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**Researching university students' opinions about how a cross-cultural
immersion experience influenced their English language proficiency**

A thesis to the Faculty of Language for the degree of LICENCIADA EN LA
ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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BENEMERITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA DE PUEBLA
FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

TESIS
"RESEARCHING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' OPINIONS ABOUT HOW A
CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION EXPERIENCE INFLUENCED THEIR
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY"

PRESENTADA POR MARIANA JUAREZ BERNAL

COMO REQUISITO PARA OBTENER EL TITULO DE LICENCIADA EN LA
ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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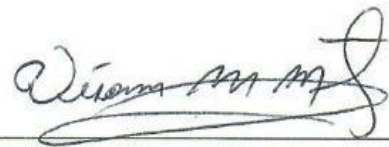
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To God

My greatest company. He provides me with life and strength to go ahead.

Key terms

- Immersion
Immersion helps students to plunge into a new world, in this case they plunge in a new country where they get new skills and abilities.
- Cross-cultural
This is the process to accept and adapt to foreign cultures at the same time cross-cultural helps student to acquire skills and attitudes.
- Culture
Culture is a set of beliefs, costumes, traditions, foods, music and all the things that define something to other.
- Academic Exchange
The opportunity that school gives you to study abroad and accomplish your academic life in another place.
- Second language
The second language is the language you learn apart from your mother tongue.
- Culture shock
The impact you have from a new culture and how it affects you. Such impact can be positive or negative.

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Abstract

This thesis is about university students' opinions on how cross-cultural immersion experience influenced their English language proficiency.

The purpose of this research is to know how students are influenced in a cross-cultural immersion. This research is evidence on how cross-cultural immersion helps to develop students' skills and abilities if they are in touch with the culture of the country they live. This fact is important because they are acquiring the language by cultural immersion that involves persons, arts, music and everything that defines a culture.

This project examines the opinions of a group of young students living in an English-speaking country. To know the opinions of the students, we do research using the qualitative method, in this case we use the case-study method which is based on narrate the results of the students doing a cross-cultural immersion.

This study helps us to include quantitative evidence, the instrument that we use during this research is an interview that help us to know the opinions of the students.

At the end of the research, we accomplish the purpose of this study, we can observe how the culture of the foreign country influenced the student's language proficiency.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Most students around the world dream to improve their skills going abroad their homes to have new experiences in their lives. Allen & Heron (2003, pg.84) affirm that “students who studied abroad, improved their fluency after spending a summer or academic study and showed more confidence and ability to perform oral task”. In other words, students who have experienced an academic exchange abroad for learning English as a foreign language to improve their skills. For instance, students enhance fluency in speaking, listening, grammar and vocabulary, they develop the listening skills and they become able to comprehend native speakers’ pronunciation. One of the most important factors of improving a foreign language is that students experience a cultural immersion; students involve in culture and that help them to acquire the language and culture of the country. As mentioned before, the students that accomplish an academic exchange are able to acquire the language as a “native person” because they immersed in the target cultural context, the student enhance the linguistics skills and specific competencies help them in the speaking and listening (Freed,1998)

Moreover, students’ immersed in an intercultural competence to have an effective learning. First of all, we need to explain what intercultural competence refers to. Intercultural competence is how people learn their first language and how teachers use the native language as a model for the learners to measure their linguistic abilities, as asserted by Bryan, Nicholas & Steven (2001). It means, students that want to learn a foreign language in an English country need to lead with it. Compares with (Deardrof,2006) refers to intercultural competences involved 3 important factors that help the students to have better communication, these three factors are “skills, target knowledge and attitudes”. Therefore, intercultural competences are conceived as the abilities of students that are encompassed with knowledge, skills and attitudes. To know more about the topic, is necessary to explore students that have

done an international academic exchange, how they improved their language competencies when they return, in contrast with students who have not had such experiences.

The result of this research helps us to understand the impact and the importance of academic exchanges in students' language proficiency. At the same time the investigation helps us to classify the most important factors: (culture, linguistics, intercultural competences, teaching, aptitudes, skills, knowledge and more; to help the student to acquire the English language in a native English-speaking country.

1.1 Problem

Several students of different institutions do not have the opportunity to experience the immersion in a native English-speaking country. If the students want to learn a second language, it is important to have the experience in an English-speaking country. For this reason, is important to know the importance of doing an academic exchange.

1.2 Participants

The participants that contribute to this research are students from different institutions that have done an academic cross-cultural immersion in an English-speaking country. These students have done an academic exchange and had the experience of being in an English-speaking country.

1.3 Context of research

The universities where the research project is developing are private institutions that have mobility programs where the students have the privilege to do an academic exchange to develop the language. The contact with institutions of higher education abroad translates into a better preparation for students who seek to stand out in the mastery of languages, thus opening the path of success in the 21st century. The students want to learn languages for the purpose to go abroad.

This investigation addresses the following general and specific research questions:

General Research Question:

- What are university students' opinions about how a cross-cultural immersion experience influenced their English language learning?
-

Specific research questions

1. What is the impact of an academic exchange in learning a second language?
2. How does cultural immersion influence the students' language proficiency?
3. What are the students' opinions about how immersion influenced their language proficiency?

1.4 Justification

This research project is important because every student of different institutions should have the opportunity of a cultural immersion in an English-speaking country with the purpose of acquiring as a second language. Moreover, if they face the English culture, the students should develop and flourish their abilities and skills like , listening, speaking, reading comprehension and so on; This important development of themselves help them to acquire English as a second language, it means that they can be more confident and lose their fears of expressing in English.

1.5 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to analyse the impact of doing an academic exchange to improve English as a second language. We want to motivate students of different institutions to do an academic exchange to improve their abilities and skills. We want to promote the experience of the students who have done an academic exchange to the students who have not achieved it yet and explain and demonstrate Why is the

importance of doing an academic exchange if they want to improve their English language skills.

Conclusion

This research project helps to motivate the students of doing an academic exchange. Academic exchange is very helpful for the students that are studying English teaching because they can develop their skills and abilities in all the areas in English learning process. As was mentioned before, we can analyse the factors that students have when they have done an academic exchange like the culture immersion that is important because they have to know and get involved with the English culture for getting the abilities and skills to achieving their goal that is the acquisition of English language, in other hand, intercultural competence is another fact that students face because is the process on how they are going to acquire the English language.

Finally, academic exchange is important because it helps the students to grow in their academic process and gives them a different view of their major and how they can apply it inside or abroad their country, at the same time academic exchange gives them the opportunity to lose their fears and get more confident.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter is about the review of literature which is relevant to the goals of this investigation. This section explores issues like: the meaning of academic exchange, the importance of doing an academic exchange in an English-speaking country, definition of ESL and EFL, importance of English language and so on. The main idea of this chapter is to talk about the impact of doing an academic exchange for acquiring English as a second language in students that have done a cross-cultural immersion in an English-speaking country. We developed some research questions to make easier to comprehend the importance of doing this academic exchange and what are some of the factors that students face during this experience.

2.1 Meaning of Academic Exchange

First of all, we have to understand what is an academic exchange? To give us a background of what it means. Academic exchange is the possibility of studying for a period of study in a national or foreign institution. Mobility implies your incorporation as a student in another institution, without losing your rights.

Allen & Heron (2003, pg.84) say that “the students who have studied abroad, improved their fluency after spending a summer or academic studying abroad and showed more confidence and ability to perform oral task”.

An academic exchange helps you to improve your mastery of a new language ability, is necessary to learn a new language, this case we focus in an English language. Academic Exchange helps the students to get the skills that they need to perform, it means when the students immerse in an English-speaking country, they need to develop their skills like writing, listening, reading, speaking and grammar. Moreover, doing an academic exchange gives them an opportunity where they can live surrounded by a native speaker so they immersed in an English culture.

2.1.1 The importance of doing an academic exchange

As we have demonstrated the significance of academic exchange, you can imagine the importance. Most of the time students that are studying English Language Teaching do not know the importance of doing an academic exchange, not just because they do not want to, there are many factors like: economic problems, familiar situations, work and so on. Students who are studying English Language Teaching should consider going on an academic exchange to help them to improve and open them a different outlook. If they go on an academic exchange, they will develop their abilities and skills, it will be easier because they are going to be in touch with the culture. Academic exchange helps them in different aspects of their approach, they can get a better job. Academic exchange helps them to improve their curriculum and get a better job in their country or abroad that is the better option if you have done an academic exchange.

2.1.2 Doing an academic exchange in an English-speaking Country

Nowadays academic exchange has taken an important role due to new circumstances and a demand of a globalized world. As it was mentioned before, academic exchange has an important role in the academic development because it helps the students to increase their knowledge in different areas of their lives.

Doing an academic exchange is important because students can develop their skills and abilities so this study is focused on doing an academic exchange in an English-speaking country because the students that we have as an example in our research project are students that want to acquire English as a second language.

The importance of doing an academic exchange in an English-speaking country is because the students that are studying English Language Teaching can improve skills like speaking, listening, writing and reading comprehension because they are facing the culture of the country and it helps them to afford better the English language because they are in touch with native people so this is one of the objectives in doing the academic exchange in an English-speaking country.

2.2 English as a foreign language: definition of ESL and EFL

We have to explain the meaning of these important acronyms. First of all, we have to distinguish the difference between EFL (English as a foreign language) and ESL (English as a second language).

EFL is where the teacher teaches English language to students in a country where English is not the native language. For example, a Chinese student learning English in China would fall under this category. Another example is when someone from Mexico learns the language, they learn it as a foreign language.

ESL is where English is taught to students in a country where English is the native language. One example is: A Chinese student is learning English in Australia. In this case, the Chinese is learning the language in an English-speaking country.

In this research project we are base on learning the language as a ESL (English as a second language) because we investigate how students acquire the language in a cross-cultural immersion in a English-speaking country.

2.2.1 Importance of English language

The importance of English language around the world is something important that all the people have to know. People have to know; English language is a universal language that helps us to communicate with anyone with a different language. Globalization gives helps people to have access in everything they want, but not everyone has the same language, for that reason the federations of languages create a tongue mother “English language” that helps people to stay in touch with other cultures with the purpose to have an agreement.

2.2.2 Reasons for learning English

There are many reasons for learning English as a second language, students that learn English language have to consider some reasons that will help them during the process of learning.

As we have mentioned before, English language is considered a universal language that helps people to communicate with different people that speak a different

language. For that reason, is important to know what are the most important reasons to learn English language. For example:

- I. First of all, English is the language of communication, science, computer technology, mass media and tourism.
- II. English today is absolutely necessary for every good specialist: Nowadays, if you develop the language, you get a better job, you have more opportunities to grow in the world of work, you have a better pay and more opportunities in different areas of your life.
- III. Another important reason is travelling. Nowadays, technology is easier to spend holidays travelling. You travel to visit other countries and continents, modern cities and the ruins of ancient towns as well as to enjoy places, or just for a change of scene. English has become an international language that gives you the opportunity to discover new things, different ways of life, to meet different people, to try different food, to listen to different musical rhythms. As a conclusion, the knowledge of it will make our trip easier and more comfortable, will give an opportunity to communicate with native speakers, to ask for necessary information and for help.
- IV. Self-education and self- development are other reasons for learning English: they considered that English will help to expand people 's competence in other fields. English becomes a part of self-educational process and for consequence a self-development. Learning the language people get acquainted with the culture and way of life in the country which language they are going to learn.

As a conclusion, there are many reasons for learning English language and is important to learn it because it will help you in all the aspects of your life.

2.3 Meaning of culture

First of all, is necessary to know what is culture. "Culture, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." It is mentioned by (Adam Muller, 2005 pg. 7). It means that

culture is one of the important things that students need to know when they do an academic exchange. The students need to know everything about culture of the country, it will help them to acquire the language as a second language. As we have mentioned, students develop different skills during this period of their academic exchange because they have to face the culture.

2.3.1 Meaning of cultural immersion

First of all, cultural immersion is necessary an integration into an unfamiliar community, interacting with local people, and experienced the way others live in that community by being there and engaging in daily life activities. Second, living in the community everyday challenged one's cultural and individual assumptions and identity. In other words, you get an interaction in a host culture, the main idea is to involve with culture members. Finally, you realize the instance of immersing in a culture.

Cultural immersion helps the students to get involved in the culture of the English-speaking country that they have to face every day, for that reason they learn English as second language and not as a foreign language. We have mentioned the difference before. Students that do an academic exchange and have a cultural immersion, they acquire the language as an ESL because they are bombarded by information in the language that they are learning, in this case English language and they are immersing in the culture.

2.3.2 The influence of cultural immersion in learning a second language in an academic exchange.

As was mentioned in the definition of the meaning of culture and what connection have in learning the language as an ESL, we can understand the influence of cultural immersion in learning a second language in an academic exchange is too important because when you go abroad to study in a new country where the language is not the same of your mother tongue is complicated sometimes because you have to adapt into a new one. For this reason, you have to get immersed in the culture and acquire everything of the culture that helps you to develop the language. Moreover, you get immersed in a culture: religions, costumes, traditions, language, vestments,

food, the way they think and so on, culture influence the learning because you have to adapt and learn their idioms, the correct words, so it helps you develop your skills during this process with the finality of learning English as a second language, you have to make it natural for yourself.

2.4. Definition of intercultural competences

The importance of intercultural competence in an academic Exchange to improve English as L2 (second language) is important because the learning is more effective. First of all, Intercultural Competence is how people learn their first language and language teachers have long used the native speaker as a model for their learners and a benchmark against which to measure their linguistic abilities exclaims Byram, Nichols & Stevens (2001). It means person who wants to learn a foreign language in an English-speaking country in this case need to lead with it. The intercultural competence makes the students develop their competences that are involve with knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The intercultural competences have a specific component that helps students to developing it in practice; for example: knowledge, skills and attitude. These three components help the complementation by the values one holds because we construct values which are part of each learner belonging to given society.

2.4.1 The influences of intercultural competences in learn English as a second language.

To put in practice the intercultural competence (Ur,1996; Swarbrick, 1999. Pg.11) say the “effectiveness” of learning in a foreign language classroom is often seen in terms of the choice of materials which are “good” with respect to their relevance, linguistic level, authenticity, interest and so on; and “good” activities that promote interactivity, autonomy and challenge. What was mentioned before in point 2.4. When you put it in practice the students develop and challenge their self because they need to adapt according with the different kinds of learning, values and costumes of the foreign country. The students should have to put in practice their

competences during this period and learning English as a second language in an English-speaking country and different language.

2.4.2 Cross-national cultural competence model

The following figure (2.1) talks about three important aspects: personality, attitudinal and coping variables that are in the middle of the circle from this point you start, then the next step Heppner et al. (2012) says that these 3 aspects from the bottom of the circle talk about the problems that occur during development of conscious, abilities, skills and knowledge of the student during the process of cross-cultural competences.

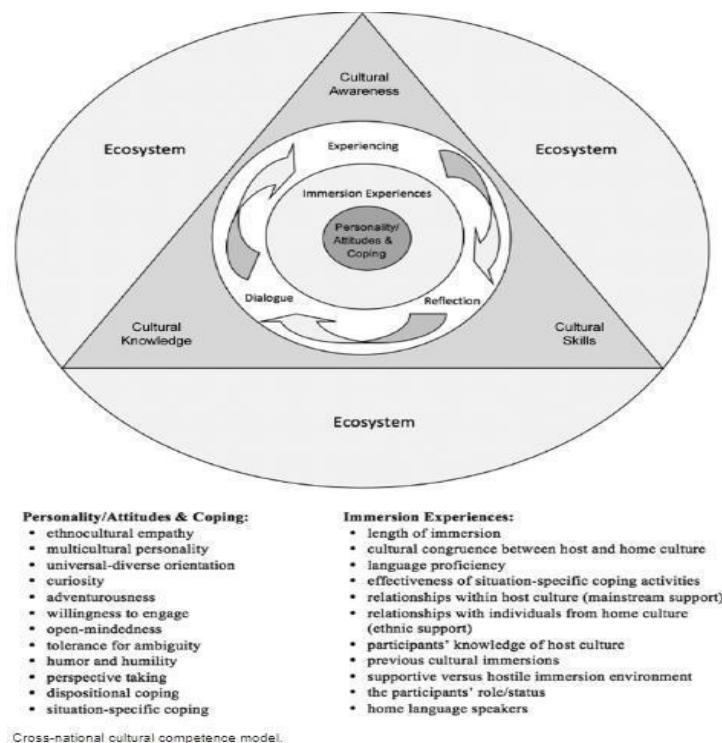


Figure 2.1 Cross-national cultural competence model (taken from Kenneth T

Then he said that the second step is the strongest process during these cross-cultural competences because here the students are learning the process or the mechanism of the immersion experiences. The last one we can see that are more

like the environment where the student or learner develop all this skill during a process of cultural immersion and put in practice the intercultural competences during his or her adaptation. This picture helps us to understand the process and how students acquired the language.

2.5 Meaning of culture shock

Oberg (1954. pg.2) defines culture shock as “the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse”. It means that culture shock is when someone leave their environment where they have grown and they feel safe and comfortable, then they have to move to an unfamiliar culture and have to start since the beginning. Cultural shock is a big problem for the students who want to go abroad and have to get involved with the new culture of the country they arrive. It is something difficult for someone’s because everybody is accustomed with their own culture so is an impact when they have another culture where they have to accustomed and deal with it.

2.5.1 Stages of the adaptation of the culture shock



Figure 2.2 Stages of the adaptation of the culture shock (Taken from Obregon,1954)

(Obregon, 1954) through this picture Obregon described the stages of which students or any people have to follow to adapt in a new cultural environment.

1. Honeymoon stage: Is the first part of everything, is when the student is in love, it means that anything disturbed it and everything is alright. The student is delighted and all the things around him or her are perfect. They do not give the importance of the new culture and do not see the difficulties that will come.

2. Regression stage: This stage is when the students are seeing the defects of culture, is something like when someone is not acquiring what was expected by

them. In this stage the students are missing their families, friends, hobbies that they used to have and they have problems with the adaptation of the culture. In the honeymoon stage they feel that they can with the language but as time goes by, they realize that the language is not what they believed, it is difficult.

3. Negotiation stage: The students distinguish the new culture from the origin culture they are. They wake up and see the reality, in this stage they make friends, they are more constant in their routine and make a daily routine, given the importance of what they are there and the importance of the new culture. They get familiar with the target culture to make it.

4. Mastery stage: After the students pass all these stages and they want to spend a long time there, they become native in the new culture but are some people who just spend a short period so they do not complete this stage.

Those stages are still important when students immerse into a cross-cultural immersion because are the stages that students have to done during the process of adapting into the culture of the country.

2.6. Meaning of linguacultural

The notion of linguacultural is also being proposed as a way to bring cultural learning into foreign language pedagogy (Andersen, Lund, & Risager, 2006; Diaz, 2013; Risager, 2006, 2007)

Linguacultural is the combination of linguistic and culture, during the time, many pedagogies want to linguistic and culture been a single integrated process into the education, to make every school to put in practice the culture during the students are learning a foreign language.

2.6.1 The levels of linguacultural learning

Now we know the meaning of linguaculture, we will understand the following steps of the levels of linguaculture learning. This four levels was disigned by Krashen with the purpose of explain the levels that students have to deal during the process of learning linguaculture. By the following, these four levels are explained below:

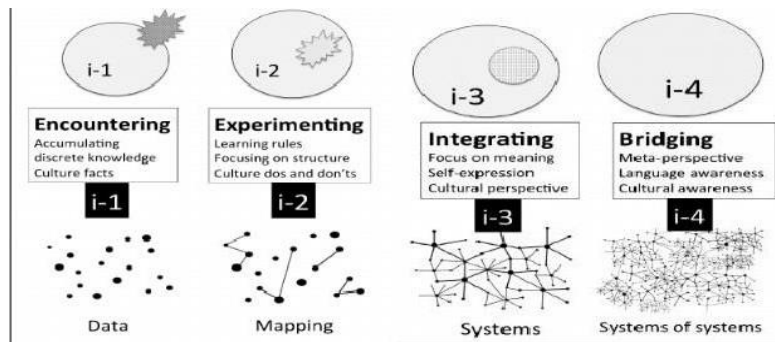


Figure 2.3 Levels of linguacultural learning (taken from Krashen,1987)

1. Level i-1 Encountering : Is the level where the students are discovering something that they do not know and have to get in touch with the new language and have to put in practice their abilities and skills. They have to bring out all what they have learned during the time. At the same time, students are learning the basic of the culture during this stage.
2. Level i-2 Experimenting: During this level the students are creating a new connection between cognition and experiences. They feel comfortable and start to immersed in the new foreign linguaculture. The learners are gained cultural experiences.
3. Level i-3 Integrating: Learners integrate all their knowledge and for them is easier the process of communication and they use the language, they are fluent and can make a good use of the foreign language.
4. Level i-4 Bridging: As it name says is a bridge, it means that is the line that someone cross to become something or someone. An example is when you are learning the language and then you become a teacher of the language. In this level the learners left the idea to be cognotivism and they become constructivism. They put in practice all of what they have learn in the linguaculture and they do it to their person. (Shaules,2014) say that learners are in a high level where all their knowledge make it native.

2.7 Research in the field

There are some other studies about cultural immersion in a different country or the experiences about to be immersed in a place to learn or acquire a new language, for example we can see on Alanah (2013) that, to study abroad, is something important nowadays because it makes students part of an information systems and technology education. These types of courses make the students to have educational experiences that help them to develop their language, skills, abilities and their person, because they are facing a different cultures, that helps them in a future to get a job in the global marketing, because as we mentioned before, we are living in an edge of globalization and have this skills of learning, help the people to improve their self-develop and self-educational as we mentioned in point 2.2.2 and give them the opportunity to develop their skills in a collaborative way.

Other study conducted by Conroy, Shelley & Taggart (2015) talks about how programs to study abroad have increased. Most programs are short-term and include a cultural immersion as well as classroom and/or service learning. In this article, the authors discuss a study abroad program to China that included cultural immersion and classroom learning specific to traditional Chinese medicine. This research Project wants to give you a perspective about the benefits of cultural immersion and a greater appreciation of cultural diversity, complementary and alternative medicine and holistic health care. It is more related with medicine but the important of this research is to know how participants deal with the cultural immersion during their process of adaptation in China where they are studying medicine.

There is other study by Oghenebruphiyo Gloria (2018), they talked about how cultural immersion program structure impacts the learning process in which students develop transformational outcomes for example global awareness, cultural tolerance and how these transformational outcomes influence students' attitudes and behaviours towards others who are physically and culturally different from them.

The last one research Project that have similitudes of my Project is about Intercultural Competence in Teaching: Defining the Intercultural Profile of Student Teachers. This article describes the intercultural profile of European student

teachers in order to clarify the relationship between Intercultural Competence and teacher training. Intercultural competences are important to talk about because is an important aim where explain you the competences that students and teachers have to deal and how you work with it and helps you to understand the process of developing the language in a new context or unfamiliar context and how you have to work in with the purpose of get the level of the language you are hoping.

Like those researches, exist a lot of research Project that help us to understand better the topic we are developing to give us a better perspective of the research and understand with the purpose of give a good point of view in the research Project. Those researches projects are not the same of the research Project we are developing, but give us more ideas to develop the investigation, is always importantto know the perspectives of others and the similitudes of the topics, that help us to create and new development of the research with the purpose of help others.

Conclusion

Chapter II consists to know about the meanings of some topics that are integrate in the thesis, this information helps us to know more about the research in this case “Researching university students’ opinions about how a cross- cultural immersion experience, influenced their English language proficiency. “This topic is important for me and interesting because the purpose of doing this research project is to motivate the students to enjoy an academic exchange and give them the opportunity to have the experience.

It was really important to talk about the culture immersion because is an important step that students have to face and deal with it, for many students this is a difficult part during the process of adaptation in another country for the cultures difference. For that reason, students have to face the culture immersion that is something that have to live every day, if we talk about cultural immersion in our country is to have every day an idea bombing, since you wake up until you go to bed. When we talk about idea, it means the language, the food, the customs, traditions, the way people think, so on. For that reason, when you are in another country with the purpose of acquiring a new language in this case an English language, you have to immersed

and adapt to the culture of the country to acquire in this case English language and you will acquire as a second language because as we mentioned on point 2.2 ESL is where language is taught to students in a country where is the native language. So, immersed in culture improves your skills and abilities to develop the language. This research project gives us another perspective of what we want to learn about the project and help us to improve our skills with the purpose of develop our research project in a good way and challenge us to improve and develop other skills and abilities.

Something important about the topic is that if you want to learn a new language, in this case we are talking about English language, you should have to do an academic exchange to get the experience of the cultural immersion. As we have mentioned, if you want to learn English as a second language (ESL), you have to immersed in the country's culture. Moreover, if you are in a country where speaks the language you want to learn, it will be easier for you to learn it and practice because you are immersing in the culture for consequence you acquire the language as a second language.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This chapter is about the methodology used in this research project. The objective was to know students' opinions about how a cross-cultural immersion experience, influenced their English language proficiency. This thesis adopts a qualitative research getting a formal importance. In this chapter we developed some research questions that make us easier to compare and know the student's opinions about the cross-cultural immersion experiences.

For this research project the instrument that we applied was the Case-Study method, I chose this method because studies are qualitative, so is better to use this case-study for narrate the results of the opinions as a description.

A case-study is a research methodology that is a strategy and an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon in a real-life context. We used case-study because is descriptive and this help us to describe the process that students have during their cross-cultural immersion. This method is useful because includes quantitative evidence so we can develop the opinions of each student.

3.1 Participants

For this research project, seven students were interviewed (four were male and three were femme), these students were between 20-23 years old and were students from two different institutions one was Western town collage and the other one was DTU Danmarks Tekmiske Universitet these students were in a cross-cultural immersion in an English-speaking country. The seven students had different mother tongue languages: The mother tongue of 4 students were Spanish, one French, one Chinese, one German. These seven students we interviewed, were students that had a good level of English and had experienced the immersion in an English-speaking country where they had a cross-cultural immersion that influenced their English language proficiency.

3.2 Research context

The students studied in private institutions with mobility programs, these two institutions were Western Town collage and DTU, where the students had the privilege to do an academic exchange to develop the language. These universities are private. The students that done an academic exchange, were students that wanted to develop their proficiency in English language and wanted to experience the immersion in an English-speaking country. The majority of the students studied in DTU and only three studied in Western town collage.

3.3 Instrument

The instrument was designed with the objective to get and know the opinions of the students that have done a cross-cultural immersion to influenced their English language proficiency. For this research we used the interviews for recollect proofs of the participants that help us to understand this research project and affirm or complement our investigation. The instrument was organized in two parts, the two parts were composed of multiple-choice items where students had to circle the best option, the first part contained six questions that helped us to know the general information of the students and the second part were ten questions that talked about their cross-cultural immersion and had an instruction where students described how their English proficiency was developed during your cross-cultural immersion.

These two parts of the instrument were important because it helped us to be descriptive in our analysis and to proof the thesis of what we are focus on, in this case we want to proof that cross-cultural immersion influenced their English language proficiency and the importance of do an academic exchange.

3.4 Piloting

The questionnaire was applied to three Mexican students who went to an academic exchange to the United States last semester and currently live in Puebla these three students studied in BUAP “Benemérita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla”, they were from Facultad de Lenguas LEI . The three students answered the questionnaire in

order to have an example of how will be in a real context. During the piloting the students did me some corrections about the questionnaire, an example was the structure of the questions but questionnaire was understandable even though the questions were in English because the students have knowledge of English language. The application of this questionnaire was easy to do it, I sent to these three students by email and they gave me back as the same way their answers. Then I corrected the observations they did me. In the other hand, I talked with the students from LEI and they told me that was not difficult for them to be in an academic exchange although their tongue mother is Spanish. When they left Mexico, they had a B1 level so it was easy for them, they told me that cultural immersion during the academic exchange they improved their English level from B1 to B2. The piloting was good as I expected.

3.5 Data Collection

When I decided which topic, I wanted to developed I talked with a friend that was in an academic exchange in Denmark he studied in DTU so he was my principal tool that helped me to do the interviews with his friend, so I texted him and told him about my project and if he could help me to apply the instrument and I always had his support. I sent to him the instrument by mail and he sent to his friends the instrument by mail too, his friends answered the instrument and he returned to me by mail. For the students that studied in WTC I sent to them by mail because they were my friends so it was easy to me to get in touch with them. As this way I could recollect all the necessary information.

3.6 Discussion and Analysis

The students that were interviewed accomplished the questionnaire correctly. The applying-process was effective, it was sent by email and it was easier for everybody because they could do at the time they wanted and they sent at the moment or other day, to answer the questionnaire took around 10-15 min approximately. The results of the analysis coincided on what it was expected, it means that the three students that were interviewed answered that learn English in an English country is favourable

because you are in a cultural immersion that helps you to acquire the language better and know more the culture and the use of the language. And the students that we used for this research coincided that the immersion in an English-speaking country is important because you develop your proficiency, in this case English language.

Conclusion

This chapter is really important because we knew the different points of view and opinions of the students and we understood the importance of an academic exchange having an immersion in an English-speaking country if your objective is to develop English language. The results of the piloting were important because it gave us a huge information for our analysis of what we expecting to have, in this case what we wanted are positive results and the participants that were interviewed answering a questionnaire gave us these positive results. So, at the end of this chapter I had the result that I expected to have since the beginning and know with this piloting and with my instrument it gave me some good news that helped me to proof my thesis.

CHAPTER IV

Analysis and Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses and analyses the data obtained, as well as the results emerging from the discussion. This chapter analyses the responses of the students' opinions about how a cross-cultural immersion experience influenced their English language proficiency. We analyzed each question from the questionnaire and then we designed a figure with the purpose to explain the participants' opinions. Then the questions were divided in parts to have a specific conclusion of each question.

4.1 Results from the questionnaire

In this part we talk about the explanation of the results of the questionnaire. The results are presented in figures at the same time these figures are organized into two sections, the first one is about general information and the second talks about their cross-cultural immersion that is focus on a specific information that helps this research project.

The first question asked about the participants' mother tongue. The results (Figure 4.1) show that more than half of the participants' mother tongue was Spanish, while the other three participants' spoke other languages. The results show that even though the students were from different countries, 3 of them studied in Canada and the rest studied in Denmark at the moment of conducting this study. It is important to say that in the Universities they studied in, they did not use their mother tongues but they used English as the official language for their studies.

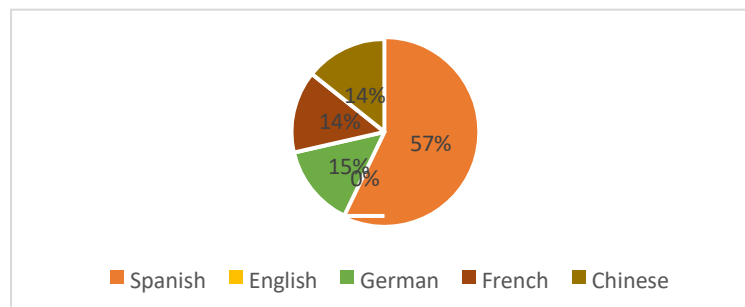


Figure 4.1 Mother tongue

The second question asked about the country the participants live in their cross-cultural immersion experience. The results (Figure 4.2) says that the majority of the participants lives in Denmark and the other half in Canada. The participants that live in Denmark are the participants that study in DTU and there are from different countries like China, France, Germany, México and the other half that live in Canada are from Mexico and they study in WTC.

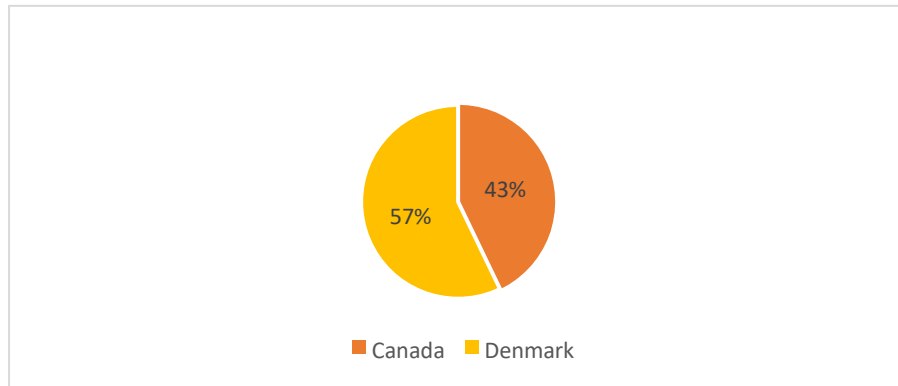


Figure 4.2 Students' living country

The following question in section one from the questionnaire, explored the participants' level of proficiency. Figure 4.3 shows that from the seven participants, five students got an intermediate level while the other two were advanced. This means, that the proficiency of the intermediate was between B1, and B2, while the advanced got a C1 in the The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). These findings (Figure 4.3) show that the fact that the participants live or have lived or studied abroad, immersed in the context of the target language, surely helped them increase their proficiency in the native language of the country they lived in.

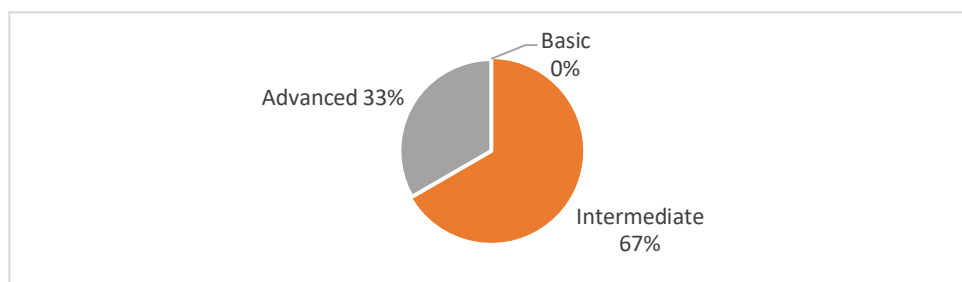


Figure 4.3 Participants' level of proficiency

Now we focus on section two of the questionnaire, it concentrated in the obtaining of information about how the cross-cultural immersion had influenced participants' English language proficiency. The first question in this section asked why the participants had gone on an academic exchange. Figure 4.4 shows that the two dominant reasons were, because they wanted to improve their language proficiency which was highlighted as the most important reason among the participants, while the second most important reason was because the participants were interested in knowing new people.

The findings show that (Figure 4.4) mastering a second language was top in the interest of the participants. Five students selected that want to improve their English and that was the main reason to do their academic exchange. The rest of the students 'interest in knowing new people where three students that prefer the social environment, this is understandable in young participants, that live in a stage of having new friends, and are seeking to have new experiences. On the other hand, it is interesting that none of the participants showed interest in the culture of the target language or in the obtain of an international certification of language proficiency.



Figure 4.4 students doing an academic exchange

Question number two of the second section, talks (Figure 4.5) about how cross-cultural immersion experience influenced students' English learning , in this part we want to focus on which skills the students develop more during they academic exchange or during their stay in an English speaking country as you can see the majority of the student want to improve their speaking, then two of the students want to develop all the skills because they think that is important to develop all the skills and take advantage that they are living in an English-speaking country, finally two

other students prefer develop just listening and grammar. It is important to know what is the reason for the students to do a cross-cultural immersion because this helps us to understand our research and to know the majority's main reason.

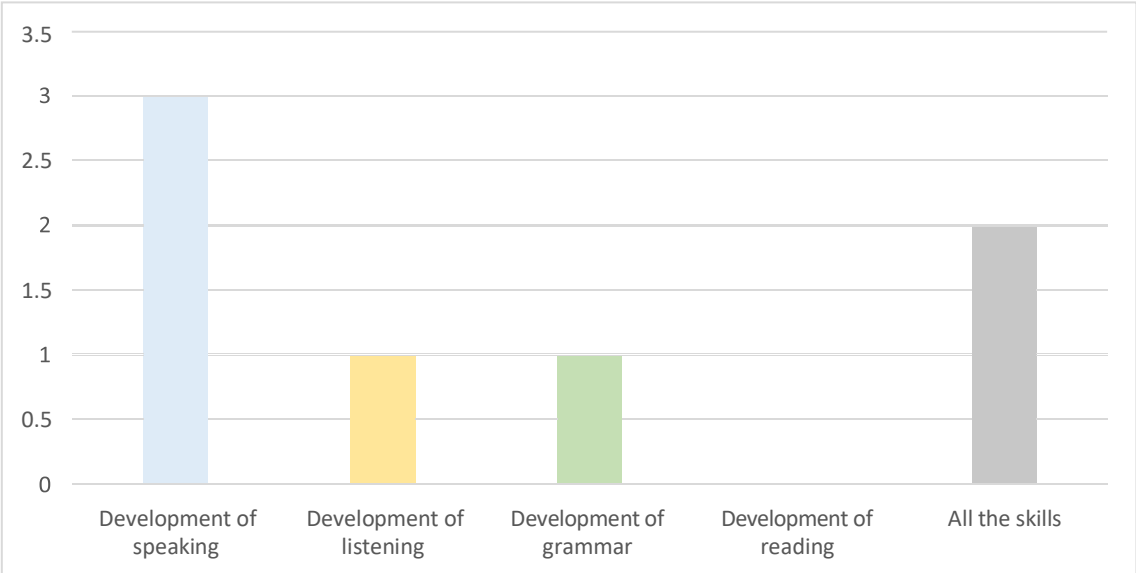


Figure 4.5 Studied cross-cultural immersion experience

Figure 4.6 is about the question of what academic activities help students to improve their English, in this section the results show that the majority are three students selected social groups, the other students selected different activities as reading circle, acting classes, sport classes and so on. According with the results we can understand why participants prefer these activities that help students to enrich their English acquisition. As we know they are young students, so they prefer the social groups because the put in practice their English language and try to develop all the skills and not just one. They participants from different countries are interested in activities where they can be social and at the same time put in practice their language they are acquiring, in this case English language.

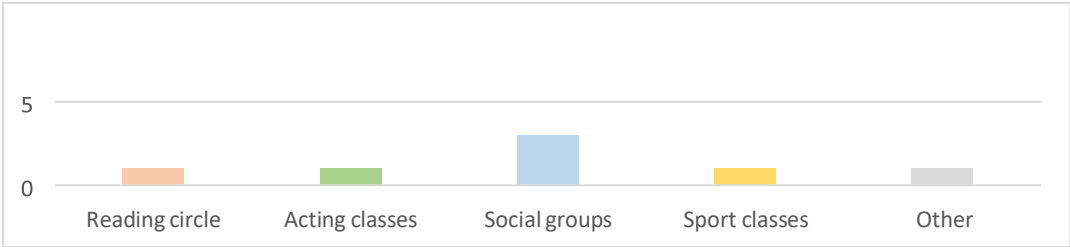


Figure 4.6 Activities help students to improve English

The figure below (Figure 4.7) shows what aspects of the culture have influenced their language performance. The majority of the participants that are 7 students from different countries that their academic exchange is in Denmark and Canada think that costumes and traditions are important aspects that influenced them in their language performance and just one think that arts help to develop the language. Here we can see that costumes and traditions define a culture, so students think that both are important to influenced their English language and help them to develop althe skills and understand the place they are living, and enrich their immersion in the English-speaking country.

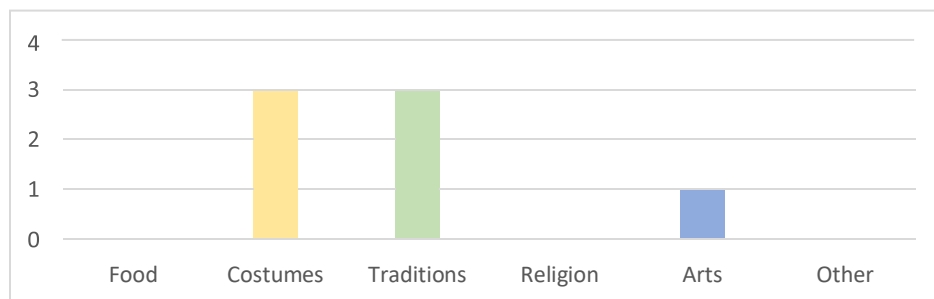


Figure 4.7 studied aspects of culture that influence language performance

Conclusion

This chapter discussed about students' opinions and helped us enhance reliability to this research project. Moreover, students' opinions' helped us analyse the data from the questionnaires that were applied to participants, enrolled in a cross-cultural program. The chapter examined the importance to do that, and how it influenced participants' English language proficiency. Also, we could understand the different points of view of the students as well as the most important issues for them.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings and the analysis of the research questions. We talk about the relationship between the specific research questions and the outcomes from chapter IV. In this chapter also we describe how the study answered the research questions, the limitations of the study during developing our research project, then we related some recommendations for further researchers and finally a conclusion of this Chapter.

5.1 Findings and research questions

Question one asked *about the impact of an academic exchange in learning a second language*. The results show that the impact of doing an academic exchange in learning a second language is something positive because the students enrolled in such programs moved from a basic or intermediate English level, to an advanced level when they end the academic exchange.

Research question two explored how *cultural immersion influence the students' language proficiency*. The majority of the students answered that cultural immersion is the best way to acquire a language, in this case we based on English language. The students immersed in the culture of English-speaking countries, said during their interview that this factor helps them to develop their skills, like: writing, speaking, reading and vocabulary. The majority of the students said that "speaking skill" is the most develop in an immersion because you are in touch with native people so you practice more this skill because is principal tool of communication. Communicate in the native language, forcing your speaking skill, although you do not have a good English level you have to do it and is the only way you can have a communication. Moreover, other students said that vocabulary is the second skill you develop because if you have a stretch number of words in your language, difficulty you will have it in other language (English language), so they refer that is the same thing when you are trying to develop your speaking language. More specific is that when

you are trying to communicate, native people have different words that they use so

your brain catch it and it makes a process of acquiring new vocabulary, if you do not know you investigate the significance of the word and you try to use it in a new conversation during the end of the day or the next day and so on. Then the third skill you develop by the same time is listening skill because of the constant process of hearing people talking English language, your ear customary to hear the native language and create a process with your brain to understand the significance of the communication.

The question three asked *the students' opinions about how being in a context of immersion influenced their language learning*. Students answered positivity, all the students said that learning English during an immersion is something important and effectivity because you really develop the language, you get the optimism to practice, repeat your mistakes during the process to get fruits or the challenge of learn the best way the English language. Students said that all the students should have an immersion in the country where they want to learn their language, to have a good process and reach your goals.

5.2 Summary of Findings

No. of Item From Survey	Issue explored	Findings	Comments
Q1	Participants' mother tongue	4 Spanish 1 Chinese 1 French 1 German	The four Spanish speaking participants lived in Mexico and the other three live in their home countries.
Q2	Students 'living country	4 Denmark 3 Canada	The majority of the participants lives in Denmark and the other half in Canada.

Q3	Participants' level of proficiency	5 Intermediate level 2 Advanced level	The majority of the students had an intermediate level and just 2 students had an advanced level. At the end of the academic exchange the students developed their proficiency as advanced level.
Q4	Students doing an academic exchange	5 Improve English 2 Know new people	The majority of the students are interesting in develop the English language during the academic exchange
Q5	Studied cross-cultural immersion experience	3 Development of speaking 1 Development of listening 1 Development of grammar 2 All the skills	The different purpose of students help us to know what was the skill they wanted to develop. We can observe that the majority are focus in speaking and two other want to develop all the skills.
Q6	Activities help students to improve English	3 Social groups 1 Reading circle 1 Acting classes 1 Sport classes 1 Other	The majority of the students said that the activities to develop their English language was the social groups because have more interaction with native people or people that speak

			English. The other half selected different activities base on their interests.
Q7	Aspects of culture that influence language performance	3 Costumes 3 Traditions 1 Arts	These three aspects involve the culture that influences the students to develop their language proficiency. As we can see customs and traditions are important in a cultural immersion to develop any language.

5.3 Limitations of the study

During this research process I got many limitations, one was that it was my first time doing a research project, it was complicated for me like the comprehension of the parts of the chapter, but the most complicated I think was, to choose the name of the topic and the design the research questions, it was extremely difficult for me, then the way to do search, find out information for my topic and how to cite authors was challenging. These three things were the most difficult. Moreover, it was interesting and exciting to learn about it. Other limitation that I had during this process was that there were many suspensions in the school so sometimes it was difficult to me because I could not have the best communication with my professor and I got confused in some chapter, but at the end my teacher helped me in the bestway he could do it, the suspensions sometimes affect the way of the delivered, I mean that the time sometime was short or was faster, but at the end it was fantastic to work in this way because we could delivered on time the work and have a feedback soon.

Now in 2020 we got a worldwide problem that is the covid-19 that it affects to everyone because during this period we should have to delivered our research to be presented and know I think that maybe we do not get the feedbacks on time and we should do it by ourselves without our teacher because we understand that teacher have others school problems so sometime it was difficult to get a good coordination but my professor give us excellent feedbacks by mail that helped us to understand what we should have done and correct our mistakes. I think that covid-19 made us more conscious in our research and give the best during the writing of the chapter also if it was a draft we do it the best because I think that in this way help us both the teacher and me, so the teacher could give me more specifics feedbacks and withless mistakes. It was a challenge for me working in this way I develop others skills and I am grateful for that.

5.3 Recommendation for further research

My recommendation for further research is simple. You should have to think very well your topic, the topic that you want to talk should cover all your dudes, enthusiasm, challenges, what it means is that the topic that you choose is the topic that you really want to explore, because you have to spend time investigate it and you really have to feel well doing it. Then when you select your topic, you have to think about your specific research questions that are the other factor that is too important because this question will answer all your research project. Also, for futurerecommendation about this topic is that you can investigate more about like how culture affects or influence students in an academic exchange, what students have to change in their life like their habits, customs, traditions, their daily routine. The difference ways to learn or acquire a different language from their native language like the environment they are developing the language. There are different topics toinvestigate. The best counsel is that you have to choose the topic you want to knowand to search.

Conclusion

This chapter answered all my doubts that I had during my research project and it is something good for me to know that my investigation accomplishes my general question. Because at the beginning I thought that my participants' opinions will be affirmative and according to the general question that was *What are university students' opinions about how a cross-cultural immersion experience influenced their English language learning?* It was positive and now I know that doing a cross-cultural immersion influences their English language proficiency and is the best way to learn a new language. Doing a cross-cultural immersion is the best inversion as students can do. If you really want to stand out you have to do it and compare yourself when you learn the language in your country and the difference of being in another country that speaks the language. I am really satisfied with the results of my analysis.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

Objective: This questionnaire aims to know students' opinions about how a cross-cultural immersion experience influenced their English language proficiency. The information will be treated in confidence.



BENÉMERITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA.
LICENCIATURA DE LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS
MARIANA JUAREZ BERNAL



Name: _____

Female () Male ()

Native language:

In this first section are some questions to know general information about you.

Instructions: Circle the correct option according your situation.

1. What is your mother language?
a) English b) Spanish c) German d) French
b) Other:
2. Which country do you live in?
a) United States b) Canada c) England d) Australia
b) Other:
3. Which is your English level?
a) Basic b) Intermediate c) Advanced
4. Which is your English level according to the CEFR
a) A1 b) A2 c) B1 d) B2 e) C1 f) C2 g) I do not know

5. Do you have any English certification?

- a) Yes b) No

If your answer was affirmative, which certification?

a) TOEFL b) First Certificate c) CAE d) BULATS e) IELTS

f) Other:

6. How long have you been in your academic exchange?

- a) 6 months b) 1 year c) 2 years d) 3 years Other:

In this second section there are some questions to know information about your academic exchange in an English-speaking country.

Instructions: Answer the questions according to your experience in doing an academic exchange.

1. Why did you decide to do an academic exchange?

- a) To improve my English level b) To know another culture c) To know new people d) To do a certification e) Other:

2. How do you think that a cross-cultural immersion experience influenced your English language learning?

- a) Development of speaking b) Development of listening c) Development of grammar d) Development of reading e) All the skills f) Other

3. How do you think that speaking in English with native people influences your English language performance?

- a) Pronunciation b) Fluency c) New vocabulary d) Other:

4. What are the benefits and consequences of being in an English-speaking country?

- a) To improve your English language b) Immerse in the culture c) Other:

d) Missing your home e) No have a good adaptation f) Other:

5. How does cultural immersion help you in your English language proficiency?
a) Development of speaking b) Development of listening c) Development of grammar d) All the skills e) Other:
6. How do you think English culture influence in your daily life?
a) Development of speaking b) Development of listening c) Development of grammar d) All the skills e) Other:
7. What skill do you have improved during your academic exchange?
a) Development of speaking b) Development of listening c) Development of grammar d) Development of reading e) All the skills f) Other:
8. What aspect of the culture have influenced in your language performance?
a) Food b) Costumes c) Traditions d) Religion e) arts f) Other:
9. What academic activities helps you to improve your English?
a) Reading circle b) Acting classes c) Social groups d) Sport classes e)
Other:
10. Write a little resume about how your English proficiency was developed during your cross-cultural immersion.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Transcript



BENÉMERITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA.
LICENCIATURA DE LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS
MARIANA JUAREZ BERNAL

Name: Othoniel Miranda

Female () Male (M)

Native language: Spanish

This questionnaire aims to know students' opinions about how a cross-cultural immersion experience influenced their English language proficiency. The information will be treated in confidence.

In this first section are some questions to know general information about you.

Instructions: Circle the correct option according your situation.

7. What is your mother language?

- c) English **b) Spanish** c) German d) French
d) Other:

8. Which country do you live in?

- c) United States b) Canada c) England **d) Australia**
d) Other:

9. Which is your English level?

- b) Basic b) Intermediate **c) Advanced**

10. Which is your English level according to the CEFR

- a) A1 b) A2 c) B1 d) B2 **e) C1** f) C2 g) I do not know

11. Do you have any English certification?

- b) **Yes** b) No

If your answer was affirmative, which certification?

- b) **TOEFL** b) First Certificate c) CAE d) BULATS e) IELTS

g) Other:

12. How long have you been in your academic exchange?

- b) 6 months b) 1 year c) 2 years d) 3 years Other:

In this second section there are some questions to know information about your academic exchange in an English-speaking country.

Instructions: Answer the questions according to your experience in doing an academic exchange.

11. Why did you decide to do an academic exchange?

- b) To improve my English level b) To know another culture c) To know new people d) To do a certification e) Other:

12. How do you think that a cross-cultural immersion experience influenced your English language learning?

- b) Development of speaking b) Development of listening c) Development of grammar d) Development of reading e) All the skills f) Other

13. How do you think that speaking in English with native people influences your English language performance?

- b) Pronunciation b) Fluency c) New vocabulary d) Other:

14. What are the benefits and consequences of being in an English-speaking country?

- b) To improve your English language b) Immerse in the culture c) Other:

- d) Missing your home e) No have a good adaptation f) Other:

15. How does cultural immersion help you in your English language proficiency?

- a) Development of speaking b) Development of listening c) Development of grammar d) All the skills e) Other:

16. How do you think English culture influenced in your daily life?

a) Development of speaking b) Development of listening c) Development of grammar d) All the skills e) Other:

17. What skill do you have improved during your academic exchange?

a) Development of speaking b) Development of listening c) Development of grammar d) Development of reading e) All the skills f) Other:

18. What aspect of the culture have influenced in your language performance?

b) Food b) Costumes c) Traditions d) Religion e) arts f) Other:

19. What academic activities helps you to improve your English?

b) Reading circle b) Acting classes c) Social groups d) Sport classes e)

Other:

20. Write a little resume about how your English proficiency was developed during your cross-cultural immersion.

I always have had a good English level, but sometime I got problems with pronunciation and listening because I have problems in hearing. Staying in this cross-cultural immersion has help me in many ways, so now I increase my English language.

