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**ACADEMIC IMPACT OF THE TEACHING SPANISH AS FOREIGN
LANGUAGE SUBJECTS IN EXCHANGE STUDENTS IN THE FACULTY
OF LANGUAGES BUAP**

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LICENCIADO EN ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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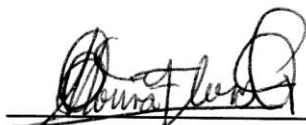
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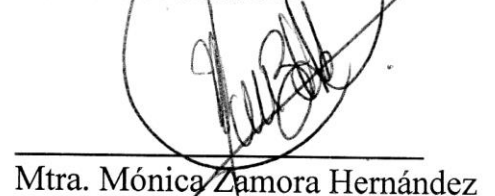
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Dedications

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Abstract

Considering that foreign students have a different experience according to their needs, the purpose of this research is twofold: first, it intends to know the impact that the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects have in exchange students; second, it intends to know to what extent teachers at the faculty of languages help these students to cover their language needs. In order to achieve this purpose, the following three research questions were formulated: 1) What was the principal reason to carry out the school exchange? 2) What kind of impact does the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects have in foreign students? 3) To what extent do faculty of languages teachers help them cover their language needs? This is a qualitative research because we are involved in a depth analysis of reasons and opinions (Creswell, 2003). A case study strategy of inquiry was used (ibid). The instrument to carry out this research was a questionnaire designed in Spanish; it was divided in three sections with a total of 13 items. The results seem to indicate that foreign students showed an inclination in three reasons to take the interchange experience: a) culture, b) academic prestige and c) improve their knowledge of Spanish. The impact of the Spanish subjects is divided in three parts: a) communicative, b) pedagogic and c) cognitive; and students recognize help from teachers to cover their language needs. With these results, the purpose of the study has been successfully achieved.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Problem

Nowadays we all know that the English language is considered one of the most important languages in the world because of its global character. According to the study plan of the Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés, it is the language used in fields like technology, international trades, science, tourism, business, sport events as well as media and entertainment, it is the official language at least in 75 countries, it is the mother tongue of 375 million people and the second language in another 375 million. However, in recent years, we have seen an increase in the Spanish Learning as a Foreign Language due to the incorporation of this language as a subject in some schools specialized in languages. Spanish is considered as one of the foreign languages that students from other countries can learn in their universities what create exchange programs and all those issues related with it such as courses, masters, congresses, research studies, etc. According to the study plan of the Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Ingles until 2009 there were 9 schools in Puebla that offered stay groups for bachelors from other countries, who came to increase their knowledge in the Spanish language in order to grow personal and professional. That situation made the Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla led the student's formation in that direction and that is why the implementation of subjects focused on the Teaching Spanish as a foreign language was included in the study plan of the Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés.

The idea to investigate the academic impact that the teaching, Spanish as foreign language subjects has in foreign students, came from a particular experience that I saw in my Spanish Grammar class:

The first classes were easy for all; they were about tenses in Spanish and “*accidentes gramaticales del verbo*”. All of us, including foreign students from Korea felt comfortable with the subject and we thought that it was so easy. However after days and weeks, the course was developing more and more complex, we had to analyze the subject and complement of complex and simple sentences, memorize and apply some concepts that I never had heard before and I was sure that my classmates had not.

I used to sit behind Korean students and they used to ask me some questions about the new topics, sometimes I could answer them, other times I could not because the topics were difficult for me too. After some days I noticed that Korean students stopped speaking and participating in the class. They wasted their time speaking in their mother tongue and they looked like if the class were useless for them so I decided to ask them what was happening, immediately they answered that the course was so difficult, in fact, one of them told me that he felt so frustrated.

1.2 Rationale for Topic Selection

Based on this experience I started wondering what kind of impact the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects that BUAP offers for foreign students have because as I said before the implementation of those subjects focus on how to teach Spanish to foreign students and it was created for *Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés* student's in order to complement their academic formation.

Furthermore after reading and looking for some articles and theses related with this topic I realized that there is just 1 thesis about the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects at the faculty but this topic has been investigated in a different way as I want to do

it, there is not one research study about how those subjects impact in foreign students because the fact that our faculty offers them does not mean that there are perfect or adequate for them that's why I consider this investigation so important.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

Because of the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects are focused on Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés students is important to know how those subjects impact in foreign students because their linguistic needs are different to ours and I would like to know to what extent the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects meet foreign students' linguistic needs.

1.4 Research Questions

My intention in this study attempts to address the following questions:

RQ1 - What was the principal reason to carry out the school exchange?

RQ2 - What kind of impact does the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects have in foreign students?

RQ3 - To what extent do faculty of languages teachers help them cover their language needs?

1.5 Research Setting

This specific research will take place in the faculty of languages BUAP with foreign students (non-native Spanish speakers) involved in the Teaching Spanish as foreign

language subjects. The curriculum structure of Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés (LEI) is designed in six disciplinary areas: Target Language, Pedagogy, Linguistics, Research, Culture, and Complementary area. The objective of complementary area is offering to the students a better possibility to acquire complementary knowledge and better opportunities in the work environment. The Complementary area offers 2 options: Teaching Spanish as a Foreign Language and Translation.

The objective of the Teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects focus on the increase of linguistic and cultural Spanish knowledge as well as the promotion of this language between speakers from other languages. The subjects from this complementary area are five: Mexican literature, Grammar I and II, Academic Writing and Mexican Spanish.

The most important part of this study is to explore if the Teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects meets foreign students' linguistic needs.

1.6 Significance of the Topic

To create valuable and useful knowledge in order to have a clear idea of how the Teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects impact in the foreign students and to communicate the findings with school authorities in order to considered the creation of a special course and/or workshops for those students, or to omit to add or to improve the actual subjects because according to Nuñez (2009) the ultimate aim in a course is to lead the learners to a particular state of knowledge based on their needs. Furthermore, the findings could help the teachers to improve their techniques and Spanish methods teaching in order to create meaningful learning.

1.7 Context of the Research

The context of this research is Spanish for Foreign Students because it provides us with information about exchange students and valuable information of the Spanish Subjects in general.

1.8 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter introduces the principal reasons and purposes of the thesis study. The significance for students and teachers and other fields of study were described as well as the research questions were formulated. In the following chapter, the literature review will provide the most important topics for this research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a brief overview of globalization and languages, learning Spanish as a foreign language will be shown. The concepts related to this investigation will be discussed as well as some previous studies from which this research arose. It is important to mention that this chapter goes from general to specific ideas in order to understand better the purpose of this study. In the end, the impact of the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects will be explored in more detail.

2.2 Globalization

Globalization is a concept that affects people all around the world. It is a concept whose definition can be applied to different areas; however, in this project, globalization will be defined as a process that involves people and social relations. According to Albrow (1990, cited in UNESCO, 2010), globalization refers to “Those processes by which the peoples of the world are incorporated into a single world society, global society” (para. 4). Another similar definition is provided by Larsson (2001, cited in Cuterela, 2010) who mentioned that globalization “is the process of the shrinking of the world, the shortening of distances, and the closeness of things. It allows the increased interaction of any person on one part of the world to someone found on the other side of the world” (p. 9). Additionally, Giddens (1990) indicates that globalization is defined as “the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa” (para. 5). Finally, UNESCO (2010)

points out that globalization is the ongoing process that is linking people, neighborhoods, cities, regions, and countries much more closely together than they have ever been before. These definitions agree with the world, people and places interacting as a whole community without any kind of political or geographical boundaries.

The previous definitions emphasize the connection of places in different parts of the world, but other definitions emphasize another important aspect. For example, Held et al. (1999, in UNESCO 2010) say that globalization “can be thought of as a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation of the spatial organization of social relations and transactions” (para.3). Also, “Globalization can refer to those spatial-temporal processes of change, which constitutes the fundament of the transformation of human concerns in an organization, linking together and expanding human activity across regions and continents” (Held et al., 1999, in Cuterela, 2010, p. 138). In these definitions, globalization is viewed more as a process that represents a spatial and temporal aspect, through different human relations, changes, and transformation.

From the previous definitions, it can be seen different perspectives of globalization to understand this word. It has been given a set of definitions and a brief overview related to the research. In the next section, it will be described an overview of globalization and language.

2.3 Globalization and Language

In the following lines, a brief review about globalization and language is presented in order to understand their relation and situation. In this respect, Siguan (n.d.) mentioned that:

“hay una serie de factores relacionados con el proceso técnico que hacen que en la actualidad el tránsito de la información a cualquier lugar del mundo pueda ser casi instantáneo... esto produce que los contactos culturales sean cada vez más abundantes y profundos y los desplazamientos de población son cada vez más frecuentes. Este aun presente fenómeno como cualquier acción, tiene consecuencias y una de ellas es que pone en contacto a muchas personas que hablan lenguas diferentes” (p. 1).

“there are factors related as technologic processes that nowadays make possible that transmission of information around the whole world can be easy and fast it is possible material and human transportation in any point of the world, it produces that cultural contacts become more important and deeper, also migration occurs more frequently. This still present phenomenon as any action has consequences and one of them is that there are persons having contact in different languages” (p. 1).

Moreover, Delhumeau (2011) mentioned that globalization allows languages and their cultures to be spread out and to be an important part of the world; languages are the crucial medium to communicate across culture. According to this author, there are some advantages of speaking one or several languages; the first is to enable people to perceive new horizons, the second is to think globally, and the third is to increase our understanding of ourselves and about what is around us. These points of view are about the importance of languages in a globalized world, intensifying the interaction of people in any place of the world.

Hjarvard (n.d.) mentioned that English has been considered as the world language, that people used to speak to communicate with people of any part of the world, it has become the lingua franca of this networked globe. Sturza (2005) mentioned that the English language is the common tool for communication in this globalized world, although the reason for this fact is not clarified. “Globalization, made possible by new forms of transport and information processing, may explain the need for a common tool for communications, but it doesn't explain why the tool is English” (Sturza, 2005, p. 901).

These authors emphasize English as a result of the need to communicate in a globalized world.

It can be seen at first view that use of this language is positive but it also has drawbacks. Irina (2011) mentioned that the impact of globalization on the world languages increase the danger of multilingualism and multiculturalism as a consequence of the high use of English and its status of lingua franca. To support this idea Siguan (n.d.) said:

“En la actualidad la globalización está provocando la desaparición de lenguas menores en un proceso que se acelera con el paso del tiempo y que desde hace un tiempo ha sido denunciado como una perdida similar a la que representa la desaparición de especies vivas, animales o vegetales.” (p. 2)

“Nowadays globalization is inducing the disappearing of minor languages in a process that grows up through the time and it has long been denounced as a loss that represents extinction of live species like animals and vegetables” (p. 2).

This idea is reinforced by Steger (2009, cited in Garrido, 2010) when he refers to the globalization of languages as “A process by which some languages are increasingly used in international communication while others lose their prominence and ever disappear for lack of speakers” (p. 67). These authors emphasize the predominance of some languages over other languages which may tend to disappear with globalization. This may be the case of English over other languages around the world.

In the previous sections, it has been explained that the relation between globalization and languages may have a positive and negative impact. As a result of this, a growing necessity to learn English has emerged. In the next part, it will be explained aspects of learning a second language.

2.4 Second Language Learning vs. Second Language Acquisition

In this part of the research, a brief overview of second language learning is provided. In the first place, it is important to take into account that globalization has provoked “the need for English as a language of international trade and communication” (Burns & Richards, 2009). To reinforce this idea, Baishya (2015) mentioned “the language most commonly associated with globalization is English and over two billion speak this language, some two-thirds of them as a second language. From the beginning of history to its reconstruction, the spread of English has been one of the long-term effects of globalization” (p. 3). “English is not only a system of communication but also the preeminent language of science, technology, and medicine. This serves to emphasize the fact that the need for language learning is greater than ever” (Oana-Roxana, 2012) (p.81). English can be seen as the global language and as a second language of a considerable part of people in the world.

Fisher (2012) mentioned that “English is a key avenue to promoting global understanding. To understand the importance of language and culture, people need to be familiar with several languages and cultures” (p. 23). Also, Della Chiesa, Scott, and Hinton, (2013) said that “learning another language means that at some stage one becomes acquainted with another culture. Deliberately using culture as an avenue for teaching may increase motivation and success in and outside of the classroom” (p. 28). To know and learn a second language like English, implies to have certain contact with one or more cultures, besides it is important to mention that “...the learning and teaching of NNLS [non-native languages] might create feelings of appreciation for cultural differences, which could lead to the development of more tolerant mindsets” (ibid).

Even though English is considered a global language, the second language process does not necessarily refer to learning that specific language. For example, Mitchell and Myles (1998) said that “Learning of a second language can occur in learning of not necessarily of a specific language, it applies for any language, and this language can be only being possible after the acquisition of a first language” (p. 1) According to Cook (1997) second language learning is a term which “is generally used to refer to any language other than the first language, in whatever situation or whatever purpose” (p. 7.). These are definitions of second language learning that provide a general idea of what L2 learning means.

In order to continue with these ideas, it is necessary to establish the difference between the terms learning and acquisition. Krashen (1995) established this difference by saying that learning refers to “conscious knowledge of a second language, knowing the rules, being aware of them, and being able to talk about them” while acquisition “is a subconscious process; language acquirers are not usually aware of the fact that they are acquiring language, but are only aware of the fact that they are using the language for communication” (p. 10). According to these definitions, it can be understood that the acquisition process is most common in a child and the learning process is for the adults, and it is also understood that each of these processes is also different in the contexts where they take place. Saville-Troike (2006) mentioned that “... SLA includes informal L2 learning that takes place in naturalistic contexts, formal L2 learning that takes place in classrooms, and L2 learning that involves a mixture of these settings and circumstances” (p. 2). Besides, Krashen (1982) mentioned that second language learning is also called formal knowledge

and second language acquisition is called informal learning. Formal and informal learning are related to this Krashen theory.

In this section, a brief overview about second language learning process and situations has been provided according to some authors. In the next lines, it will be found facts about motivation and language teaching that are also closely related to this research.

2.5 Motivation and Language Teaching

According to Brown (2000), “second language learning is a long complex undertaking. Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language...total commitment, total involvement, and total physical, intellectual and emotional responses are necessary to successfully speak a L2” (p. 1). There are many aspects that are considered important in second language learning and one of these is motivation. Motivation is “the combination of the effort plus desire to achieve the goal of learning of the language” (Gardner 1985, cited in Noels, 2001, p. 10). These responses need help of motivation.

Hall (2011, cited in Al-Ghamdy, 2014) mentioned that “motivation is necessary to have success in any kind of activity... In addition, teachers usually believe that success or fails most of the time are because of presence or lack of motivation” (p. 2). “Some L2 learners do better than others because they are better motivated” (Cook, 1997, p. 96). In second language learning as in every other field of human learning, motivation is the crucial force which determines whether a learner embarks on a task at all, how much energy he devotes to it, and how long he preserves.

According to Cook (1997), there are many kinds of motivation, although that fact does not mean that all of these are effective. Two types of effective motivation in the learning process are integrative motivation and instrumental motivation. According to Cook (1997) “integrative motivation is learning the language in order to take part in the culture of its people and instrumental motivation is learning the language for a career goal or other practical reason” (p. 96). It seems that integrative motivation has more efficiency than instrumental motivation, Whatever kind of motivation students have, it is clear that highly motivated students do better than the ones without any motivation at all (Harmer 1998).

Other kinds of motivation are intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. The first one refers to what is provoked by the need or desire of achieving a goal or an objective, and Oxford (2013, cited in Harmer, 2015) says that “intrinsic motivation is passion for learning and a sense of competence while performing challenging tasks and extrinsic motivation comes from outside the learners by the needs or desire to pass an exam” (p. 90). Cook (1997) mentioned “knowing another language may mean getting a job; a chance to get educated; the ability to take a fuller part in the life of one’s own country or the opportunity to emigrate to another (p.1)

There are different kinds of motivation although it does not matter what is motivating to students. This feeling or sense needs to be conserved from the start to the end of the learning process to achieve results, it is something important in teacher’s role and other aspects will be mentioned in the role of teacher section.

2.6 Role of the Teacher

Language teaching requires different components, one of them is teachers. Considering that teachers do different things, before, during and after a class, it is important to reflect on what it implies to be a teacher and the role that they take on in teaching. According to Edge (1993), the success of the teacher can be known more clearly by the amount of learning of their students. Furthermore, Harmer (1998) coincides with this idea when he mentions that a good teacher is a person who cares about the learning of their students instead of opinions about him or her. These two authors focus on students' learning, not on themselves. Moreover, Harmer (1998) found that the personality and character of the teacher are essential in this profession, also to be empathic and to know the names of all of their students.

Rogers (2013, cited in Harmer, 2015) conducted a study which asked fifty first-year students at Qatar University to write essays to gain opinions about good and bad teachers. They remark the motivation skill and most of them wanted a person as a mentor and able to guide them rather than a traditional teacher. Shen (2012, cited in Harmer, 2015) conducted another study which asked fifty-one students in Taiwan the same question and in this case, the most mentioned answer was patience.

There are some teachers' skills that need to be developed. There are research studies about the specific role of teachers, the skills that all those who wish to achieve good results should consider to developing. Harmer (1998) mentioned that teachers' role consists in class management to facilitate interaction with their students, use a comprehensible language, give instructions as simple as possible and well-staged, create a balance on time

that teachers and students talk during the classes, considering that students are the persons that need the practice, also a teacher is able to create surprise as in clothes that he or she wears as in execution of classes with a variety of activities to stimulate students of all ages. A teacher is able to have a pre-arranged plan to act when something is attempting and is able to evaluate the progress of their students. Finally, he mentions that aspects such as physical presence, appropriate behavior, the physical movements of language and how the teacher sits and walks, speaks and has contact with students in the classroom, make eye contact, are another aspect to consider to improve the students' perceptions.

On the other hand, Davies and Pearse (2000) indicate the teacher's success as a communicative skill developed by students, in class and in the daily life of students; they consider that preparing students to use English accurately is an important issue. According to Edge (1993) aspects like organization, provide security, motivate, instruct, model, guide, inform, give feedback, encourage and evaluate are activities that teachers perform, but he highlights the fact that students should focus their attention on self-study, to be able to get a lot of knowledge without the necessity of a teacher.

According to Harmer (2015), the teacher plays several roles in the classroom. He is a controller when he gives the required information and acts as a guide in steps to get better results; teachers also are monitors providing feedback; he acts as a prompter (when encouraging their students to continue and guiding them) and editor when suggesting changes in writing and speaking activities; the teacher is a resource and a tutor when teachers clarify doubts and give individual help, and they are organizers (organizing time in activities) and task setters at the moment of starting a motivating class and give clear and well-staged instructions. Richards (1999) considers that the teacher's role involves the

monitoring in the learning of the student, a control of results in the learning process, a teacher is also an organizer and driver of student behavior, a provider of accurate language models, and counselor and friend.

To sum up, good teachers are focus most in achieving learning and they have a specific role that covers many aspects; main aspects that different authors consider important to take it into account are mentioned in this section. Another important role to overview is the role of students that is detailed below.

2.7 Role of the Student

In the same way that teachers know what their role implies and are part of language learning, also learners are a support to achieve the best possible results in this process. Different authors discuss what it means to be a good learner and the role that they have in their second language learning. These aspects are detailed in the following lines.

According to Edge (1993), all learners are different. Not all individuals have the same knowledge, skills, or expectations and other related characteristics. Learners are also influenced by their age and by the educational, social and cultural backgrounds, which they may or may not share with their mates and teachers. Harmer (2015) mentioned that the age of students is important to consider at the moment to make decisions about teaching and what students are asked to do because of the general differences between children and older students. For example, it is reasonable that children acquire much of a foreign language with games and playing and for adults sometimes it is not always necessary. Individuality of students also plays a role; learners have different expectations according to their culture

and personalities that can represent a challenge at the moment of being in contact with other cultures and already organized teaching. These two authors give their point of view about learner's difference.

Also, Edge (1993) says that some learners are more successful than others. Good language learners are optimists about the language and usual speakers of the language being learned. They are personally motivated, and believe in their progress, they fail and learn from their mistakes, they enjoy learning another language, they practice, they search how to express something in their own words, and they think in the language and know their own learning strategies and try to find another one. In addition, Harmer (1998) mentioned that good learners listen, try and fail, ask about their doubts and are interested in how to learn better, accept correction, eagerness, and intelligence, use language loudly or in a quiet voice, also good learners are active in class. Both authors emphasize the active role that learners play in their language learning process.

Rubin and Thompson (1983, cited in Nunan, 1999) found the following specific characteristics of a good learner: find their own style to learn, organize their language, are creative with language, practice inside and outside the classroom, learn to develop strategies to be aware of the target language without the wanting to understand each word, use rhymes, word associations and other mnemonics to recall what they have been learning, try and fail, include previous knowledge, relate context with language, learn communicative techniques, use formal and informal language. According to Richards (1999), the student's role implies learning approaches, attitudes to learning, inclination to certain learning styles and strategies, inclination in certain learning activities, patterns in the teacher to learner and learner to learner interaction, students own learning, learners' view of

affective learning and teaching. These are other aspects that are considered in effective learners at the moment to learn and practice their second language, they are able to recognize what is more appropriate for their learning process.

Another aspect in learners is self-study. Harmer (1998) mentioned that just because our students are not in the classroom, it does not mean that they cannot go on learning on their own. If students are always doing what, and only what, they are told to do, there is very little chance for them to become truly autonomous. Real autonomy presupposes students' agency and students can hardly be said to have taken this responsibility for (and control of their actions if they are always doing what someone else wants and orders them to do). At first glance it seems to be a good habit for students, although Harmer (2015) says there is the case of learners that have educational and cultural influence considering that learners' autonomy is culturally motivated and is unattractive in some cultures, where perhaps, adherence to group norms and respect for authority are highly prized.

As it could be seen in this section, learners are different because of different factors. It was also explained some aspects that imply to be a good learner according to different authors that help to understand the role of students in the classroom and even outside the classroom. In the following section, information about the impact of studying abroad can be found.

2.8 Impact of Studying Abroad Programs

Considering that studying in academic programs allows students to experience an impact. In the following lines, some facts about the impact that academic programs have on

students are mentioned. For example, Rundstrom (2005) said that “study abroad does enhance students’ intercultural communication skills even if they are already present...students who study abroad do in fact show a greater change in intercultural communication skills than students who stay on campus” (p. 369). Furthermore, postsecondary institutions and organizations have invested substantial resources to increase study abroad participation with the expectation that students who live and learn in the midst of another culture for an extended period of time will develop intercultural awareness, sensitivity, and communication skills that that they could not acquire through other educational mechanisms available on campus (ACE, 2002; Green, Luu, & Burris, 2008; NAFSA, 2003 cited in Hungerford, 2012, p. 17).

Knight (2014) said that “many believe that modern information and communication technologies and the movement of people, ideas, and cultures across national boundaries presents new opportunities to promote one's culture to other countries and to enhance the fusion and hybridization of cultures” (para. 12). Moreover, Rundstrom (2005) mentioned that “... it seems more clear than ever that we learn how to communicate with our neighbors in an adaptable and sensitive manner, and it is valuable to know that studying abroad is one opportunity that can help in that endeavor” (p. 370). These authors mentioned that participation of students in this kind of study abroad programs enhance them to improve their communication skills, making a difference in acquired skills when they stay in their respective campus.

It shows that through study abroad programs, a comprehension and sensitivity of different cultures can be generated. Knight (2014) mentioned that “an important benefit is a greater understanding of cultural diversity and hopefully stronger intercultural appreciation

and communications skills” (para. 12). According to McCabe (2001), “the term internationalization seems to suggest cooperation and understanding between two countries and or cultures, some international education programs continue to tout the necessity and benefits of internationalization as a preferable process by which to plan their programs” (p.139). These authors relate education programs with cultural comprehension, making an emphasis on the impact that study abroad programs have on the students’ cultural competence. Another aspect important to review in this research is Spanish Language use that is mentioned in the next section.

2.9 Spanish Language Use

This section describes interesting facts about the use of the Spanish language around the world. This may give an idea of the importance of this language in different areas. Even though English is the considered a global language, Spanish also has a considerable number of speakers. Cervantes Institute (2018) mentioned that “... over 577 million people speak Spanish worldwide, as a native, second or foreign language, considering that Spanish is the second most spoken language in the world in terms of native speakers and the second largest language for international communication” (p. 6). With regards to the previous idea, “Spanish language has presence in all the continents... and it is one of the most extended language geographically (Rodriguez, Vazquez & Lopez, 2009, p. 1).

It is estimated by UNESCO that by the middle of this century, a quarter part of the USA population will speak Spanish. The Spanish language is the second mother tongue that almost 15% of people in the United States speak nowadays. About 100 million people

speak Spanish as a second language. In the United States and Canada, Spanish is the most studied foreign language. According to these facts, it can be seen that the Spanish language can also be considered an important language and one of the most used languages around the world (Pedreño, (2006).

To sum up, these facts illustrate the importance of the Spanish language around the world. It is important to mention that the use of the Spanish language may have increased by the time this thesis project is being conducted, which reinforces the growing number of speakers every year.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter discussed a series of concepts associated with the topic and the aims of this study. These concepts served to clarify and understand the purpose of this research. In the following chapter, it will be presented the research methodology that was used in order to get data to answer the research questions for this research.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the following chapter, the research design will be presented as well as the participants will be described. On the other hand, the instrument will be presented, all data collection procedures and data analysis procedures in which this project arose.

3.2 Research Design

According to Creswell (2003), a qualitative approach is a process that uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenological research, ethnographies. Case studies and grounded theory studies Taking into account this definition the following project is a qualitative research because our principal objective is to know what kind of impact the teaching Spanish as a foreign language subject has in exchange students and I was involved in a depth analysis of reasons and opinions. Creswell (2003) mentions that in a case study “the researcher explores in depth a program, an event, an activity, a process, about one or more individuals... researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time” (p. 15). No doubt this kind of strategy of inquiry is the best for this project, as I already know the case study intends to explore, to describe, to explain, to evaluate or to transform and in this project I intended to evaluate the Spanish as a foreign language subject.

3.3 Subjects

The participants of this project were five exchange students between 23 to 24 years old. All of them with certification B1 of the Spanish language. As a part of the exchange

experience, they had the chance to take different subjects related with their carrier in different BUAP faculties. Here at the faculty of languages, for example, they took complementary subjects related to Teaching Spanish as a foreign language like Mexican Spanish, Grammar II, Academic Writing and/or Mexican Literature. The first participant was a male from South Korea from Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (한국외국어대학교). He is studying Spanish interpretation and translation degree. He spent six months at BUAP. Here at the faculty of languages, he took Mexican Spanish, Grammar II, Academic Writing and Mexican Literature subjects. On the other hand, he took Mesoamerica history at philosophy faculty and Spanish for foreigners VII at C.U.

The second, third participants were females from Japan from Provincia Aichi University where they are studying Hispanic Studies Degree. Here at the faculty of languages, they took Grammar II and Academic Writing subjects. In the Faculty of Administration, they took cultural and National Heritage, Geographic and English for tourist services as well as Spanish for Foreigners VIII at C.U.

The fourth participant was a male from Japan from Tenri University where he is studying Spanish language and Japanese teaching degree. He took Grammar II and Upper Academic Writing in the faculty of languages; furthermore, he took Sociolinguistics and Linguistic -Morphology Theories at philosophy faculty as well as Spanish for Foreigners VI at C.U.

The fifth participant was a female from Japan from Provincia Aichi University where they are studying Hispanic Studies Degree. Here at the faculty of languages, they took Grammar II and Academic Writing subjects. In the Faculty of Administration, she took

cultural and National Heritage, Geographic and English for tourist services as well as Spanish for Foreigners VIII at C.U.

Participants	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Genre	Male	Female	Female	Male	Female
From	South Korea	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan
From University	Hankuk University of Foreign Students	Provincia Aichi University	Tenri University	Provincia Aichi University	Provincia Aichi University
Career	Spanish Interpretation and translation degree	Spanish Studies Degree	Spanish Studies Degree	Spanish and Japanese Teaching Degree	Spanish Studies Degree
Time of Exchange	Six months	=	=	=	One year
Level of Language	B1 of Spanish	B1 of Spanish	B1 of Spanish	B1 of Spanish	B1 of Spanish
Foreign Spanish subjects	Mexican Spanish, Grammar II, Academic Writing and Mexican Literature	Grammar II and Academic Writing.	Grammar II and Academic Writing.	Grammar II and Upper Academic Writing.	Grammar II and Academic Writing.
Other subjects	Mesoamerica history at philosophy faculty and Spanish for foreigners VII at C.U.	Cultural and National Heritage, Geographic and English for tourist services as well as Spanish for Foreigners VIII at C.U	Cultural and National Heritage, Geographic and English for tourist services as well as Spanish for Foreigners VIII at C.U	Sociolinguistics and Linguistic - Morphology Theories at philosophy faculty as well as Spanish for Foreigners VI at C.U.	Cultural and National Heritage, Geographic and English for tourist services as well as Spanish for Foreigners VIII at C.U

Table 3.1 Information about the Participants

3.4 Instrument

For this project, a questionnaire was carried out (see Appendix A). It was divided into 3 sections: the first one was about students' opinions about teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects that tried to answer the first research question, this section had 4 open questions. The second section was about the reasons they had to carry out the school exchange, this section answers the third research question and had five multiple choice statement items. Finally, the third section was about students' opinions about the teachers and tried to answer the second research question. Here 4 multiple choice statements items were designed. The instrument contained in total 13 items written in Spanish because it is the language the foreign students are learning.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

After the instrument was finished, it was applied to 5 foreign students that are described in section 3.3. The participants were given the instruction to answer it honestly and patiently.

The fact that they are students from South Korea and Japan and they are in their country caused troubles at the moment to apply the questionnaire face to face. Thus, the use of social networks like Facebook and Hotmail were necessary to carry out this project.

A student in our faculty that had the experience in Japan helped us to get the information in a considerable time. When the instrument was ready to be analyzed, it was necessary for detailed analysis to find the answers to the research questions.

3.6 Data Analysis Procedures

After collection all the questionnaires, a careful analysis was conducted with the data obtained. All the answers were read in order to find similarities or differences. The information was organized in tables for research questions 1 and 3; with regards to research question 2, the information was organized in categories according to the information provided in the open questions. The participants' extracts were added in order to understand each resulting category.

3.7 Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology that was followed in this research was explained. It has been shown in detail some elements that were useful in the research, like the research design, the participants, the instrument, the data collection procedure, and the data analysis procedures. In the next chapter, the analysis of the information will be provided.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In the present chapter, we show findings from our instrument, as we mentioned in the previous chapter it was a questionnaire that was necessary to answer our established research questions.

4.2 Research Questions

This study addressed the following questions:

RQ1 - What was the principal reason to carry out the school exchange?

RQ2 - What kind of impact does the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects have in foreign students?

RQ3 - To what extent do faculty of languages teachers help them cover their language needs?

4.3 Answers to Research Questions

This section will provide the answers to the research questions. The information will be organized in categories in order to understand each research question. Additionally, specific extracts taken from the instrument will support these categories. Because of ethical considerations, the participants' real names will be confidential. Instead, they will be labeled as Participant 1 (P1), Participant 2 (P2), Participant 3 (P3), Participant 4 (P4), and Participant 5 (P5).

4.3.1 Reasons to Carry Out the School Exchange

According to the participants, they had three main reasons to carry out the school exchange. These reasons can be observed in the following table:

Reason	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo
Conocer la cultura	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5			
Mejorar el idioma español	P1, P2, P3	P4, P5		
Mejorar mis habilidades como maestro de español		P3, P4, P5	P1, P2	
Las materias eran semejantes a las de mi carrera	P4, P5	P1	P2	P3
Prestigio académico		P1, P2, P3, P4, P5		
Otra:				

Table 4.1 Reasons to Carry Out the School Exchange

All the participants indicated that they wanted to know about the culture. They totally agreed on this reason. The second reason was academic prestige. In this case, all the participants agreed on it. Finally, the third reason was to improve their knowledge of Spanish. In this part, three participants totally agreed and only two agreed. Although other reasons were also indicated by the participants, these do not reflect a strong inclination towards the school exchange program. It is important to mention that the participants were given the opportunity to express other ideas to write any other reason they might have had. However, this part was not answered.

Now that the reasons have been analyzed, it is necessary to know the impact that the Spanish subjects had on the participants of this study. This will be explained in the following section.

4.3.2 Impact of the Teaching Spanish as Foreign Language Subjects

According to the study, it is important to know the impact that the school exchange had on the participants. According to their answers, the impact can be classified in three categories. These categories are a) communicative, b) pedagogic, and c) cognitive. Evidence of each type of impact will be provided in the following sub-sections:

4.3.2.1 Communicative Impact

The impact that the participants expressed can be understood in terms of more opportunities to practice or being exposed to the language. The following extracts reveal the contact they had with the language:

“los profesores mexicanos siempre quieren que los alumnos hablen mucho sobre algún agenda [sic]” (P1).

“porque solo escuchar en las clases me puede ayudar a mejorar” (P3).

“pude tener oportunidad de comunicación con los nativos” (P4).

According to these extracts, participants 1, 3, and 4 imply more opportunities to practice the language by having more conversations with their teachers or with native

speakers; nevertheless, participant 3 implies being exposed to the language and having less contact with her interlocutors.

In general, the communicative impact can be understood in terms of students' production of the language inside the classroom, as they had to practice conversations with their teachers and classmates. This may have given them sufficient practice to be in contact with the language in real life situations during their interchange experience.

4.3.2.2 Pedagogic Impact

The pedagogic impact of the program on the participants' teaching skills was expressed both negatively and positively. Regarding the negative impact, participant 2 mentioned the following:

“No... Me sentí mejorando el español, pero es como conversación cotidiana”
(P2).

This extract seems to indicate that the impact that this participant experienced was more communicative than pedagogic, as the teaching element is absent from her remark. However, three more participants expressed a positive impact on their teaching skills. These are their extracts:

“Porque Corea del Sur y México tienen las maneras diferentes de enseñanza. Por eso pude comparar dos maneras a mí mismo. Por ejemplo, los coreanos tenemos una tendencia de que no hablamos mucho en la clase pero los profesores mexicanos siempre quieren que los alumnos hablen mucho sobre algún agenda [sic]” (P1).

“porque mi maestra me enseñó cómo enseñar español, ella es maestra para los extranjeros” (P4)

“sí, porque aprendía cómo dar clases a los estudiantes” (P5).

In P1's answer, an unusual element for him can be identified. Teachers in Mexico motivate students to speak and give their points of view in class, something that is not very common with Korean teachers; however, the participant recognizes the difference in his learning experience. In addition, participants four and five showed a teaching impact with their answers. It seems that foreign students acquired knowledge about teaching by attending the classes and they had the guide of foreign language teachers that can be considered appropriate and useful, especially for foreign students of Teaching Spanish degree.

To sum up, it can be seen that most of the students recognize that they gained some knowledge about teaching Spanish and one student had a more communicative impact than pedagogic.

4.3.2.3 Cognitive Impact

Foreign students mentioned some facts that made possible a cognitive impact for them. They consider that Spanish as foreign language subjects helped them cognitively in terms of the information they acquired in the subjects they took. The following extracts exemplify this:

“Porque especialmente, Gramática II y Español de México me ayudaron para entender las bases del español” (P1).

“y en el curso de español puede aprender la cultura de México” (P3).

“porque en mi país no sé tanta historia mexicana” (P4).

P1 said that Grammar II and Mexican Spanish were useful to get appropriate information about the Spanish bases; P3 also said that she got knowledge about Mexican culture in that subject; finally, P4 considers that he knew the more Mexican history here in Mexico, something that did not happen in his country.

It is important to mention that teachers played an important role in the cognitive impact of the participants. More specifically, the teachers in charge of the groups simplified the contents of their subjects in order to facilitate the participants' learning and in this way they were able to better comprehend what they were taught. Participants 1 and 2 expressed the following:

“porque los profesores explicaban los contenidos fácilmente para que yo pueda entender” (P1).

“porque me enseñaron detalladamente en la clase de español para extranjeros” (P2).

The previous extracts seem to indicate that foreign students are aware of acquiring knowledge by attending classes and that they recognize their teachers' job.

Once the impact has been explained in detail, it is time to turn to the extent that teachers covered the participants' needs.

4.3.4 Teachers Covering the Participants' Language Needs

It was necessary to know if teachers helped foreign students to cover their language needs during their courses. Three main aspects can be seen that clarify this research question. The participants' answers are provided in the following table:

En mi opinión	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo
Fueron competentes en el área	P4, P5	P1	P2, P3	
Resolvieron mis dudas	P5	P1, P2, P4	P3	
Usaron técnicas y métodos correctos		P1, P2, P4, P5	P3	
Me ayudaron a cumplir mi objetivo	P4, P5	P1, P2	P3	
Other:				

Table 4.2 Teachers Covering the Participants' Language Needs

The third research question focused on investigating whether teachers covered the participants' language needs. The first reason is focused on teachers helping the participants to attain their learning objectives. In this particular case, two students totally agreed, two students agreed and one disagreed on it. Regarding teachers' use of correct methods and techniques, four students agreed and one student disagreed. About solving doubts, one student totally agreed, three students agreed and one student disagreed. On the other hand, participants had different opinions about teacher competitiveness in the area that they taught, in this case, two students totally agreed, one student agreed and two disagreed. It is important to highlight the fact that participant 3 disagreed in all the options. In this section, also the participants had the opportunity to express other ideas to write any other reason they might have had. However, this part was not answered.

4.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter presented the main results that emerged from the analysis of the information provided by the participants. Different categories are organized according to the three research questions. The reasons why students took the exchange experience were three: a) to know about the culture, b) the academic prestige and c) to improve the knowledge of Spanish. The academic impact that this experience had is detailed in three different categories: a) communicative b) pedagogic and c) cognitive. And finally, there are three reasons why participants agreed about teachers covering the foreign student's needs: the first one is that teachers helped to participants to attain their learning objectives, second is that teachers used the correct methods and techniques and third is that they answered doubts. With these categories, the research questions formulated at the beginning of this thesis project were successfully answered.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

Considering that foreign students have a different experience according to their needs, the purpose of this research was twofold: first, it intended to know the impact that the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects have in exchange students; second, it intended to know to what extent teachers at the faculty of languages help these students to cover their language needs. The conclusions of this project will be explained in more detail in this chapter.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

Results of this study are the answers to three research questions that are: a) What was the principal reason to carry out the school exchange? b) What kind of impact does the teaching Spanish as foreign language subjects have in foreign students? c) To what extent do faculty of languages teachers help them cover their language needs? Considering this: The first question results consist of three main reasons that students considered at the moment to take the exchange experience. These reasons are a) to know the Mexican culture, b) the academic prestige, and c) improve their knowledge of the Spanish language. Also, in the second research question, it was important to know the kind of impact that foreign students had because of the specified subjects. According to their answers, the impact could be classified into three categories. These categories were a) communicative, b) pedagogic, and c) cognitive. The third research question focused on investigating whether teachers covered the participants' language needs. The first reason is focused on

teachers helping the participants to attain their learning objectives. In this part, students recognize help from teachers to cover their language needs. In this particular case, two students totally agreed, two students agreed and one disagreed on it. Regarding teachers' use of correct methods and techniques, four students agreed and one student disagreed. About solving doubts, one student totally agreed, three students agreed and one student disagreed. On the other hand, participants had different opinions about teacher competitiveness in the area that they taught; in this case, two students totally agreed, one student agreed and two disagreed. It is important to highlight the fact that participant 3 disagreed in all the options.

To sum up, in this part of the chapter, the results were explained according to three already formulated research questions, which were the ones that guided the development of this thesis project.

5.3 Accomplishment of the Research Aims

This qualitative case study was carried out by analyzing the participants' opinions about the academic impact of the Spanish as foreign language subjects in exchange students at the faculty of languages, BUAP. A questionnaire was the main source of data collection in order to achieve the aims of this study. With the information obtained from the instrument, it was possible to answer all the research questions that guided this study. As a result of the analysis, the aims of the study was successfully fulfilled and the research questions were also successfully answered.

5.4 Pedagogical Implications

This study can be considered successfully achieved since the aims were fully attained. As a result of this, there are some pedagogical implications. First, this study can be useful for teachers in charge of the Spanish classes and teachers who are in charge of the design of these subjects offered to foreign students. The resulting categories of this study may be useful to improve the current subjects by taking into account the participants' opinions as to getting knowledge about the culture and the language, with activities that motivate them to continue learning about these aspects, like conversation time with their native classmates and cultural events and spaces, and considering to cover the students' needs, taking into account that students recognize the teachers' help. To know the kind of impact that the subjects have on students allows to know why these subjects are useful for students and to include other kinds of impact on them.

5.5 Limitations

Two limitations were identified in the development of this project. This first one was the number of students. Only five exchange students were the participants of this project. In this case, only the perception of a particular group of students was investigated. The second limitation was the language of the instrument. As it was designed in Spanish, the participants had some difficulties to express their ideas. This caused that the participants were confused and they did not understand some of the questions. Additional rephrasing was common in order to facilitate their understanding of the questions.

5.6 Suggestions for Further Research

After conducting this study, some suggestions have emerged. The first suggestion is a larger number of participants and a wider variety of nationalities. This may help to have a better understanding of the impact of the program on exchange students from different countries. It might be possible that different perspectives may be different, depending on the nationality of the participants. The second suggestion is related to the instrument, which could be designed in English considering that it is the lingua franca. This might help the participants to understand the questions better.

5.7 The Reflective Account

At the beginning of this research project, I had many doubts and the main one was to formulate the general topic about what I wanted to study. There were many ideas that I had but none was clear until I made the decision to study this topic. I did not know what to do at the beginning but I think that I enjoyed the process because I learned a lot to obtain this final result.

The project development period consisted of establishing the topic and start to write different points of the topic. First, it was necessary to start to clarify what exactly was expected; this was possible by developing three research questions and the first chapter of this thesis. Once the purpose of the study and the research questions were clear, it was possible to take specific actions to write the project. The different chapters of this research contain detailed information about the different aspects that were necessary to consider in a research; for example, the methodology, the instrument, the participants and other points. In

this section, it is important to mention that chapter two was the most difficult part for me because I could not understand how to write the literature review, but I decided to ask for help to my thesis director and it started to be simpler with the practice.

The write-up project period was for me the easiest part because I received help from my thesis director in writing details and I needed to be aware of my mistakes when it was necessary. I consider that there were not many mistakes but it was necessary to receive feedback in aspects like the format and what each chapter requires to have better results in the project.

I consider that I had many personal changes but the principal one was that I learned to ask for help with my doubts and to be patient in my learning process, considering that I did a project like this for the first time, I learned that a research project requires many aspects like time, patience, awareness of what you are writing to enjoy and get better results.

Some personal changes that I had were to be more conscious in the writing process, I improved my writing skills, research skills, my patience, willingness and I started to enjoy this research process. Something important was to ask for help because I almost never solved doubts with anyone, in this case with my thesis director, who gave me all the necessary support in order to successfully accomplish this goal.

5.8 Conclusion

The results of this project showed a positive impact of the Spanish as foreign language subjects on exchange students. However, some changes can still be carried out, depending on the participants' perceptions. This has been a satisfactory project that has

been successfully achieved and it has given me sufficient experience in order to understand the process of a research thesis. I hope that this project can make a small but significant contribution to the area of Spanish as a foreign language.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla

Facultad de Lenguas

Licenciatura en la Enseñanza del Inglés

Seminario de Tesis II

Academic Impact of Spanish as Foreign Language Subjects in Foreign Students

Este cuestionario tiene como propósito conocer y recolectar información acerca de las opiniones que alumnos de intercambio tienen sobre las materias de español para extranjeros. La información recabada será utilizada con fines educativos para mi proyecto de tesis y son completamente confidenciales.

Edad: _____ Género: _____ Procedencia: _____

Instrucciones: Marca con una (x) tu respuesta. De manera breve y precisa describe el porqué.

Sección 1: Opiniones sobre las materias de español para extranjeros

1.- ¿Las materias que tomaste fueron eficientes?

Si () no () porqué _____

2.- ¿Las materias que tomaste te ayudaron a entender las bases de la lengua española?

Si () no () porqué _____

3.- ¿El diseño de las materias te pareció adecuado?

Si () no () porqué _____

4.- ¿Te ayudaron a mejorar tu habilidad como maestro de español?

Si () no () porqué _____

Instrucciones: Marca con una (x) la opción que mejor exprese tu razón.

Sección 2. ¿Cuál fue la principal razón para llevar a cabo este intercambio?

En mi caso	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo
Conocer la cultura				
Mejorar el idioma español				
Mejorar mis habilidades como maestro de español				
Las materias eran semejantes a las de mi carrera				
Prestigio académico				

Instrucciones: Marca con una (x) la opción que mejor exprese tu opinión.

Sección 3. En mi opinión los maestros

En mi opinión	Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	En desacuerdo	Totalmente en desacuerdo
Fueron competentes en el área				
Resolvieron mis dudas				
Usaron técnicas y métodos correctos				
Me ayudaron a cumplir mi objetivo				