I did not have any friends, any place to go, any job, any school. I felt depressed and awful"*	To have goals and work towards achieving something. (Nickols, 2016)	*"I have two jobs and my plan is to buy a house in order my family can live there."*
Aaron	*"...memories, friends, part of my life and my youth was there and coming here was terrible, I saw different customs, everything was weird."*	The implementation of goals. (Toluk and Olkun, 2002)	*"To get a job and continue studying. I am planning to move to Canada, soon."*
Luz	*"Very hard, I still cannot adapt to this country. There are many unfair things."*	Making decisions and goals to be stable. (D´Zurilla and Nezu, 2013)	*"To study, help my grandmother and support my parents"*
Josue	*"...coming back to Mexico was not too hard to readapt myself to my Mexican life"*	An individual who has a culture synergy (integrates both cultures) tries to take a new role in the society. (Adler, 3013)	*"I would love to interact with people as much as I get the opportunity. "*

Table 1. brief explanation of how easy or difficult the returning for each participant was

According to Suutari and Brewster (2005) re-entry includes stress and expectations of loss, the challenges to adapt are in regard to the perceived breach between expectation and

reality. This highlights what Sussman (2012) recognized: the fact that the returnees with less cultural identity or weak home country are the ones who perceive the re-entry as most difficult. Thus, according to this, the participants who established a whole life in the U.S, were the ones who suffered the effects of re-entry in a more crucial way. In other words, after living abroad for a long period of time, the returnees experience difficulties to re adjust to the home country (Suutari and Valimaa, 2002).

In addition, Lui (2005) found that the re-entry can take approximately 12-18 months, however some of the participants have experienced more time to adapt, this is due to the long host country interaction. Luz and Diego illustrate this point in the following examples.

"*Very hard, I still cannot adapt to this country. There are many unfair things, for example the salary here is awful! I am stress out.***" Luz, 35 years old, 24 years in the USA**

"*Really difficult as both societies are really different from each other. Sometimes I feel I do not fit in.***" Diegol, 29 years old, 20 years of stay in the U.S**

The transition of coming back to Mexico was so challenging because of the long time abroad. The returning meant, not having friends, not been used to the context, not having a close relationship with relatives, not having a job, not knowing how to survive to new environment.

As pointed out, the interaction within the host and home country made the re-entry process more difficult (Kraimer 2012). On the other hand, some of the participants experienced an easier re-adaptation period, because they had an active interaction with the host country for a minimum period, the experience was found less difficult. For instance, Diana and Enrique did not experience a severe returning:

*"It was really easy because I have always valued my country and language and I did not spend so much time in the U.S.A. "***Diana, 29 years old, 4 years living in the U.S***

"I felt sad just for the first weeks, however not so complicated because I was used to live in a Mexican society." **Enrique, 31 years old, 3 years in the U.S**

As mentioned in the literature review, the re-adjustment may also affect the general lifestyle, as well as associated activities and social relationships that makes re-adjustment a challenge (Lazarova & Cerdin, 2007). However, humans have the need to take a role and to employ strategies with the objective of surviving satisfactorily. Thus, in the next section, the strategies that the 12 participants implemented in their re-entry experience are illustrated and presented.

4.1.2 Strategies to overcome the returning

This section intends to analyze the coping strategies suggested by the 13 participants. Thus, it is important to take into account the problems that participants faced in their home country in order to see how they could overcome these difficulties by implementing coping strategies.

One of the difficulties was related to their professional life and financial problems, in those categories, the participants mentioned that they had difficulties finding a job or salary problems. They also mention the lack of opportunities in Mexico. In general, the participants indicated that the success to cope with their reentry was involved in doing something or being passionate about something, for the majority of the participants this passion was to study. According to Jokinen, Brewster and Suutari (2008) the returning can be successful if there is a sense of overcoming and accomplishing the reverse culture shock. Finally, the analysis of the data collection showed the following strategies:

1) To get stability by studying

2) To interact with family and friends

3) To have expectations and goals

4) To have activities or keep busy

5) To value and respect origins

6) To have contact with the culture and language:

7) To find a motivation

The purpose of this study is to obtain the strategies employed by the participants and supported by Jofre (2011), N'Zurilla (2007) and Arthur (2003). The seven identified strategies will be explained and supported by the participant's quotations.

1. To get stability by studying

Participants were returnee students at the Faculty of Languages. They decided to study a major for taking advantage of their proficiency in English level, so most of them are already English teachers. One of the strategies that participants mentioned most during the interviews was that this experience of knowing the language meant to have some stability while training to become English teachers. Besides, Andreason and Kinner (2005) mention that people with high-level education and self-efficacy are more successful at their returning. Jaime and Luis individually supported this strategy in the following responses:

"ELT was a sure way to take advantage of my language level." **Jaime, 24 years old**

"Study a major in ELT, because I feel I can go beyonds" **Luis 29 years old**

2. To interact with family and friends

This strategy was quite reported by the participants, in fact, they mentioned that the family was the key to accept the new changes, that the family was always there during the returning transition and that the interaction with the members of the family helped them establish goals in the home country. Besides, the interaction with friends was part of the strategy. Enrique and Delia had contact with their relatives. They synthesize this strategy in the following excerpts.

"I also go out with friends and family, in that way you can feel more comfortable with the place you are in." **Enrique, 31 years old**

"My family, specially my mom has always been there for me, also talk to my brother, having communication" **Delia, 28 years old**

3. To have expectations and goals

The people who have goals, are the ones who work hard, there are difficulties, but they will have a decision making and finally an implementation of strategies. So, setting goals help individuals to have a vision about their life and a motivation which will make them rediscover themselves. For instance, Jaime who is learning music, Paola who is planning to buy a house and Aaron who plans to move. The following quotations present goals to be achieved, to obtain an intercultural experience and even gain a better status.

"To continue learning music and playing the guitar." **Jaime, 24 years old**

"I have 2 jobs and my plan is to buy a house in order my family can live there." **Paola. 27 years old**

"To get a job and continue studying. I am planning to move to Canada, soon." **Aaron, 23 years old**

4. To have activities or keep busy

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The results show that one of the strategies suggested was having an activity or keeping busy. For instance, going out with friends, visiting some places in the city, studying or working. This strategy could help our participants to relieve depression and stress and to do something with the objective of benefiting themselves, in other words, there are new experiences and thoughts. Luis and Luz gain life experience, the following quotations support this strategy:

*"I watch TV in my mother tongue and visit places which I missed so much during my stay in the U.S.***"** **Luis, 29 years old**

"I work and teach to push on myself enough to do more like I did when I was abroad."

Luz, 35 years old

5. To value and respect origins:

From my personal point of view, I really like this strategy and was pretty suggested by our participants, because it refers to the importance of being in touch with our own culture and language, being proud of what we are and the love for ourselves. Also, this sentiment comes from the parents' teaching, if they make their children value their roots and respect them, their children will embrace their backgrounds. Diego, Delia and Paola support this strategy in the following examples.

"My roots were always present in my life" **Diego, 29 years old**

"I am super mexican!" **Delia, 28 years old**

"I have always loved Mexico, as I told you, I never forget it" **Paola, 27 years old**

6. To accept the new changes and personal growth

Despite the fact that our returnees coped with their returning, there was a need that made them accept the new changes and which helped to improve their personal growth in a

positive way. Prepare mentally, respect others' opinions, integrate differences and know that changes are part of life and are part of the strategies that the participants implemented in their home country. Pedro and Diana could find the complexity and the understanding about their returning.

"One has to be satisfied with oneself before anything else. That is something I had no grasp of until I experienced life in such different environments." **Pedro, 38 years old**

"I have different goals that I would like to achieve, I know that I can do different things I have options, I will not stay at the same place forever." **Diana, 29 years old**

7. To have contact with the culture and language:

One of the participants mentioned that each culture and language have beauty, that is true, because the interaction with own context and other environments make people change their way of being, because they become more adaptable and open minded. Delia and Diana know that they need to continue preparing and making efforts frequently which tend an easy re-adjustment, this strategy is illustrated by the following responses.

"You have to prepare yourself frequently. Language is more than talking, it is about grammar, pronunciation, it is about culture, it is about many things" **Delia, 28 years old**

"To show respect every time, try to make new friends, tell them about your culture so you can have the same back, and this is how I think that you can adapt yourself to a new place. "
Josue, 25 years old

"Be proud of what you are and where you come from. Value yourself!" **Luz, 35 years**

old

To find a motivation

Human beings cope to different situations more easily if there is a motivation, because it increases the efforts with the objective of overcoming challenges. Paik (2002) suggests that motivation tends to a more successful reentry process. Delia describes how a motivation has a important role in the overcoming process.

"Motivation is the key, my motivation is my family, my first reason. Whatever you are in any situation, think on something that makes you believe you can do it. And then, focus yourself on that person, on that dream is going to motivate you a lot. That is the key." **Delia, 28 years old**

The feelings of stress and sadness that the 13 participants experienced was the result of having naturally an idea of "home". However, the analysis of this study suggests that the re-entry is successful due to the acquired adaptive skills (Ward, 2001).

4.2 Answer to Research Questions

As pointed out, the returning may be less difficult if people prepare for returning, in the last section, the coping strategies were identified, each one was explained and supported by the participants' answers. In the following sections, the research questions will be solved and supported by the returnees.

4.2.1. What are the participants' perceptions about reverse culture shock and what are the strategies they implemented in order to cope with it?

Reverse culture shock is an unpexting and complete surprise, because people do not think or imagine that they will face the same shock at home and the truth is that the greater time

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an individual life abroad, greater the reverse shock will be faced. Nevertheless, our participants have been able to cope with it and keep a stability in their home country, somehow, the reverse culture shock has given them the benefit of a learning experience which is reported in the following excerpts.

"I would not change anything. I am happy what I am, the person I became. All the decisions were based on my needs." **Delia, 28 years old**

"You need to adapt, keep on working. Now, I am happy because, I like my job and I have good friends and my family. I Thank where I am" **Aaron, 32 years old**

"All people are raised in different ways and that there is something further, how much you think, how much you know about something, there is always chance to learn more and better about it."

Enrique, 31 years old

The literature review discussed the difficulty to manage the returning and that people needed to acquire skills and strategies to deal with this experience. Nevertheless, the positive aspects of reverse culture shock were also synthesized; when people return home, they bring much of their new culture with them and develop a new cultural identity (Sicola, 2005). According to Baruch (2016) returnees represent a high-skilled talent to re adjust, in fact, our participants had big changes that impacted their lives and consider this experience necessary for their personal and professional life.

The coping strategies which were identified are seven and each one was analyzed and explained in the section 4.1.2 by the interviewees' statements.

4.2.2. To what extent, did the strategies help the participants to reach acculturation in their home country?

There are important factors that influence the returning, such as: time lived in the US, the reasons people have to come home, and the difficulties found. However, these aspects

emphasised the need to belong, again. Generally, all the participants just wanted a more settled life in their home country. As pointed out, for the participants who had a prolonged period of time in the US, the acculturation has been rough in their returning to Mexico, very different to the ones who stayed abroad for less time, because there is another confrontation between what they were and what they are now (Kraimer, 2012). Nevertheless, all the participants have found an equilibrium to take a productive role in their home country and consequently develop an identity which is meaningful (Kohonen, 2008).

For the participants who stayed in the US for more than 10 years, the re-adjustment has been tough, but they are still implementing the coping strategies and that they need more time. Luz recognizes that she is still working to overcome it.

> *"Very hard, I still cannot adapt to this country. There are many unfier things, for example the salary here is awful! I am stressed out."* **Luz, 35 years old**

On the other hand, the feelings are more positive, and participants agree that the contact with such different environments helped them to become more open minded and adaptable due to the cross-cultural adaptations.

Finally, the analysis presents a deep comprehension and complexity about the returning process, also, the results highlight a number of different strategies that helped or had an effect on the participant's repatriation process. Now, the following section discusses the findings emerged from the data collection.

4.3 Findings

The findings of this study are synthesized in the present section, they represent the need to investigate further the reverse culture shock, because it involves everything: language, customs, beliefs, traditions, attitude, status, gender, education level, self-efficacy and so

on. However, the researcher just points out four aspects that will be evaluated: that the re-entry works differently depending on the gender, the new attitude regards the returning process, the reasons to come back to Mexico and general suggestions for future returnees.

4.3.1 Gender

A total of 13 participants were analyzed, more men than women 8 to be exact and a minor number of 5 women was formed. An interesting difference that emerged from the data collection is that men suffer more regards the actions or efforts in the home country. Comparatively, women tend to experience a less difficult returning compared to men (Cox, 2004). These feelings of stress and sadness have to do with the difficulties that the returnees faced in their home country, however, it is quite fascinating to observe how the gender works differently looking forward surviving in the home country. In fact, the researcher suggests a further investigation to compare this difference, this finding is shown in the following points of view from Pedro and Delia:

"I was given more opportunities for professional growth in a foreign country than the one offered in my own. I have felt and constantly feel this frustration. People are very protective here and few are open to share a helping hand and / or knowledge to those in need; that was not the case of my experiences in the US, where they have the type of outlook that you grow when you help others grow. I call that "progressive" thinking, when my bad experiences here stem from a the "regressive" mentality that represses even those with great potential." **Pedro, 38 years old**

"It was a long of time when I returned, it happened the same thing, it was really bad. When I moved here, I did not have any friends, any school to go. It was difficult, the first and second month my thoughts were not belonging here. However, I started studying at BUAP, things got better." **Delia, 28 years old**

Interestingly, both participants stayed in the US more than 10 years, Delia could readapt easier due to her decision to study. Also, Pedro studied a major and his interests are about writing, however his returning process was tougher. Related to this, some studies have shown that younger, single people and women experience less stress (Andreason and Kinner, 2005; Cox, 2004). Thus, the researcher suggests having a further investigation about the difference between men and women to make a comparison over their returning.

4.3.2 Attitude

In general, during the returning transition, the participants were exposed to changes on their attitudes, values and the way of being with others, interestingly. These changes make people develop a new identity in the home country (Kraimer and Shaffe, 2012). Vijver (2006) mentions that individuals tend to change their belonging, perception, personality, identity and of course, the ability to accept others' opinions and ideas. The 13 participants agreed that this experience have brought important changes on them, for instance, Pedro and Aaron have gained a better perspective about their experience.

"I feel I have put more at risk now, finally chasing after what I really believe in; success is not what I once thought it was. I realize now that, whether they have been good or bad past experiences, one has to be satisfied with oneself before anything else." **Pedro, 38 years old**

"You need to adapt, keep on working. Now, I am happy because I like my job, I have good friends and my family. I Thank where I am" **Aaron, 32 years old**

The findings support the literature review, that living in a foreign country can bring changes on the attitude in the returnees (Masgoret, 2006) because there is a comprehension on oneself. For example, Josue makes a description of himself after living this experience:

"I describe myself like this kind of person who believes that can face whatever is in front, and that there are a lot of places to know out there, and all that you need to do is dare to do what you´ve been dreaming of." **Josue, 25 years old**

Also, the participants reported that their new attitude led them to realize what they needed to make a better stay in Mexico and that they could have a well integration. Paola struggled for a long time to overcome her returning, she was deported from the US with her brother, so this experience was quite stressful and shocking. However, the expectations over her attitudes are shown in the following statement:

"I had to become more independent and learn the things by myself. It was hard, but now I feel happy for all the things I've done." **Paola, 28 years old**

There is no doubt that the successful to obtain something has to do with the attitude, as Ward (2001) illustrates in the literature review, an individual applies some strategies to change their attitude in order to gain stability and harmony.

4.3.3. Reasons for coming back to Mexico

As it was mentioned in chapter I, the reverse culture shock starts when people decide to come back. In fact, there are some studies that report that the members of the family are a significant factor for those individuals who return, because they miss the family company and interaction (Harvey, 2009). In addition, Lidgard and Gilson (2002) suggest that people who are older than 25 years old come back to start a family, on the contrary Liz came back with her new family to study.

"Well, I came with my new family know, husband and daughter. I was not so convinced of coming back because I knew I was going to live in the suburbs, but I wanted to have a degree in something and that was the main purpose of my return." **Liz, 28 years old**

In addition, Paola reported a struggle which was the deportation from the US. This factor impacted her dramatically:

"It was terrible! My brother and I were deported from the U.S, it was like 6 years ago and since then, we haven't seen our family. Nowadays, we frequently talk and have contact." **Paola. 27**

years old

It is necessary to mention that the ones who moved to the US for studying an exchange program, the reasons to return were different. Many of them expect job offers, to grow up professionally, to gain better opportunities on the personal development in their country. (Bossard and Peterson, 2005). For example, Enrique studied in the US; in his return he was expecting a better job offer.

"After the study program…At the beginning, my working experience was in a different country, so people did not want to hire me because I had just returned to Mexico and they thought I was deported, but after some time everything is back to normal." **Enrique, 31 years old.**

His struggle to find a job was hard, but he became an English teacher in a private school, which it means that he has found a stability in Mexico. Hogarth (2015) describes "home" as a security and familiarity construction, which make individuals come back to their home. In general, the reverse culture shock was exhausting and difficult because the participants were looking forward to having a significant life that the one, they had in the U.S.A.

To sum up, the findings show that all the participants presented positive feelings regards their family and home, the negative feelings emerged as the result of all the difficulties

found in Mexico. Hazen and Albert (2006) also mention that the reasons to come back are related to personal factors which influence the re-adjustment process.

4.3.4 Suggestions

Eventually, the participants adapt to their home country, they become part of it and make efforts to accept their life at home. Despite the fact that some participants have experienced a harder and severe returning, they have developed and formulated strategies to re-socialize satisfactory.

In fact, there are some other suggestions that may help returnees in their acculturation to their home country. During the re-entry, individuals should first try to change their attitude and make efforts for re-integrate both cultures. Another suggested strategy is that returnees should be conscious and prepared for changes and even have contact with other returnees to observe their process to overcome it. Besides, instead of criticizing their home country, returnees should try to have a cultural synergy which combines and integrates aspects of both cultures, also have the knowledge that organizations and seminars to inform people about this shock which are flexible and patient to gain a better re-adjustment. (Andreason and Kinneer, 2005)

The findings suggest that people who have experienced a process of re-entry are more open and realistic regards the returning expectations and be aware for preparing themselves or other returnees for coming back home. Finally, the participants reported a significant transformation on themselves, they feel more self-confident and have gained a maturity, a personal and professional development.

4.4 Conclusion

This section tends to summarize Chapter IV, as it was pointed out, the successful to overcome reverse culture shock depends on individual internal and external factors. (Suutari and Valimaa, 2002). Additionally, the participant's experiences were highlighted in the results, then, the interviewees' perceptions, the coping strategies and how successful has been the reverse culture shock were discussed in the research questions. Consequently, the findings for the study were presented in section 4.3, then, the chapter concludes with the general suggestions for future returnees. Lastly, Chapter V introduces the conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion

Chapter V introduces the meaningful purpose of the results supported by the authors. Also, it concludes the contributions for further investigations, then, the limitations are identified, the suggestions and the reflection about this study.

The purpose of this study was to find the manner on how the participants coped with reverse culture shock returning to their home country Mexico after living in the US for a prolonged time. Thus, this chapter gives a brief summary about the study and personal reflections given by the researcher.

5.1 Research contributions

In this study, the researcher implemented a phenomenological research that explained the participant's reality of their lived experiences (Cilesiz, 2010). The research design was applied and later analyzed to obtain the expected results. For the researcher, it was important to investigate and develop the present investigation because it gives a knowledge sharing due to the cross-culture participant's experiences. At this moment, findings in this study clearly illustrate that the 13 interviewees consider their re-entry experience as incredible meaningful. Although there have been many challenges in Mexico, the coping strategies have helped them to gain a less stressful re-adjustment (Suutari and Brewster, 2000).

For schools, teachers, students, seminars and organizations, this study gives a clear idea of how reverse cultural shock emerges suddenly once one returns home. The fact that the time living abroad influences the participants' performance to survive strongly and that the re-adjustment is not always negative since people develop a personal and professional development, they become more openness, positive and confidence with a better ability to interact with others and to accept the new experiences more easily (Milstein, 2006). Overall, the researcher suggests that people need to prepare to re-integrate their foreign and home country without criticizing or feeling that they are giving up everything, on the contrary, it is possible to overcome reverse culture shock if people have the ability to accept, respect and relate to a diverse range of cultures and people.

5.2 Limitations of the study

First of all, one limitation was that the researcher contacted other 5 more participants, so the total of participants turned to be 18, but the planning to apply the instrument face to face with each one could not be possible due to the fact that some of the participants had a

non-stopping job. Besides, there were a small number of women participants, 5 women compared to 8 men participants, but as it was pointed out in chapter IV, the researcher recommends a further investigation about gender differences regarding the returning process. Another limitation for this investigation was the amount of time given to complete this research, the goal was to conclude the thesis in 5 months, however the researcher acknowledges that there was a desire to investigate other themes related to the returning process such as: language, status, perceptions, beliefs, values, gender, age, independence, personality, identity and so on, but it is an extensive thematic analysis. So, the researcher includes some suggestions for further researchers over returning adjustment.

5.3 Suggestions for further research

The framework to analyze the shock of coming home is complex, but the current themes are valuable to help returnees by providing some strategies or solutions for a successful re-entry adjustment. By mentioning this, there are many related topics which were not included in the research, however, these themes can be further investigate. Thus, the researcher emphasizes the importance of investigating about the differences gender, the roles that women have on their returning should be analyzed with detail, the cross-cultural experiences that people have before their return which influence the successful to cope with it. Additionally, the reasons to come back home need to be evaluated to observe how easy or difficult is the process depending on the feelings about "home".

As a suggestion, training programs, seminars and more organizations should be introduced to improve coping strategies and acquired skills (Andreason and Kinneer, 2005). Returnees can be motivated by involving them in international projects where they can share their knowledge so they can be considered as role models. (Kraimer, Shaffer, Harrison, & Ren,

2012). In addition, there are other suggestions, the importance of supporting returnees in their re adaptation. This support can come from family, friends, school and teachers. Further analysis on the culture identity is needed, if the returnees who experience a higher cross-cultural become more mature and competitive in their professional growth, and the importance for people knowing more about reverse culture shock, also further studies about psychological changes.

5.4 Reflection

At first, my desire was to talk about the ELT students voices on their cultural shock, but during my investigations on this first shock, I found that there was another shock that I didn't even know it existed. The shock of coming home, the idea of facing another re-adjustment in one's language and culture made me desire to focus my research on this phenomenon. I felt curious and I push myself to complete my research, interestly my thesis suggests that the re-adjustment process is hard, but it brings positive aspects as well, there is a need to prepare people in coping with their returning experience.

5.5 Conclusion

Chapter V summarizes the thesis itself. The principal purposes for my study were to inform the perceptions of 13 participants over their returning to Mexico, the manner in which they responded and coped with their re-adjustment, as well as the coping strategies implemented.

Finally, my thesis contributes to know more about the second shock, to acknowledge that this phenomenon can happen to individuals who are exposed to cross-cultural experiences. These people can feel confused, sad, anxious and desperate. However, the re-adaptation and re-adjustment depend on the efforts of each one to obtain a stability satisfactory.

Comentado [2]: This is not clear

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Appendix A

Instrument

RETURNING HOME FROM THE USA

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FORM

Gender _____
Age___
Interviewed by_____
Introductory Protocol
To facilitate our note-taking, we would like to audio tape our conversations today. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) the purpose of this interview is to describe the process of 're-entry' and re-adapt to Mexico after living in the United States, (3) and how this process affects students' identity. Thank you very much for your agreeing to participate.

Foreign experience

1.   What did you feel when you moved to the U.S.A? Why did you move there?

2.   How did you prepare for life in the U.S. before you arrived?

3.   How long did you live in the U.S.A? And who did you live with?

4.   How difficult or easy was for you to adapt to the American society? What emotion could you use to describe this experience?

Language ability

5. When you were studying in the U.S.A, how did you feel?

6. Did you continue using Spanish in the US?

7. Now, how would you describe your English level?

Re entry process

8. How difficult or easy has been for you to readapt yourself to the Mexican society? How have you felt?

9. What difficulties have you faced in Mexico? How did you fix them?

10. When you arrived here, what things you did not like very much?

Strategies/ Solutions

11. What has helped you get used to Mexico

12. What would be the best decision you have done in Mexico?

13. Have you changed after being in the U.S.A? If so, do you consider these changes have had an impact on your life?

Attitude

14. Do you feel completely integrated to your culture and language?

15. Are you adaptable?

16. If you were moving to another country, what would you do to adjust?

17. How would you describe yourself before moving to the U.S.A?

18. How would you describe yourself after living in the U.S.A?

19. If you had another chance to start your experience again, what would you do different?

Learning experience

20. Finally, what suggestions would you give to a person to adapt/integrate to one's own culture and language successfully?

Thank you for your cooperation!

Appendix B

(Transcription sample)

Name: Delia   Gender: F   Age: 28

The next interview was by a undergraduate student in ELT. Actually, she is studying a master on education and collaborated with the researcher to know about her experience. The protocol was at the Faculty of Languages

Interviewer: Delia, what did you feel when you moved to the U.S.A? Why did you move there?

Interviewee: *I felt very bad because I used to miss my family, a lot, specially my brother, mmm, when I moved there I felt kind of frustrated, because I did not know the language. I did have any friend or people to talk to. I really felt alone.*

I moved there, because my parents got divorced when I about 10 years old.

Interviewer: How did you prepare for life in the U.S. before you arrived there?

Interviewee: *I did not prepare anything, my mom just decided to go. One day, she said "let's move" and we did it.*

Interviewer: How long did you live in the U.S.A? And who did you live with?

Interviewee: *It was very difficult because although you know people who speak Spanish, they do not speak it. They ignore you. I lived with my family, for 15 years I remember that people are rude when you are new. But, teachers wanted to help me. I survived for my family and my teachers.*

Interviewer: How difficult or easy was for you to adapt to the American society? What emotion could you use to describe this experience?

Interviewee: *It was hard, any people to rely on, any friends, so it was only myself, myself, myself.*

Interviewer: When you were studying in the U.S.A, how did you feel?

Interviewee: *I did not understand some classes. This was the worst time. Then, I had friends, but the most difficult part was the language, I could not communicate, I did not know anything, however my friends translated what I wanted to say. The language was part of me. I tried to pay attention all the time.*

Interviewer: Did you continue using Spanish in the US?

Interviewee: *Of course, my mom did not learn how to speak English, so we spoke in Spanish. Even, I had mexican friends and we did it in Spanish.*

Interviewer: Now, how would you describe your English level?

Interviewee: *I believe is good. It doesn't really matter if it is Spanish, English or Italian, or any language, but you have to prepare yourself frequently. What I want to say, is that language is more than talking, it is about grammar, pronunciation, it is about culture, it is about many things. So, I believe that you never finish learning the language. I think it is good, I have some certifications about it but I will never have the enough skills to believe that you are very good at English. It is normal not bad, just normal.*

Interviewer: How difficult or easy has been for you to readapt yourself to the Mexican society? How have you felt?

Interviewee: *It was a long of time when I returned, it happened the same thing, it was really bad. When I moved here, I did not have any friends, any school to go. Actually, the food make get sick, because it is different. I had relatives who I did not see for and when I noticed they changed. It was difficult, the first and second month my thoughts were not belonging here. However, I started studying at BUAP, things got better.*

Interviewer: What difficulties have you faced in Mexico? How did you fix them?

Interviewee: *I knew Spanish, so I do not think I have faced difficulties in Mexico. Maybe, getting closer to my relatives.*

Interviewer: When you arrived here, what things you did not like very much?

Interviewee: *Many things. The first one was the transportations, here they are really bad, really bad. I did not like them. Security in Mexico is horrible. Money, because in the U.S. I was working as a babysitter, I had good money and here in Mexico, I started looking for a job and money was like.. an issue. It is disturbing.*

Interviewer: What has helped you get used to Mexico?

Interviewee: *My family, specially my mom has always been there for me, also talk to my brother, having communication. Family, gave me important motivation, they were the key.*

Interviewer: What would be the best decision you have done in Mexico?

Interviewee: *To study a career. Teaching English, I was expecting to be a teacher, I love teaching, so it is been the best decision.*

Interviewer: Have you changed after being in the U.S.A? If so, do you consider these changes have had an impact on your life?

Interviewee: *Yes of course that I changed. I am more open minded. The way people wear clothes, when I came here I got some dresses and skirts and some members of my family told me "you can not dress like that in here because boys and men and…blah, blah" You know, all those comments that are not really good. To respect people's opinions when you say something, in Mexico, people tend to criticize. Also, religion, here in Mexico is just god and virgin, I mean, if you believe in god or not, it is just your decision, if you not hurt we are good. Also, I mean we do not respect nature. I changed a lot, it is like you are re educating yourself.*

Interviewer: Do you feel completely integrated to your culture and language?

Interviewee: *I am super mexican!*

Interviewer: Are you adaptable?

Interviewee: *Human beings are the only ones who can be adaptable, when you have a necessity you have to adapt yourself to whatever the situation is.*

Interviewer: If you were moving to another country, what would you do to adjust?

Interviewee: *Learn the language, you need to communicate and respect cultures. Each one has beauty.*

Interviewer: How would you describe yourself before moving to the U.S.A?

Interviewee: *I was a child, a baby girl. I was shy and very quite, but I had the necessity which made talk to people and If I needed something, I had to talk.*

Interviewer: How would you describe yourself after living in the U.S.A?

Interviewee: *The way to communicate, I try to respect other opinions, beliefs, ways of living, thinking, their appearances. I respect even more.*

Interviewer: If you had another chance to start your experience again, what would you do different?

Interviewee: *I would not change anything. I am happy what I am, the person I became. All the decisions were based on my needs.*

Interviewer: Finally, what suggestions would you give to a person to adapt/integrate to one's own culture and language successfully?

Interviewee: *Motivation is the key, because if you have a reason to move on in life, to face problems, you can do great things. My motivation is my family, my first reason. Whatever you are in any situation, think on something that makes you believe you can do it. And then, focus yourself on that person, on that dream is going to motivate you a lot. That is the key.*

Researcher: Delia, do you know something? I really loved your last 2 answers, They are are beautiful and the part in which you mention that you would not change anything because you have achieved your goals.

Participant: *Thank you so much beautiful, the truth is that life takes you to different roads, but there is no doubt, family always be there, that should be our key. Thanks for your words!*