BENEMÉRITA UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE PUEBLA

FACULTAD DE LENGUAS

Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés

STRATEGIES IMPLEMENTED BY JAPANESE STUDENTS TO OVERCOME DIFFICULTIES WHEN LEARNING SPANISH IN MEXICO

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Languages for the degree of

Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés

By:

Ximena Mendoza González

Thesis Director

Mtro. Juan Alberto Amador Cruz

Puebla, Pue. **November, 2019.**

Strategies implemented by Japanese students to overcome difficulties when learning Spanish in Mexico

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

Ximena Mendoza González

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

Licenciatura en Enseñanza del Inglés

Thesis Director

_____

Mtro. Juan Alberto Amador Cruz

Committee Member

_____

Mtro. Leonel Ojeda Ruiz

Committee Member

_____

Mtro. René Bautista Castillo

Puebla, Pue. **November, 2019.**

Abstract

It is known that when students learn a new language, it is common to have difficulties during the process of learning. In order to positively deal with difficulties, it is necessary to apply learning strategies (Oxford, 1990). This qualitative research sets up the following purposes: first, to find out the main difficulties that Japanese learners of Spanish as a foreign language have. Second, to know the strategies that students use to overcome their difficulties.

The research setting is the Faculty of Languages at BUAP. The participants are Japanese students who came to the university as part of an academic exchange. They study Spanish as a foreign language at the University Language Center. At the moment of the research, students were attending intermediate and advanced Spanish lessons (B1-B2 according to CELE programs based on The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). The data collection was carried out through a semi structured interview which contained seven questions.

According to the results, the main difficulties involve: fast native Mexican speaking, conjugation of verbs, vocabulary, previously learned Spanish (Spanish from Spain), bad words, gender, language in use (specific contexts), talking to older people, colloquial expressions and accent and intonation. While the main strategies students apply comprise: taking notes; asking natives and friends; talking to friends, natives and classmates; watching movies; searching in dictionary, memorization, listening to the radio and listening to music. These strategies fall into categories such as: direct or indirect strategies, at the same time they can be metacognitive, arranging and planning learning, social, asking for clarification or asking questions strategies, among others (Oxford, 1990).

Acknowledgements

First of all, I want to thank to Mtro. Juan Alberto Amador Cruz for being part of this project, his help during the process of doing this research, likewise I'm thankful for his pieces of advice and for his provided time which I appreciate along with the knowledge he shared during this process.

I also want to thank to Mtro. Leonel Ojeda Ruiz and Mtro. René Bautista Castillo for accepting being part of the committee members, I really appreciate their help, their time and of course, their comments to improve and conclude this research.

Dedications

This thesis is especially dedicated to my parents, with love and gratitude. I'm so thankful for their help, their patience and because they gave me the necessary during all this time, this is the result of all their unconditional support and their effort. Thanks for having made this possible and for made me a stronger person every single day.

Likewise, I also dedicate this project to my other family members, my loved ones, and of course my friends who were by my side when I needed help, they also gave me support and encouragement, and I'm so thankful for that.

Table of Contents

Chapter I **1**

Introduction **1**

1.1 Introduction to the Problem **1**

1.2 Rationale for Topic Selection 2

1.3 Purpose of the Study 2

1.4 Research Questions 2

1.5 Research Setting 3

1.6 Significance of the Topic 3

1.7 Context of the Research 3

1.8 Conclusion of the Chapter 4

Chapter II **5**

Literature Review **5**

2.1 Spanish in the World 5

2.2 Spanish in Mexico 6

2.3 Previous Research about Difficulties 7

2.4 Language Learning Strategies 8

2.4.1 Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategy **9**

2.5 Classification of Language Learning Strategies 11

2.5.1 Previous Research about Language Learning Strategies 17

2.6 Communication Strategies 18

2.6.1 Taxonomy of Communication Strategies 20

2.7 Communicative Competence 22

2.7.1 Models of Communicative Competence 23

2.8 Conclusion of the Chapter 25

Chapter III **26**

Methodology **26**

3.1 Introduction 26

3.2 Research Design 26

3.3 Setting and Participants 27
3.4 Instrument 28
3.5 Data Collection and procedure 28
3.6 Conclusion of the Chapter 29

Chapter IV 30

Analysis 30

4.1 Introduction 30
4.2 Results 30
4.3 Description of the Results 30
4.3.1 Fast Native Mexican Speaking 30
4.3.2 Conjugation 34
4.3.3 Vocabulary 36
4.3.4 Previously Learned Spanish; Spanish from Spain 38
4.3.5 Bad Words 40
4.3.6 Gender 42
4.3.7 Language in Use (in specific contexts) 43
4.3.8 Talking to Older People 46
4.3.9 Colloquial Expressions/Language 48
4.3.10 Accent and Intonation 50
4.4 Conclusion of the Chapter 51

Chapter V 53

Conclusions 53

5.1 Introduction 53
5.2 Main Findings 53
5.3 Summary of the Findings 55
5.4 Implications 56
5.5 Reflective Account 57
5.6 Limitations of the Research 58
5.7 Suggestion for Further Research 59

List of References 60

Appendix A 62

Appendix B 63

Appendix C..... 71

List of figures

Figure I. Diagram of the Strategy System..... 12

Figure II. Complete diagram of Learning Strategies. 14

Figure III. Learning Strategies according to Rubin 15

Figure IV. Learning Strategies according to Naiman et al. 17

Figure V. Taxonomy of Communication Strategies. 21

Strategies implemented by Japanese students to overcome difficulties when learning Spanish in Mexico

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Problem

Nowadays, as it is known, learning a second language is very important because of many reasons like: better opportunities, cross-cultural friendships, business, international academic exchanges, etc. Therefore, the ability to communicate in another language is becoming more important, but when students learn a new language it is common to face different difficulties, mainly because of the linguistic and cultural differences.

During the time that I have been learning a second language and studying teaching English, I faced some difficulties due to language and culture. The most common difficulties were: applying knowledge or take patterns from native language, changing grammatical rules, misunderstanding of words, pronunciation as well as behavioral aspects in communication.

I think that learning a second language is a journey through the language, its history, culture, society and linguistics. Therefore, for all mentioned before, I have wondered what the principal difficulties to learners of Spanish as a Second Language are.

According to Quintero and Mejía (2010), along with languages like English, French and German, Spanish is one of the most diffused languages internationally. García (2013, as cited in Rojas, 2014) claimed that more than 500 million people speak Spanish. Spanish

is the second language in the world by number of speakers and the second language of international communication.

1.2 Rationale for Topic Selection

As it is mentioned before, there are some problems or difficulties when learning a second language. The process of learning a new language can be affected by different factors as well as producing errors of grammar, vocabulary, syntax and pronunciation. In order to face these problems, it is necessary to apply learning strategies.

In this case, I would like to know what difficulties Japanese students present when they learn Spanish as a second language, and at the same time what strategies they implement to solve their problems.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out through different data what main difficulties Japanese learners of Spanish as a Second Language face during learning and acquiring the language as part of their student exchange, and how they improve their problems. It means, what strategies they implement to face difficulties when learning Spanish.

1.4 Research Questions

1. - What are the difficulties that learners of Spanish as Second Language face when learning the language?

2. - What strategies do they use when facing difficulties?

1.5 Research Setting

This research was developed at the Faculty of Languages BUAP with learners of Spanish as a Second Language who came to the university as part of an academic exchange. These students take classes of Spanish for foreigners at the University Language Center where the data was collected.

1.6 Significance of the Topic

Nowadays, there are few investigations about Japanese students learning Spanish as a Foreign Language. This research could help teachers, and students of the Faculty of Languages BUAP who are interested in teaching Spanish to foreign learners. Teachers could shape their way of teaching by knowing the difficulties and strategies students use during the process of learning Spanish as a Second Language. At the same time, it will be a great significance for my experience during all the process doing this research, because of the results that I will obtain and the new knowledge I will acquire.

1.7 Context of the Research

This research deals with the difficulties Japanese students face during the process of learning Spanish, for this reason it is important to mention the term of Second Language Acquisition (SLA), which according to Gass and Selinker (2008) is "the process of learning another language after the native language has been learned" (p. 7). They also mentioned that generally refers to "the learning of a nonnative language in the environment in which that language is spoken" (p. 7).

In addition, according to Saville-Troike (2006) SLA "refers both to the study of individuals and groups who are learning a language subsequent to learning their first one as young children, and to the process of learning that language" (p. 2).

Saville-Troike (2006) also mentions that "A second language is typically an official or societally dominant language needed for education, employment, and other basic purposes" (p.4).

To sum up, SLA is the process of learning a new language after a native language, and it occurs in the environment in which the new language is spoken, in this case, the learning of Japanese students takes place in Mexico at the University and at the Faculty of Languages.

1.8 Conclusion of the Chapter

Today it is important learn a new language, but during the process of learning, learners can face some difficulties caused by different factors. For this reason, I would like to find out what are the main difficulties for learners of Spanish as a second language and how they deal with these difficulties, that is to say, which learning strategies they implement.

To carry out this research, it is needed to make a literature review and to apply a research methodology, which will be developed in the following chapters.

Chapter II

Literature Review

2.1 Spanish in the World

According to Quintero and Mejía (2010) along with languages like English, French and German, Spanish is one of the most diffused languages internationally. Nowadays, in this era of globalization, technologies and communication, Spanish is the second most important mother tongue worldwide and third most spoken with 400 million native speakers located mostly in Spain and Latin America. According to the 'Enciclopedia Libre Universal en Español' in first place, "Mexico has 102,000,000 speakers, followed by Colombia with 44,500,000, Spain with 44,100,00 and Argentina with 38,500,000" (as cited in Quintero and Mejia, 2010, p. 61).

García (2013, as cited in Rojas, 2014) states that "more than 500 million people speak Spanish. Spanish is the second language in the world by number of speakers and the second language of international communication" (p. 496). García 2013 also argued that almost 20 million people study Spanish as a foreign language. Furthermore, Rojas (2014) mentioned in his research that the importance of Spanish is due to demography, per capita income, and the influence on international trade and the number of people who study the language. He also mentioned that Spanish has an important place on the Internet and social networks. For instance, García (2013, as cited in Rojas, 2014) claims that "Spain and Mexico are among the 20 countries with more internet users. Spanish is the third most used language on Net by number of users" (p. 497).

In the field of applied linguistics, Lafford (2000) wrote a review of influential works in Spanish Applied Linguistics in the twentieth century. Her research is divided into four

'eras' which are defined by 'paradigms shifts' and occur when significant changes are noticed in the following areas: psychological, second language acquisition theories and linguistic theories:

Era 1 "(homage to tradition, 1900- 1944) evidenced a preoccupation with phonetics and phonology"

Era 2 "(post world war II empiricism, 1945-1965) shifted the emphasis to morphological studies"

Era 3 "(the rise of rationalism, 1965-1979) focused on morphology but also evidenced a shift to the study of syntax and discourse issues"

Era 4 "(language in its social context, 1980-1999) focused on the study of 'language products' in the social context that produce them, as well as on the psycholinguistic processes involved in Spanish SLA and how these processes were affected by certain types of instructional contexts".

2.2 Spanish in Mexico

This thesis is involved in the "era 4" since the main objective is to explore the difficulties international students experience when learning Spanish in a Public University, and to know the strategies they utilize to face these difficulties. Literature about strategies is presented in the next section.

According to González (n.d.), nowadays it exits a necessity for non-Spanish speakers who want to study or work in Mexico to dominate spoken and written Spanish. He mentions that an extensive community of speakers on both sides of the Atlantic, emigrations of Latino Americans, the trade and eventually the culture in Spanish promote

an excellent market for the study of Spanish as a second language. He additionally states that the recent exchange between Asia and Latin America has strengthened Spanish, now as a second language after English. Therefore, González mentions that Spanish language teachers who work in Mexico must consider the emphasis to the processes of teaching and learning about reflection and creation of written language and Mexican culture. The way in which Spanish is spoken in México represents a unique value as cultural and national identity element.

Hence, these cultural aspects affect the learning of international students presenting some difficulties and consequently they need strategies to solve their obstacles. Language learning strategies are presented in the following paragraphs.

2.3 Previous Research about Difficulties

There is a study which analyzed English language learning difficulties of Korean students in a Philippine university (Guzmán, Albela, Nieto, Ferrer and Santos, 2006), In that case it deals with their sociolinguistic competence, their motivation and cultural factors.

According to Yen and Stevens (2004), in the United States, a large percentage of international students are Asiatic in origin (as cited in Guzmán, Albela, Nieto, Ferrer and Santos, 2006).

In this research, it is looking for find out the difficulties of students who learn Spanish and the strategies they use to solve problems.

There is another research which deals with the difficulties of students who learn English as a foreign language in Spain. The study called “Factors impeding the learning of

a second language in Spanish school system" mentioned different difficulties such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, speaking, writing, teacher and material. According to Kocaman (2017), there exist linguistic barriers, instructional barriers in teaching English, affective factors (anxiety, attitude and motivation), lack of assistance (resources, materials), among other difficulties.

To sum up, during the process of learning a second language, learners can face different difficulties related to linguistics, teaching methods, affective factors or culture. Therefore, in this thesis it is aimed to find out the difficulties Japanese students have when learning Spanish and the strategies they use to solve them.

2.4 Language Learning Strategies

Richards, Platt and Platt (1992) define 'strategy' as "procedures used in learning, thinking, etc. which serve as a way of reaching a goal" (p. 355). In language learning, a strategy is a way in which a learner tries to make sense of the use of words, grammatical rules and other aspects of a language. In second language learning, it is an intentional behavior and thoughts that helps learners understand, learn or remember new information. Furthermore, Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard, and Robbins (1999) claimed that Learning Strategies "are procedures or techniques that learners can use to facilitate a learning task" (p. 12).

For Oxford (1990):

"Strategies are operations employed by the learner to aid the acquisition, storage, retrieval, and use of information. In addition, they are specific actions taken by the learner to make

learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations" (p. 8).

According to these definitions, a learning strategy is a way or technique to reach goals, in this case, learning goals, and at the same time it makes learning easier and significant. Briefly and as reported by Oxford (1990), language learning strategies have the following features:

1. Contribute to the main goal – communicative competence.
2. Allow learners to become more self-directed.
3. Expand the role of teachers.
4. Are problem-oriented.
5. Are specific actions taken by the learner.
6. Involve many aspects of the learner, not just the cognitive.
7. Support learning both directly and indirectly.
8. Are not always observable.
9. Are often conscious.
10. Can be taught.
11. Are flexible.
12. Are influenced by a variety of factors. (p. 9)

2.4.1 Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategy

According to Brown and Palincsar (1982, as cited in O'malley and Chamot, 1990, p.8) “metacognitive strategies involve thinking about the learning process planning for learning, monitoring of comprehension or production while it is taking place and self-evaluation after the learning activity has been completed”. And cognitive strategies “are more directly related to individual learning tasks and entail direct manipulation or transformation of the learning materials”. (p. 8)

Similarly, according to Richards et al, (1992) cognitive strategies refer to “processes and behavior which learners use to help them to improve their ability to learn or remember something, particularly with specific classroom tasks and activities” (p. 60). And metacognitive strategies “involve thinking about mental processes used during the learning process, monitoring learning while it occurs, and evaluating learning after it has occurred” (p. 227).

In addition, Richards et al, (1992) mentioned that metacognitive strategies a learner may use when he or she is beginning to learn a new language include:

“1 planning ways of remembering new words encountered in conversations with native speakers

2 deciding which approaches to working out grammatical rules are more effective

3 evaluating his or her own progress and making decisions about what to concentrate on in the future”. (p. 227)

As it can be seen, Brown & Palincsar (1982, cited in O'malley and Chamot, 1990) and Richards et al, (1992) agree on a cognitive strategy deals with thinking about learning during or/and after an academic task was carried out. This strategy is performed by the

individual, in this case the student, at a mental level. Metacognitive strategies involve the mental process a learner uses during a learning process. Richards et al (1992) mention three examples similarly to what Brown and Palincsar (1982. cited in O'malley and Chamot, 1990) claimed, as planning the process of learning and evaluate their progress.

2.5 Classification of Language Learning Strategies

O'Malley and Chamot (1990, as cited in Macaro, 2001) provide two further categories of strategies bringing their classification system to four:

1. Cognitive strategies
2. Metacognitive strategies
3. Social strategies
4. Affective strategies. (p. 23)

Social and affective strategies are often treated as 'a broad grouping' which involves either interaction with another person or the control of one's feelings with regard to language learning.

Oxford (1990) classified learning strategies into two groups: Direct Strategies and Indirect Strategies and these two classes are subdivided into six groups (memory, cognitive and compensation strategies; metacognitive, affective, and social strategies respectively), consequently, these groups are subdivided into 19 strategy sets and finally the entire learning strategy system includes 62 strategies. The six groups mentioned before are included in the following figure.

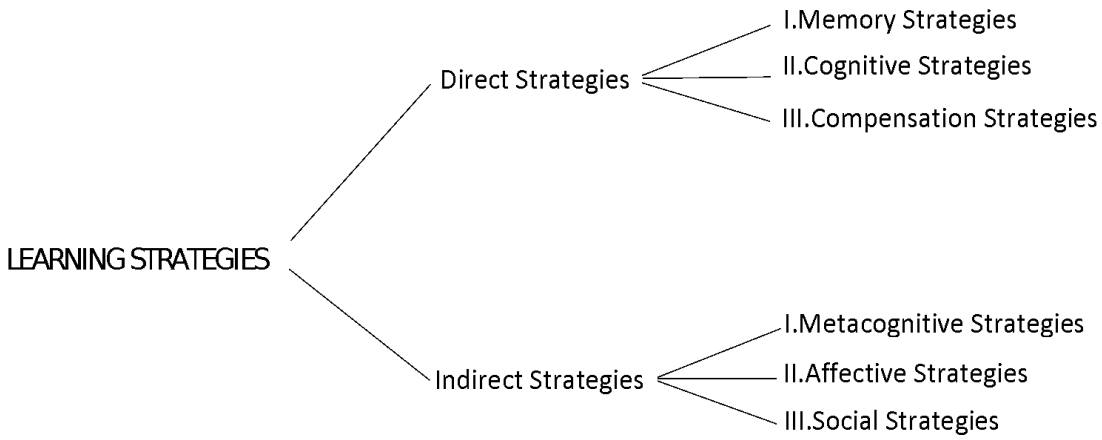

Figure I. Diagram of the Strategy System (Oxford, 1990, p. 16).

The next figure represents the complete learning strategy system, including 62 strategies.

	DIRECT STRATEGIES			***INDIRECT STRATEGIES***	
		1. Grouping			1. Overviewing and linking with already known material
	A. creating mental linkages	2. Associating/elaborating		A. Centering your learning	2. Paying attention
		3. Placing new words into a context			3. Delaying speech production to focus on listening
I. Memory strategies	B. Applying images and sounds	1. Using imagery	**I. Metacognitive strategies**	B. Arranging and planning your learning	1. Finding out about language learning
		2. Semantic mapping			2. Organizing
		3. Using keywords			3. Setting goals and objectives
		4. Representing sounds in memory			4. identifying the purpose of a language task
					5. Planning for a language task
	C. Reviewing well	1. Structured reviewing			6. Seeking practice opportunities
	D. Employing action	1. Using physical response or sensation		C. Evaluating your learning	1.Self-monitoring
		2. Using mechanical techniques			2. Self-evaluating

	A. Practicing	1. Repeating		A. Lowering your anxiety	1. Using progressive relaxation, deep breathing, or meditation
		2. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems			2. Using music
		3. Recognizing and using formulas and patterns			3 Using laughter
		4. Recombining			
		5. Practicing naturalistically		B. Encouraging yourself	1. Making positive statements
II. Cognitive strategies			**II. Affective strategies**		2. Taking risks wisely
	B. Receiving and sending messages	1. Getting the idea quickly			3. Rewarding yourself
		2. Using other clues			
				C. Taking your emotional temperature	1. Listening to your body
	C. Analyzing and reasoning	1. Reasoning deductively			2. Using checklist
		2. Analyzing expressions			3. Writing a language learning diary
		3. Analyzing contrastively (across languages)			4. Discussing your feelings with someone else
		4. Translating			
		5. Transferring			
				A. Asking questions	1. Asking for clarification or verification
	D. Creating structure for input and output	1. Taking notes			2. Asking for correction
		2. Summarizing			
III. Compensation strategies		3. Highlighting	**III. Social strategies**	B. Cooperating with others	1. Cooperating with peers
					2. Cooperating with proficient users of the new language
	A. Guessing intelligently	1. Using linguistic rules		C. Empathizing with others	1. Developing cultural understanding
		2. Using other clues			2. Becoming aware of others' thoughts and feelings

	1. Switching to the mother tongue
	2. Getting help
	3. Using mime or gesture
B. overcoming limitations in speaking and writing	4. Avoiding communication partially or totally
	5. Selecting the topic
	6. Adjusting or approximating the message
	7. Coining words
	8. Using a circumlocution or synonym

Figure II. Complete diagram of Learning Strategies (Oxford, 1990).

As stated before, this research aims to explore the strategies Japanese learners of Spanish use when they face difficulties with the language. Oxford's proposal is useful to know the types of strategies students utilize.

Regarding strategies, Rubin (1981, as cited in O'Malley and Chamot, 1990, p. 3) proposed a classification scheme that subsumes learning strategies under two primary groups and a number of subgroups. The first primary category, consisting of strategies that directly affect learning, includes clarification verification, monitoring, memorization, guessing/inductive inferencing, deductive reasoning and practice. On the other hand, the second primary category, processes that contribute indirectly to learning, consisting of create opportunities to practice and production tricks.

Author	*Primary strategy classification*	*Representative secondary strategies*	*Representative examples*
Rubin (1981)	Strategies that directly affect learning	Clarification/verification	Asks for an example of how to use a word or expression, repeats words to confirm understanding
		Monitoring	Corrects errors in own/other's pronunciation, vocabulary, spelling, grammar, style

		Memorization	Takes note of new items, pronounces out loud, finds a mnemonic, writes items repeatedly
		Guessing/inductive inferencing	Guesses meaning from key words, structures, pictures, context, etc.
		Deductive reasoning	Compares native/other language to target language
		Practice	Looks for rules, of co-occurrence Experiments with new sounds Repeats sentences until pronounces easily
	Processes that contribute indirectly to learning	Creates opportunities for practice Production tricks	Listens carefully and tries to imitate Creates situation with native speaker Initiates conversation with fellow students Spends time in language lab, listening to TV, etc. Uses Circumlocution, synonyms, or cognates Uses formulaic interaction Contextualizes to clarify meaning

Figure III. Strategies according to Rubin (1981, cited in O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

Although Oxford (1990) mentioned a larger classification diagram about learning strategies than Rubin's scheme (1981), they coincide in the existence of direct and indirect strategies which affect the learning process and even though they group these strategies in different ways, there exist similarities. Talking about direct strategies, they agree on analyzing and reasoning within cognitive strategies, and guessing and reasoning as compensation strategies. In other words, direct strategies concern the processes and tasks a learner employs during learning, in this case, when learning a second language. On the other hand, indirect strategies create opportunities for practice and evaluate learning, and at the same time these strategies encourage learners to improve their abilities.

Unlike Oxford and Rubin, Naiman et al. (1978, as cited in O'Malley and Chamot, 1990) mention an alternative classification scheme. It contains five broad (primary) categories of learning strategies and secondary categories. The primary classification includes an active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of a language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands, monitoring L2 performance.

Author	*Primary strategy classification*	*Representative secondary strategies*	*Representative examples*
Naiman et al. (1978)	Active task approach	Responds positively to learning opportunity or seeks and exploits learning environments Adds related language learning activities to regular classroom program Practices	Student acknowledges need for a structure learning environment and takes a course prior to immersing him/herself in target language Reads additional items Listens to tapes Writes down words to memorize Looks at speaker's mouth and repeats
	Realization of language as a system	Analyzes individual problems Makes L1/L2 comparisons Analyzes target language to make inferences Makes use of fact that language is a system	Reads alone to hear sounds Uses cognates Using what is already known Uses rules to generate possibilities Relates new dictionary words to others in same category
	Realization of language as a means of communication and interaction	Emphasizes fluency over accuracy Seeks communicative situations with L2 speakers	Does not hesitate to speak Uses circumlocutions Communicates whenever possible Establishes close personal contact with L2 native speakers
	Management of affective demands	Finds sociocultural meanings Copes with affective demands in learning	Writes to pen pals Memorizes courtesies and phrases Overcomes inhibition to speak Is able to laugh at own mistakes Is prepared for difficulties
	Monitoring L2	Constantly revises L2	Generates sentences and looks

	performance	system by testing inferences and asking L2 native speakers for feedback	for reactions Looks for ways to improve so as not to repeat mistakes

Figure IV. Naiman et al. (1978, as cited in O'Malley and Chamot, 1990).

Unlike Oxford and Rubin, Naiman et al. did not mention direct and indirect strategies, but they claimed there is a primary classification and contains five categories of learning strategies, after that, a secondary category which represents/describes the former. Their primary classification includes an active task approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication and interaction, management of affective demands and monitoring L2 performance.

As strategies are plans or techniques to solve learning problems or reach learning goals during the process of learning, in this case, a second language, and after now about all the strategies and their classification, it can be seen that the process of learning involves also communication strategies which will be developed in the next section.

2.5.1 Previous Research about Language Learning Strategies

The article called "Estrategias de aprendizaje que utilizan los estudiantes chinos que aprenden español como lengua extranjera" (Feng & Iriarte, 2018) is focused on the analysis of the learning strategies used by Chinese students in their learning of Spanish. It is a quantitative study and they adapted a questionnaire of Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The questionnaire (SIIL) which is designed by Oxford, is used in the field of learning languages but the original version is for students of English.

In that study, Feng and Iriarte (2018) showed that Chinese students in general use all categories of strategies between a moderate to high frequency, but social strategies with highest frequency, followed by cognitive, compensation and metacognitive strategies; while memory strategies are less utilized by the students, followed by the affective strategies.

To conclude this section, Language Learning Strategies have an important role during the process of learning, this research will explore the main strategies that Japanese students employ when leaning Spanish as second language to solve problems while communication occurs. The article mentioned has in common with this research that in the field of teaching and learning Spanish, in this case Asiatic students, there exist few investigations, for this reason, the new studies are a contribution in this field.

It is important to realize that language learning strategies have an important role during the process of learning. Both, this thesis and the article above are focused on the main strategies that students employ when leaning Spanish as second language to solve problems while communication occurs. However, this thesis project deals with Japanese students, which there exists few investigations. Henceforth, this research contributes to the language learning strategies field.

2.6 Communication Strategies

First of all, the term communication "refers generally to the process by which information is received by an organism or organisms. At its most basic level, communication involves the sending and receiving of information" (Shaw, 1998, p. 33).

In daily communicative interaction, when a message is not understood, communication problems occur. Therefore, communication strategies are used in order to make interaction easier to manage. Foreign language learners may encounter various communication problems when their interlanguage is limited. They "need to employ communication strategies, which have been defined generally as devices used by second language learners to overcome perceived barriers to achieving specific communication goals" (Færch & Kasper, 1983, cited in Ayuni, 2013, p. 129).

Communication strategy, according to Richards et al. (1992), is "a way used to express a meaning in a second or foreign language, by a learner who has a limited command of the language" (p. 64). In addition, Tarone (1977, as cited in Kasper and Kellerman, 1997, p. 2) stated that communication strategies are "used by an individual to overcome the crisis which occurs when language structures are inadequate to convey the individual's thought". Likewise, Færch and Kasper (1983) argued that they are "potentially conscious plans for solving what an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal" (as cited in Kasper and Kellerman, 1997, p. 2).

In other words, communication strategies are actions (or plans) which a language user or new learner employs to communicate something in a second or foreign language in order to achieve a communicative goal.

Although communication involves both verbal and non-verbal language, "communication strategies are usually associated with spoken language and research has shown that students tend to use different communication strategies when they are unable to express what they want to say because of their lack of resources in their second language" (Hedge, 2000, as cited in Ayuni, 2013, p. 130). The author also claimed that learners have

two options: they can either leave the original communicative goal or they can try to reach other alternative plans and use other linguistic means that they have at their disposal. The next section presents specific communication strategies that individuals tend to use when they communicate.

2.6.1 Taxonomy of Communication Strategies

This section deals with the taxonomy of Communication Strategies, the following chart describes the strategies proposed by Bialystok (1990) and adapted from Varadi (1973), Tarone (1977), and Faerch and Kasper (1983), as cited in Ayuni, (2013).

Communication Strategies	Strategies	Explanation of Strategy
A. Avoidance or Reduction Strategies	a. Message abandonment	Leaving a message unfinished because of linguistic difficulties.
	b. Topic avoidance	Avoiding topic areas or concepts which pose linguistic difficulties.

B. Achievement or Compensatory Strategies	a. Circumlocution	Describing or exemplifying the target object or action (e.g., the thing you open doors with for describing keys).
	b. Approximation	Using an alternative term which expresses the meaning of target lexical items as closely as possible (e.g., ship for describing sail boat).
	c. Use of all-purpose words	Extending a general empty lexical item to contexts where specific words are lacking (e.g., overuse of thing).
	d. Word-coinage	Creating non-existing L2 word based on a supposed rule (e.g., paintist for painter).
	e. Use of non-linguistic means	Mime, gestures, facial expressions.
	f. Literal translation	Translating literally a lexical item an idiom, a compound word or structure from L1 to L2.
	g. Foreignizing	Using a L1 word by adjusting it to L2 phonologically (e.g., adding a L2 suffix).
	h. Code switching	Using a L1 word with L1 pronunciation.
	i. Appeal for help	Turning to the conversation partner for help directly or indirectly.
C. Stalling or time gaining strategies	a. Use of fillers/hesitation devices	Using filling words or gambits to fill in pauses and to gain time to think (e.g., now, let me see…)

Figure V Taxonomy of Communication Strategies (Ayuni, 2013, p. 130).

This chart describes the communication strategies according to Bialystok. The first group includes avoidance or reduction strategies, which implies learners leave messages unfinished or avoid topics because of linguistic difficulties. The second is about achievement or compensatory strategies where learners will use alternative terms to express something, non-linguistic means like mime, gestures or/and facial expressions; literal translation, or use of words from their L1. The third group is called stalling or time gaining strategies, where learners will make pauses to gain time to think about what they want to

communicate. The strategies mentioned above usually go hand in hand with the communicative competence which is explained below.

2.7 Communicative Competence

In the field of language learning the term competence refers to "speaker's knowledge of their language, the system of rules which they have mastered so that they are able to produce and understand an indefinite number of sentences, and to recognize grammatical mistakes and ambiguities" (Crystal, 2008, p. 92). Therefore, competence deals with the ability to learn well a language.

According to Richards et al. (1992), competence is "a person's ability to create and understand sentences they have never heard before. It also includes a person's knowledge of what are and what are not sentences of a particular language" (p. 68). This term leads to 'communicative competence', which as reported by Richards et al. (1992), is the ability not only to apply the grammatical rules of a language in order to form grammatically correct sentences, but also to know when and where to use these sentences and to whom. In addition, they said that communicative competence includes:

a knowledge of the grammar and vocabulary of the language

b knowledge of rules of speaking

c knowing how to use and respond to different types of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, thanks and invitations, and

d knowing how to use language appropriately (p. 65).

As reported by Johnson and Johnson (1998), communicative competence "is the knowledge which enables someone to use a language effectively and their ability actually to use this knowledge for communication" (p. 62).

As it is mentioned before, "communication involves the sending and receiving of information" (Shaw, 1998, p. 33). Therefore, communicative competence is an ability to communicate correctly and effectively to others applying the correct grammatical rules. It will help learners to understand better and implement different strategies when learning a second language.

2.7.1 Models of Communicative Competence

Johnson and Johnson (1998) claimed that the term Communicative Competence is most usually attributed to Dell Hymes who wrote a document called 'On Communicative Competence' dated in 1970. Hymes distinguishes four sectors of communicative competence: knowledge of what is possible, feasible, appropriate and actually done.

Canale and Swain (1980, as cited in Johnson and Johnson, 1998, p. 66) present a reinterpretation and then communicative competence consists of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence, with sociolinguistic competence further broken into sociocultural competence and discourse competence.

> *Grammatical competence* is knowledge of the language code and includes knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar, semantics and phonology.

Strategic competence is defined as verbal and non-verbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence.

From *sociolinguistic competence, sociocultural and discourse competence* are arisen. The former is knowledge of the relation of language use to its non-linguistic context. *The latter* is knowledge of rules for 'the combination of utterances and communicative functions' which may be conceived as knowledge of factors governing the creation of cohesion and coherence (p. 66).

Additionally, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001), communicative language competence can be considered as comprising several components: linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic.

Linguistic competences "include lexical, phonological, syntactical knowledge and skills and other dimensions of language as system, independently of the sociolinguistic value of its variations and the pragmatic functions of its realisations" (p. 13).

Sociolinguistic competences "refer to the sociocultural conditions of language use. Through its sensitivity to social conventions (rules of politeness, norms governing relations between generations, sexes, classes and social groups, linguistic codification of certain fundamental rituals in the functioning of a community)". (p. 13).

Pragmatic competences "are concerned with the functional use of linguistic resources (production of language functions, speech acts), drawing on scenarios or scripts of interactional exchanges. It also concerns the mastery of discourse, cohesion and coherence, the identification of text types and forms, irony, and parody" (p. 13).

To sum up, the term of 'communicative competence is attributed to Dell Hymes, Canale and Swain (1980) presented a reinterpretation of Hymes' paper and consists of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. This reinterpretation involves the knowledge of the language as lexical items, rules about morphology, syntax, semantics and phonology; the use of language in a non-linguistic context and knowing rules to communicate correctly (cohesion and coherence).

In other words but similarly, for the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (2001) communicative competence involves: linguistic competences, sociolinguistic competences and pragmatic competences. All of them refer to viewing the language as a system, the use of language in the different sociocultural conditions and the use of linguistic resources to communicate adequately. Finally, it can be seen that sociolinguistic competences are important because of the different rules of politeness, conditions, norms, social groups and other factors that are part of the society and culture.

2.8 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter developed the literature review needed to have a clear idea of what Language Learning Strategies are and how it could help during the process of learning a new language. In this case, it will help to understand how Learning Strategies are employed by learners of Spanish as a second language to solve difficulties and communicate effectively.

The chapter also shows information about Spanish which is one of the most diffused languages internationally, along with languages like English, French and German. In the following chapter, the methodology to carry out this research is presented.

Chapter III

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the methodology used in this research. Firstly, the research design is described, followed by the setting and participants, the instrument used, and the data collection procedure implemented in order to obtain the necessary information for this research.

3.2 Research Design

As well known by researchers, there are two kinds of research, the qualitative research and the quantitative research. According to Richard and Cook (1979, as cited in Nunan, 1992) the qualitative research advocates use of qualitative methods concerned with understanding human behavior from actor's own frame of reference, it is naturalistic and uncontrolled observation, subjective and close to the data, grounded discovery-oriented, exploratory, expansionist, descriptive and inductive. Qualitative research is a process-oriented, is valid and real unclear here, and contains rich and deep data. It is ungeneralizable: single case studies and assumes a dynamic reality. On the other hand, quantitative research as the method that advocates the use of quantitative methods, seeks facts or causes of social phenomena without regard to the subjective states of the individuals, obtrusive and controlled measurement. It is objective and removed from the data: it is focused on the outsider perspective that is ungrounded, verification oriented, confirmatory, reductionist, inferential, hypothetical-deductive, and outcome oriented. It is also reliable, that is, hard and replicable data, generalizable and assumes a stable reality.

According to Creswell (2003), in qualitative approach "the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e. the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern)" (p. 18). That is to say, that the researcher based their knowledge/statements on the significance and meaning of experiences.

According to Creswell (2003), in qualitative approaches the researcher employs methods such as open-ended questions, interview data, observation data, emerging approaches, text or image data; and tends to use practices of research such as collect participant meanings, focus on a single concept or phenomenon, bring personal values into the study, study the context or setting of participants, validate the accuracy of findings, make interpretations of the data, collaborate with the participants. Hence in qualitative research, to apply an instrument and collect data, the researcher could employ different methods to make interpretations of the data and is involved in the research collaborating with the participants.

In other words, qualitative methods understand human behavior. Qualitative research is close to the data, grounded, discovery-oriented, exploratory, descriptive and inductive. It is also process-oriented, valid, and ungeneralizable. Quantitative methods follow facts or causes of social phenomena without involving the subjective states of the individuals. Quantitative research is controlled and measured, objective, deductive, outcome-oriented, also generalizable and it assumes a stable reality. Therefore, taking into account the descriptions mentioned before, this research assumes to be qualitative.

3.3 Setting and Participants

The participants of this project are foreign students who are part of the courses of Spanish for foreign learners at the University Language Center (CELE). They are in upper intermediate and advanced level and come from Japan. The CELE program holds 9 courses of Spanish; as stated in their programs, students achieve C1 level in course 9 according to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Participant 1 is 21 years old, studies sociolinguistic of Spanish and is in 8th level. Participant 2 is 21 years old, studies Spanish and is also in 8th level. Participant 3 is 20 years old, studies Spanish and is in 7th level. Participant 4 is 21 years old, studies at the faculty of economy and also is taking courses of Spanish, she is in 9th level.

3.4 Instrument

The instrument used for this research consists of a semi structured interview. It is designed to obtain the necessary information which will help to know what the principal cultural and linguistic difficulties are that foreigners face when learning Spanish as second language. It is important to mention that the interview contained seven questions and during the process of questioning some follow-up questions were added when it was necessary.

3.5 Data Collection and procedure

Once the interview was designed, an individual 25-35 interview was applied to 4 Japanese students from CELE-BUAP. They were audio-recorded to obtain the data and after that, the audios were transcribed in order to analyze the data carefully. Then, the data was classified into two main categories according to the research questions; the difficulties the participants faced when learning Spanish as a foreign language and the strategies they implemented to solve them.

3.6 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter showed the methodology for this qualitative research, whose purpose is to explore the main difficulties from foreign learners during the process of learning Spanish, and also to know about the learning strategies they used to improve their learning. The setting and the participants' background were described. In addition, the instrument and the data collection and its procedure were stated. The results are developed in the next chapter where examples and descriptions are mentioned about the difficulties and the different Learning Strategies.

Chapter IV

Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This section deals with the analysis of all the data collected in this research. The main difficulties that participants mentioned and the strategies they used to face problems when learning Spanish are presented. It shows the examples of the difficulties that participants said followed by the different type of strategies. Participants are referred to as P1, P2, P3 and P4.

4.2 Results

This section seeks to identify the most relevant information about the main difficulties that Japanese learners face when learning Spanish and the learning strategies they use to solve these difficulties. The analysis is based on the transcription of the interview made to the participants. See appendix A.

4.3 Description of the Results

According to the data obtained, the information below was found. As it is mentioned before, some examples of the difficulties are presented followed by the main strategies learners used, and then the types of strategies according to Oxford (1990).

4.3.1 Fast Native Mexican Speaking

One of the difficulties reported by the participants was fast native speaking. Participant 1 stated that she has complications when she speaks with native Spanish speakers. Participant 2 said that she has problems to understand native Mexican-Spanish classmates and teachers because of their speed. Participant 3 stated that he cannot

understand a conversation with more than two native Mexican speakers at a time. Similarly, participant 4 expressed that native Mexican speakers speak very fast and that is why she does not understand.

Regarding the strategies the participants used to face their difficulties, participant 1 stated that she utilized an indirect metacognitive strategy, arranging and planning learning, seeking practice opportunities (Oxford, 1990), since she tried to talk to native Mexican speakers along her stay at the university that was for a year. This way, she hoped to understand better Spanish from natives. Participant 2 mentioned an indirect strategy from metacognitive strategies, arranging and planning learning, seeking practice opportunities (Oxford, 1900) because she stated she talks with her friends to practice. In addition, she also utilized a direct strategy, as part of memory strategies, creating mental linkages, associating/elaborating; and applying images and sounds, representing sounds in memory (Oxford, 1990), since she mentioned that for her to solve problems, she also watches movies in Spanish with subtitles in Spanish, and Japanese movies with Spanish subtitles. In this way, she can understand how to say some phrases in Spanish. It is important to mention that participants 3 and 4 did not share the strategies they used to improve this difficulty.

Example	Strategy	Type of strategy

P1	"...when I talk to natives they speak very fast and sometimes it is difficult to understand". "…cuando hablo con los nativos me hablan muy rápido y a veces me cuesta trabajo entenderlo"	"When I lived in Japan I had not many opportunities to talk to natives and when we speak in Spanish, we speak very slowly, that's why I started to listen to the radio in Spanish to get used to the speed". "When I listen to the music in Spanish, it is very fast and I just recognize some words but not everything, especially preposition, that's why when I listen to the music I read the lyrics and I listen to. Talk to natives, my stay is just for one year, for this reason I want to take advantage of it". "Cuando vivía en Japón no tenía tantas oportunidades de hablar con los nativos y cuando hablamos los japoneses en español hablamos muy lento por eso empecé a escuchar radio en español para que me acostumbre en la velocidad". "Cuando escucho la música en español es muy rápido y recojo algunas palabras pero no todo, sobre todo preposición por eso cuando escucho la música veo letras y escucho, leo y escucho. Hablar con los nativos, mi estancia es solo de un año por eso quiero aprovechar".	1.Direct strategy I.Memory strategy A.Practicing 2. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems. 1. Indirect strategy. I. Metacognitive strategy. B. Arranging and planning your learning. 6. Seeking practice opportunities.

P2	"When I studied Spanish in Japan, the Spanish-speakers teachers spoke to us a little slowly, but now, I take some classes with Mexicans, and students and teachers speak very fast, for this reason it is difficult to me following what they say". "Cuando estudiaba español en Japón, los maestros hispanohablantes creo que nos hablaba un poco despacio pero ahora meto algunas clases con los mexicanos, y los alumnos y los maestros hablan muy rápido por eso me cuesta seguir lo que ellos dicen".	"The way I use the most, is speak with my friends but I also watch the movies with subtitles in Spanish, sometimes I watch a movie in Spanish with subtitles in Spanish, but sometimes I watch a Japanese movie with subtitles in Spanish so I can understand a Japanese phrase and its translation in Spanish" "La manera que uso más, es hablar con mis amigos pero también veo las películas con subtitulo en español, a veces veo película en español y con subtitulo en español, pero a veces veo película japonesa con subtitulo en español por eso puedo entender una frase japonesa como se traduce a español y puedo entender".	1. Indirect Strategy I.Metacognitive strategies B. Arranging and planning your learning. 6. Seeking practice opportunities. 1.Direct Strategy I.Memory Strategies A.Creating mental linkages 2.Associating/ elaborating 1.Direct Strategy I.Memory Strategies B.Applying images and sounds 4. Representing sounds in memory
P3	"For me, the most difficult to learn Spanish is the amount of words and what they (Mexicans) say, for example, I can understand face to face but when I speak with more than two Mexicans, I cannot understand because Mexicans speak very fast". "Para mí lo más difícil de aprender español es la cantidad de palabras y entender lo que dicen, por ejemplo yo puedo entender cara a cara pero cuando hablo con más de dos		

	mexicanos no puedo entender porque los mexicanos hablan muy rápido para mí".		
P4	"...when listening I feel that you Mexicans speak very fast, and also young people a lot of bad words, that's why sometimes I do not understand". "…al escuchar siento que ustedes los mexicanos hablan muy rápido, y también los jóvenes utilizan muchas groserías, por eso a veces no entiendo".		

4.3.2 Conjugation

Another difficulty reported by the four participants was conjugation. When the question was asked, the participant 1 directly said that conjugation of verbs was a difficulty. Participant 2 stated that the conjugation of verbs was a trouble because in Spanish there exists a lot of conjugations and personal pronouns and because to memorize every single verb was difficult for her. Participant 3 just mentioned that for him conjugation is one of the difficulties. And participant 4 stated that conjugation is difficult because there are plenty of conjugations, e.g. when she addresses elderly people or when she refers to many people, that is, she had to use different conjugations according to the person she talks to.

In this section, the strategies mentioned to face this participants' difficulty were: participant 2 an indirect strategy, of the group of social strategies, asking questions, asking for clarification or verification (Oxford, 1990). That is, when she has a problem, she asks her friend who likes to study grammar; this way, she solves problems. Participant 3 utilized

direct strategies. First, memory strategies, reviewing well, structured reviewing. Then, employing action and using mechanical techniques. Finally, practicing and repeating, (Oxford, 1990). These strategies fit because he states that he needs to memorize verb conjugations. On the other hand, he mentioned that taking notes and finding out in dictionaries are also ways to find a solution to this problem. As in the previous category, here two participants did not share the strategy they use to improve this difficulty.

	Example	Strategy	Type of strategy
P1	"The conjugation of the verb, the articles, because in Japanese we do not have them". "La conjugación del verbo, los artículos *'el, la, los, las'* porque en japonés no los tenemos".		
P2	"...in Spanish there are many conjugations; *'I, you, he, we'* and when I was in Japan I studied Spanish from Spain, and there exists *'vosotros'* and memorizing the conjugations is difficult". "…en español hay muchísimas conjugaciones; *'yo, tú, él, nosotros'* y además cuando estaba en Japón estudiaba español de España y había *'vosotros'* y memorizar las conjugaciones es difícil".	"...verb tense is more difficult and my Japanese friend likes to study grammar and when I have a problem about grammar or linguistics, I usually ask her and she answers me to solve problems." "…el tiempo verbal es más difícil y mi amiga japonesa le gusta estudiar gramática y cuando tengo un problema sobre gramática o lingüística normalmente pregunto a ella y ella me contesta y soluciono".	1. Indirect strategy. III. Social strategy A. Asking questions. 1. Asking for clarification or verification.
P3	"Conjugation, here in México the meaning of some phrases. I was studying Spanish from Spain, that's why I like without *vosotros*".	"About conjugation I need to memorize, just what I can do is memorize. Take notes and search in the dictionary".	1. Direct strategy. I.Memory strategies. C.Reviewing well. 1. Structured reviewing. D.Employing action.

	"Conjugación, en México significado de algunas frases. Yo estaba estudiando español de España, por eso para mí, a mí me gusta sin *"vosotros".*	"Sobre conjugación, necesito memorizar, solo lo que puedo hacer es memorizar. Tomar notas y solo investigar en diccionario".	2. Using mechanical techniques. A.Practicing. 1.Repeating. 1.Direct strategy. II. Cognitive strategies. D.Creating structure for input and output. 1. Taking notes 1. Indirect strategy. I.Metacognitive strategies. B. Arranging and planning your learning. 1. Finding out about language learning.
P4	"Conjugation is very difficult, because there are plenty of conjugations, so when I talk with adults/older people I have to use conjugation of "you" (singular), and when I am with many people I have to use conjugation of "you" (plural), but the good thing is that in Mexico it does not exist *vosotros*". "Conjugación es muy difícil, porque hay tantas conjugaciones, por eso cuando hablo con los mayores tengo que utilizar verbo de usted… conjugación de usted, y cuando estoy con muchas personas tengo utilizar conjugación de ustedes pero lo bueno es que en México no existe *vosotros."*		

4.3.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary was another difficulty stated. Participant 1 claimed that when she listens to a word that she does not know, she cannot take notes. Participant 2 responded that, there exists vocabulary which she does not understand, and then when she looks for a word in a dictionary, she finds more unknown words. It is also difficult for her to distinguish how to write those words because not only some sounds are confusing for her, but also some orthography issues like the use of "s", "c" and "z". Participant 3 stated that the most difficult when learning Spanish is the quantity of words and understand what people are saying. And participant 4 declared that there are different words with the same meaning, that is the use of synonyms, or words which are more common in Mexican Spanish than others (for example, in Spanish from Spain).

In this section, participant 1 referred to the group of direct strategy; cognitive strategies, creating structure for input and output, and taking notes (Oxford, 1990), since she takes notes when she finds unknown words. Participant 2 utilized an indirect strategy followed by metacognitive strategy, arranging and planning your learning, and finding out about learning language (Oxford, 1990) because she looks up unknown words in the dictionary. In this case, participants 3 and 4 did not mention a strategy.

	Example	Strategy	Types of strategy
P1	"When I listen to a word which I do not know, I cannot write". "Cuando escucho una palabra que no conozco, no puedo escribir".	"When I find the words which I do not know, I always take notes". "Cuando encuentro las palabras que no conozco siempre tomo nota".	1. Direct strategy. II. Cognitive strategies. D.Creating structure for input and output. 1. Taking notes
P2	"There is vocabulary that I do not understand and every time I	"There is vocabulary that I	1. Indirect strategy. I.Metacognitive

	search in the dictionary there appears another word which I do not understand, and sometimes I cannot distinguish how to write in alphabet, if '*R, o L, C, S, o Z'*." "Salen muchísimos vocabularios que yo no entiendo y cada vez busco en diccionario pero mientras busco en diccionario sale otra palabra que no entiendo y a veces no puedo distinguir cómo escribir en alfabeto, si '*R, o L, C, S, o Z'*."	do not understand and every time I search in the dictionary". "Salen muchísimos vocabularios que yo no entiendo y cada vez busco en diccionario"	strategies. B. Arranging and planning your learning. 1. Finding out about language learning.
P3	"For me, the most difficult of learning Spanish is the amount of words, and understand what they (Mexicans) say…" "Para mí lo más difícil de aprender español es la cantidad de palabras y entender lo que dicen…".		
P4	"When I was in Japan I used the word '*ordenador'* but here you use computer. And also the words that have same meaning *'auto, coche, carro'."* "cuando estaba en Japón utilizaba la palabra *ordenador* pero aquí ustedes usan computadora, y también muchas palabras que tienen mismo significado *'auto, coche, carro'."*		

4.3.4 Previously Learned Spanish; Spanish from Spain

The next difficulty reported by the participants was their previous knowledge of Spanish learnt in their country. They were taught Spanish from Spain which was different to the real context they faced; the Mexican Spanish environment. It is important to say that all the participants in this study took previous Spanish lessons in Japan, which Spanish from Spain was the target language to learn. Regarding this difficulty, participant 1

expressed that the Spanish they learnt in Japan is from Spain. Then, when she was for the first time at the faculty of languages, she got confused because of a phrase, common at least in some contexts in Puebla, to express "you're welcome". Participant 2 studied also Spanish from Spain and when she arrived in Mexico, she could not understand all Mexican Spanish. Participant 3 said that he prefers Spanish in which "vosotros", the second person in plural, is not used. Similarly to participant 2, participant 4 stated that she learnt Spanish from Spain and when arrived in Mexico, she did not understand what Mexicans said.

Regarding the strategies participants 1 and 2 mentioned they used, they ask people, especially friends, about what they do not understand. In Oxfords terms, they utilize an indirect strategy, following a social strategy, asking questions, asking for clarification and verification because they look for explanations to understand Spanish through their friends. Participants 3 and 4 did not state a strategy.

	Example	**Strategy**	**Types of strategy**
P1	"The Spanish we learn in Japan is from Spain and when I went to the Faculty of Languages for the first time I said *'gracias'* and they told me *'no hay de qué'* and I did not understand because I only knew '*you're welcome'.* Then they explained it to me". "El español que aprendemos en Japón es de España y cuando fui a la facultad por primera vez, dije *'gracias'* y me dijeron *'no hay de qué'* y no entendí, porque solo sabía '*de nada'* y me explicaron".	"I always ask, when I speak with my friends it is not complicated, and they talk to me slowly and clearly". "Siempre pregunto, cuando hablo con mis amigos no me cuesta trabajo y me hablan lentamente y claramente".	1. Indirect strategy. III. Social strategy A. Asking questions. 1. Asking for clarification or verification.
P2	"…In Japan I studied Spanish from Spain that's why when I arrived in Mexico I could not	"Sometimes I ask to my Mexican friends and they explain to me and I can	1. Indirect strategy. III. Social

	understand the Spanish of Mexico". "…yo estudiaba español de España en Japón por eso cuando llegué a México no pude entender bien el español de México".	understand, but sometimes I cannot understand and if my Japanese friends are there I ask them for help and they explain to me in Japanese". "A veces pregunto a mis amigos mexicanos y ellos me explican y puedo entender, pero a veces no puedo entender y si están mis amigos japoneses yo pido ayuda a ellos y me explican en japonés".	strategy A. Asking questions. 1. Asking for clarification or verification.
P3	"I was studying Spanish from Spain, that's why I like without *vosotros*". "Yo estaba estudiando español de España, por eso para mí, a mí me gusta sin *"vosotros".*		
P4	"…in Japan, at the Japanese university I learnt Spanish from Spain, so when I decided to study here in Mexico and I arrived here, I did not understand what Mexicans said". "…en Japón en la universidad japonesa yo aprendía español de España… castellano, por eso cuando decidí estudiar aquí en México y llegué aquí, no entendí lo que decían los mexicanos".		

4.3.5 Bad Words

The participants also mentioned that bad words are difficult to understand, for this reason this is another difficulty found. Participant 2 argued that in Mexican Spanish a lot of bad words exist when compared to Japanese in which there are not many. The use of these bad words, by Mexicans, made her not understand Mexicans' intentions. However, she now

can understand what they mean, especially when they are joking. She does not think any more that the use of bad words is really offensive at least in the situations she has been to, since she used to think it was offensive and even scary. Participant 3 expressed, without details, that Mexicans like to say bad words and make combination of words. Participant 4 stated that young people utilize a lot of bad words and sometimes she cannot understand yet what Mexicans say.

In this category, the strategy that participant 2 named is memorization, which is a direct strategy, followed by a memory strategy, reviewing well, and structured reviewing. In this case, this is the strategy she uses since she explicitly states that she memorizes the different meanings the words have. However, when she mentions the context, she implicitly means she keeps in mind the situations where the different meanings are used. Participants 3 and 4 did not mention their strategies.

	Example	**Strategy**	**Types of strategy**
P2	"In Mexican Spanish there are a lot of bad words, in Japanese there are not much bad words, for this reason it sounds strong for me… but when I arrived to Mexico I got scared because I thought it is very offensive". "Español de México hay un montón de groserías, en japonés no hay mucha grosería por eso para mí suena muy fuerte, por eso ya puedo entender mis amigos está bromeando, pero cuando llegué a México me asusté, pensé que es demasiado ofensivo".	"I have to memorize, it is complicated the words which have different meaning in context, although it is the same word it has different meaning and I have to memorize everything". "Tengo que memorizar, me cuesta las palabras tienen diferentes significados por contexto, aunque es misma palabra tiene diferente significado y tengo que memorizar todo".	1. Direct strategy. I.Memory strategies. C.Reviewing well. 1. Structured reviewing.

P3	"…Mexicans like bad words and make combinations of words." "Y también los mexicanos gustan groserías y hacer combinación de muchas palabras. Y objeto indirecto, sobre escribir es muy fácil pero hablar no".		
P4	"…Young people use a lot of bad words, that's why sometimes I do not understand". "…y también los jóvenes utilizan muchas groserías, por eso a veces no entiendo".		

4.3.6 Gender

The use of gender is also a language issue some participants find difficult. Participant 1 declared that sometimes she does not know when a word is feminine or masculine. Participant 2 stated that there are words which she knows they are feminine or masculine because she learnt them in formal lessons in her country. What participant 2 implicitly expressed here is that Spanish turns complicated because mostly the feminine words have an "a" ending, however, there are exceptions and it is when she finds difficult to look up those words in the dictionary every single time when she faces them in communication.

In order to face this difficulty, participant 2 mainly uses the dictionary to clarify if a word is feminine or masculine. According to Oxford (1990), the strategy utilized here is an indirect one, which leads to a metacognitive strategy, arranging and planning your learning, and finding out about language learning. Participant 1 did not state her strategy.

	Example	Strategy	Types of strategy
P1	"Sometimes I do not know the kind of word; if it is feminine or masculine, or if it is singular or plural because in Japanese it does not exist." "A veces no sé cuál es la palabra, es femenino y masculino y también singular y plural porque en japonés no existe".		
P2	"…there are some words that do not end with 'A' like (in Spanish) *'la foto'* and it is feminine and ends with 'O', I know that because I learnt that form in Japan but if there are other words I cannot imagine that every time I have to look for in the dictionary". "…hay algunas palabras que no terminan con 'A' como *'la foto'* y es femenino y termina con 'O', eso lo sé porque lo estudié en Japón pero si hay otras no puedo imaginar cada vez que tengo que buscar en diccionario".	"About gender is easy because I just search in the dictionary". "Sobre género es fácil, porque solo busco en diccionario".	1. Indirect strategy. I.Metacognitive strategies. B. Arranging and planning your learning. 1. Finding out about language learning.

4.3.7 Language in Use (in specific contexts)

In this category, two participants mentioned that during the process of learning Spanish, mainly when interacting in specific communication events, it has been difficult to understand what people are saying. For example, participant 3 declared that he went to the doctor and he did not understand what the doctor was communicating. He also said that when he arrived at the airport, he did not understand when the security guard asked for a tip. Another language issue the participant 3 expressed is making phone calls, since he does not understand what the speaker is saying. The participant 3 finishes his comment by stating that this difficulty deals principally with the words people use. Participant 4 argued that when she studied at the Faculty of Languages, talking to the students was easy because

they talked to her first. Nevertheless, she started to study at the faculty of economy and in addition to her difficulty to interact with her classmates there, it is hard to understand what teachers said because they use words related to economy.

In relation to the strategies and according to Oxford (1990), participant 4 mentioned two indirect strategies; one of them is a metacognitive strategy, followed by arranging and planning learning, and finding out about language learning. The second one is a social strategy, which leads to asking questions, and asking for clarification and verification, (1990). These strategies are observed since participant 4 looked up words in the dictionary even though she cannot find the specific words used in the economic context. When she does not find the economic vocabulary, she draws on her classmates' knowledge to solve the problem.

	Example	Strategy	Types of strategy
P3	"…when I went to the doctor, I did not understand. And when I arrived at the airport a security guard asked me something like "tip" and I did not understand, finally he said something like "pay me" so I understood. And I do not like calling by phone with Mexicans, seriously not, when I call to Uber sometimes I do not understand, with her (his girlfriend) yes, I understand, because I know the words she uses but other persons I do not know". "…cuando fui al médico, no entendía. Ah, y cuando llegué a México en aeropuerto de Ciudad de México un guardia me preguntó algo como *"propina"* y no entendía, por último me dijo como *"págame algo"* por eso entendí. Y llamar		

	con mexicanos no me gusta, en serio no, cuando llamo a Uber a veces no entiendo, con ella (su novia) sí, porque sé qué palabras ocupa pero otros, no sé".		
P4	"The last term I studied at the Faculty of Languages, and there are many students interested in Japanese culture but now, I study at Faculty of Economy and there are not many people as in the Faculty on Languages, when I studied at Faculty of languages, students came up and talked to me and I had to do nothing, but at the faculty of economy did not happen the same, for that reason I had to talk to my classmates and for me it was complicated. It is the difficulty". "...at the faculty of languages I took English classes that's why I know the words that teachers use, but at faculty of economy, teachers use words related to economy and I search in the dictionary but I do not find these words, so I had to ask to my classmates, in this way I think I improved my Spanish". "Yo estudiaba en la facultad de lenguas el semestre pasado y en esa facultad hay muchos estudiantes que interesa conocer la cultura japonesa, pero ahora estudio en la facultad de economía y no hay tantas personas como allá, y yo cuando estudiaba en la facultad de lenguas no tenía que hacer nada, solamente ellos se acercan a mí y me hablan, pero en la economía no pasó lo mismo por eso tuve que intentar hablar con los compañeros y eso me costó mucho. Creo que esa es la dificultad". "Y también ahora que estudio en la economía pero en Japón no, por eso todavía me cuesta mucho porque en la facultad de lenguas tomaba la carrera de	"…I search in the dictionary but I do not find these words, so I had to ask to my classmates, in this way I think I improved my Spanish". "…por eso yo busco pero no sale en el diccionario, entonces tenía que preguntar a mis compañeros y a través de eso creo que mejoré mi español".	1. Indirect strategy. I.Metacognitive strategies. B. Arranging and planning your learning. 1. Finding out about language learning. 1. Indirect strategy. III. Social strategy A. Asking questions. 1. Asking for clarification or verification

	inglés, por eso ya sé las palabras que dicen los profesores, pero allá en la economía los profesores usan más las palabras específicas a economía, por eso yo busco pero no sale en el diccionario, entonces tenía que preguntar a mis compañeros y a través de eso creo que mejoré mi español".		

4.3.8 Talking to Older People

The next difficulty mentioned deals with talking to someone older than the participants. Since participants explicitly bring to light the confusion between *"tú"* and *"usted"* whose usage depends on the distance between speakers, they also refer to the level of formality and deference. Participant 1 stated that when she talks with her friends, communication is not complicated, but when she talks with her friend's mom it is hard to understand. She considers that it happens maybe because her friend's mom is an adult and uses different words. Participant 2 declared that she gets confused with the pronoun "you". She does not know if it is formal or informal because in Japan the age is so important when referring to others. And participant 3 claimed that he cannot identify how to talk with people who are older. Even though participant 3 may refer to a variety of factors when talking to older people, it is assumed that he also implies the use of pronouns and the level of deference.

With respect to the strategies participants 1, 2 and 3 commented, they deal with an indirect strategy, which leads to social strategy, asking questions, and asking for clarification or verification (Oxford, 1990). These are the strategies they use since participant 1 asks questions when she does not understand when talking to her friend's mom. Participant 2 because if she does not understand, she asks her Japanese friends, and participant 3 always tries to ask and requests a repetition.

	Example	Strategy	Types of strategy
P1	"In Spanish there is a formal way of "you" and informal, in Japanese too but it is different". "En español hay una forma de usted y tú que son diferentes, en japonés también hay pero es diferente".	"I always ask, when I speak with my friends it is not complicated, they talk to me slowly and clearly. I live with a Mexican family and I understand what my friend says but it is complicated to understand what (her) mom says, maybe because she is older and my friend is the same age as I, and her mom uses different words and it is difficult, for this reason I always ask *'what is this?* "Siempre pregunto, cuando hablo con mis amigos no me cuesta trabajo y me hablan lentamente y claramente. Ahorita vivo con una familia mexicana y entiendo lo que dice mi amiga pero me cuesta mucho trabajo entender lo que mamá me dice, tal vez es porque es mayor y mi amiga tiene misma edad que yo y mamá usa palabras diferentes y me cuesta mucho trabajo, por eso siempre pregunto *'¿eso qué es?"*	1. Indirect strategy. III. Social strategy A. Asking questions. 1. Asking for clarification or verification
P2	"When we talk with my friends or students same age, we use 'you' (tú) but in Japan the age is very important, for this reason I have to say 'you' but formal. "Cuando hablamos con mis amigos o los alumnos casi misma edad, usamos *'tú'* pero en Japón la edad es muy importante por eso a veces tengo que decir *usted* pero más formal que usted aunque mi amigo o mi amiga es solo un año mayor que yo siempre me confundo si es tú o usted".	"…for me, the variety of Spanish is very interesting. If I cannot understand, I ask to my Japanese friends" "…para mí es muy interesante la variedad de español. Si no puedo entender pregunto a mis amigos japoneses."	1. Indirect strategy. III. Social strategy A. Asking questions. 1. Asking for clarification or verification

P3	"I still cannot distinguish how to talk to people when they are older". "Aún no puedo detectar cómo hablar con la gente cuando tiene más edad".	"… I always try to ask, I demand to people to say what they are saying, again" "… siempre intento preguntar, pido que otra vez lo digan."	1. Indirect strategy. III. Social strategy A. Asking questions. 2. Asking for clarification or verification

4.3.9 Colloquial Expressions/Language

Two participants mentioned that colloquial expressions and colloquial language is a difficulty. The participant 1 said that they do not learn colloquial expressions in context. Therefore, she lacks familiarity with this kind of language. Likewise, participant 4 mentioned as a difficulty some typical words (such as *'no manches, qué onda'*, etc"), that is, colloquial language.

The strategies named by participant 4 are three. First, she uses a direct strategy, and then a cognitive, creating structure for input and output, and taking notes. Second, a direct strategy too, but followed by memory, practicing, formally practicing with sounds and writing systems, and practicing naturalistically. And third, indirect strategy, social, empathizing with others, and developing cultural understanding (Oxford, 1990). The first regards taking notes to understand better when she listens to colloquial phrases. The second deals with watching movies, at the beginning with subtitles and after without them. Talking about practicing naturalistically, this is the strategy she utilizes due to her willingness to practice the colloquial language her friends use, that is, when she tried to say *'qué onda'* to her friends. And the third one, indirect strategy, is supported by talking to others to know about culture.

	Example	Strategy	Types of strategy
P1	“Colloquial expressions are not familiar to me, for example ‘qué onda’ / what’s up’ because we do not learn it in context”. “Las expresiones coloquiales no son familiares para mí por ejemplo ‘qué onda’ porque no los aprendemos en contexto”.		

P4	"I had to try talking to the classmates and it was difficult. I think it is the difficulty, and the typical Mexican words "…tuve que intentar hablar con los compañeros y eso me costó mucho. Creo que esa es la dificultad, y las palabras típicas de México *'no manches, qué onda'*, etc".	"When I listen to colloquial phrases for the first time, I write those phrases with their meaning, and in this way I understand, so I tried to say *'que onda'* to my friends. "I have a TV in my room, so in my free time I watch movies in Spanish without subtitles, at the beginning with subtitles but now not any more. When I was in Japan, I studied but not much, I just did my homework and spoke in class, here in Mexico I have to speak to communicate, to know about culture, that's why I just speak". "Cuando escucho las frases coloquiales la primera vez, también yo anoto esas frases con significado y creo que a través estas frases entiendo más, por eso intentaba decir *'qué onda'* a mis amigos". "Yo tengo un televisor en mi cuarto, por eso cuando estoy libre veo unas películas en español sin subtítulo, al principio con subtitulo, pero ahora ya no. Cuando estaba en Japón, estudiaba pero no tanto, solamente hacía las tareas y hablaba en la clase, aquí en México tengo que hablar para comunicar, saber la cultura, por eso hablo solamente".	1.Direct strategy. II. Cognitive strategies. D.Creating structure for input and output. 1. Taking notes 1.Direct strategy I.Memory strategies A.Practicing 2.Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems 5. Practicing naturalistically 1.Indirect strategy III.Social strategies C. Empathizing with others 1. Developing cultural understanding

4.3.10 Accent and Intonation

It was found that for participant 4 the accent and intonation is a difficulty. She pointed out that Mexicans speak like singing and that there is a variety of intonations and accents which are difficult to understand for her unless she is involved in them and

practices them. That is, the more she gets accustomed to a variety of language, the better she understands and the more she knows about it, for instance, the accent from Puebla.

Regarding the strategy she used to face this difficulty, she used an indirect strategy, social, asking questions, and asking for clarification and verification (Oxford, 1990) as a result of asking questions to her roommate whose accent was northern. The participant states that when she started living with her northern roommate, she used to ask her questions because she did not understand her accent.

	Example	Strategy	Types of strategy
P4	"Mexicans speak like singing […] but I lived with a boy from the north of Mexico and he had a strong accent, it depends of the area of Mexico, intonation and accent changes, right? I already got used to hearing what people of Puebla say but I do not with people from the north". "siento que ustedes los mexicanos hablan como cantar […] pero yo vivía con un chico del norte de México y él tenía acento muy fuerte, depende de la zona de México, la entonación y acento cambia ¿verdad? Ya me acostumbré escuchar lo que dicen los poblanos pero las personas del norte no tanto"	"…when I was living with the boy from the north of Mexico, at the beginning I did not understand anything, but I was living with him, so I had to understand what he was saying, that's why I had to ask: "what does it mean?, what are you talking about?". "…cuando vivía con el chico del norte, al principio no entendí nada pero vivía con él, por eso tenía que entender lo que decía por eso muchas veces preguntaba*: ¿Qué significa eso? ¿De qué hablas?* Y poco a poco".	1.Indirect strategy. III.Social strategy A. Asking questions. 1. Asking for clarification or verification

4.4 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter presented the categorization of the data analysis. Based on the research questions, the difficulties that students of Spanish as a foreign language have were

depicted. The strategies students used to improve those difficulties were analyzed according to Oxford's (1990) theory. The conclusions of this research will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter V

Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, the main findings of this research will be developed. In order to show that the objectives of the thesis were achieved, the answers of the research questions are presented attached to the main findings. Next, a brief summary of the findings will be presented followed by the implications of the research. After that, a reflective account about the process of writing this paper will be included. Furthermore, the limitations of the study are stated and finally the suggestions for further research.

5.2 Main Findings

The purpose of this research was to explore what the main difficulties of learning Spanish as a foreign language are, and at the same time, what learning strategies learners implemented to solve their difficulties. In this case, this paper presents the difficulties and learning strategies of Japanese students who learn Spanish as part of an academic exchange. According to the results obtained, the students' difficulties and strategies when learning Spanish are the following below.

The main difficulties are:

1.- Fast Native Mexican Speaking	It was reported that native speakers speak very fast. For this reason, students of Spanish face complications when talking to their classmates or teachers, or they cannot understand when they are speaking with two or more native speakers at the same time.
2. - Verb conjugation.	It was stated that in Spanish there are a lot of conjugations and personal pronouns. For this reason, conjugation is difficult because learners sometimes do not know the verbs inflection that they must use to refer to some people. In addition, it is difficult to memorize each verb conjugation.
3. - Vocabulary.	It was revealed that vocabulary is a difficulty when there are

	unknown words. If so, students have to search them in a dictionary. Vocabulary is also a difficulty because sometimes when they listen to a word they do not know, they cannot write it. In addition, it was mentioned that there exist different words with same meaning and sometimes they do not know the most common word to be used in Mexico.
4.-Previously Learned Spanish; Spanish from Spain.	It was reported that in some students' country they learnt Spanish from Spain, and when they arrived in Mexico they did not understand Mexican Spanish; as a result, they got confused with some phrases.
5. - Bad words.	It was mentioned that bad words are difficult to understand because in Mexican Spanish a lot of bad words exist. For this reason, students do not understand what people say or do not understand Mexicans' intentions.
6. - Gender.	In this case, gender was found as a difficulty because sometimes students do not know when a word is feminine or masculine. They learnt in their country that mostly the words which end in "a" are feminine but there are exceptions. For this reason, Spanish turns complicated.
7. - Language in use (in specific contexts).	This difficulty was mentioned because when students are in different and specific situations. They have problems when communication occurs because they do not understand what people say; situations like in a doctor appointment, at the airport, calling on the phone, and at the school. Interaction in these contexts is difficult because they did not understand what people say.
8. - Talking to older people.	It was mentioned that this difficulty occurred because students got confused between *"tú"* and *"usted"*. They do not know if the pronoun "you" is formal or informal. In this case, participants present difficulties when speaking to older people than them.
9. - Colloquial expressions/ language.	In this category, it was said that in students' lessons they do not learn colloquial expressions in context. Therefore, they are not familiar with this kind of language. For this reason, Spanish is a difficulty.
10. - Accent and intonation.	It is named as a difficulty because students say Mexicans speak like singing and the variety of accents and intonations is difficult to understand.

The main strategies are:

Direct Strategies	Indirect strategies
Taking notes. According to Oxford (1990), it is a direct strategy from the group of cognitive strategies. And a subgroup, Creating structure for input and output. Taking notes.	**Asking natives and friends.** This is an indirect strategy. From the group of Affective strategies. And a subgroup, Asking questions. Asking for clarification or verification.

Watching movies. Direct Strategy. From the group of Memory Strategies. And a subgroup, Applying images and sounds. Representing sounds in memory.	**Talking to friends/classmates/natives**. Indirect strategy. From the group of Social strategies. And a subgroup, Cooperating with others. Cooperating with peers/cooperating with proficient users of the new language. Indirect strategy. Arranging and planning your learning. Seeking practice opportunities
Memorize. Direct strategy. From the group of Memory strategies. And a subgroup, Reviewing well. Structured reviewing. A subgroup, Employing action. Using mechanical techniques. A subgroup, Practicing. Repeating.	**Search in dictionary/ investigate.** Indirect strategy. From the group of Metacognitive strategies. And a subgroup, Arranging and planning your learning. Finding out about language learning.
Listening to the radio. Direct strategy. From the group of Memory strategies. And a subgroup, Practicing. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems.	
Listening to music while reading lyrics. Direct strategy. From the group of Memory strategies. And a subgroup, Employing action. Using mechanical techniques. Direct strategy. From the group of Memory strategies. And a subgroup, Practicing. Formally practicing with sounds and writing systems	

5.3 Summary of the Findings

As it can be seen, the charts above show the principal difficulties the participants have when learning Spanish. These were: fast native speaking, conjugation, vocabulary, previously learned Spanish (Spanish from Spain), bad words, gender, language used in specific contexts, talking to older people, colloquial language, and finally the accent and intonation. Therefore, to face these difficulties, students implemented the use of learning strategies which were: taking notes, asking natives and friends; talking to friends, classmates or natives; watching movies, search in dictionary or investigate, memorize,

listening to the radio and listening to music. This analysis is supported by Oxford (1990) theory about language learning strategies, which states the existence of a diagram to categorize the strategies into groups and subgroups. In general, there are direct and indirect strategies. The direct strategies are subdivided into memory strategies, cognitive strategies and compensation strategies. Within the indirect strategies, they are subdivided into metacognitive strategies, affective strategies and social strategies. The participants of the study used the strategies mentioned above to face and improve their difficulties regarding learning Spanish. Thus, this research suggests that there are different ways to improve foreign language learning issues. This also suggests teachers and students to be aware of these phenomena in order to experience a better Spanish learning.

5.4 Implications

Even though this study does not show why Japanese learn Spanish, it displays the fact that Spanish has become a Japanese interest. Therefore, doing research of learning Spanish by Asians, Japanese in this project, is worth it.

This investigation sheds light on the difficulties Japanese students face when learning Spanish. So, this permits to know that Spanish is not an easy task for them. Different strategies have to be applied, from social to cognitive, to successfully learn Spanish. Thus, this research project helps to understand how students of Spanish as a Second Language improve the difficulties they can present during the process of learning. In addition, it is important to mention that with this study teachers can help their students by implementing Learning Strategies in the classroom and make their lessons enjoyable, at the same time learning can be easier and more significant.

5.5 Reflective Account

This section of the thesis deals with my experience during the realization of this project. It will be briefly developed different aspects such as the beginning of the research, the development and advances, and my personal opinion.

At the beginning of the project, for me, it was difficult the selection of the topic. I wanted to talk about errors or difficulties from learners of Spanish as a Second Language, but I finally decided to talk about the difficulties when learning Spanish as a Second Language and the Strategies learners use to face their difficulties. Once I had a clear objective, I knew it was the first step to start this significant process. Another difficulty was the process of looking for topics and information related to mine, at the moment of writing the literature review; even it was interesting, it was a little difficult when I was looking for authors and themes related to Learning Strategies and Spanish as Second Language. Then, it was the moment to look for participants and it was when I decided to work with learners from Japan. Writing the instrument was easy, the design of a semi structured interview did not take much time, after that, applying the instrument was a good experience because it was when I could meet the participants. Even though at the beginning they were shy, and they just talked with certain people, they were interviewed and finally it was good to meet new people and to know a little about their experiences and thoughts about Mexico and the people.

Besides, analyzing all the data collected was also a little difficult because of the transcription and the organization of all the results. At the end, the results were classified into the main difficulties and the strategies were classified into the different groups and subgroups mentioned in this paper.

During the time doing this research I realized the importance of Language Learning Strategies. Before starting this research and learning all the knowledge acquired along the process of my writing thesis, especially when I was studying university, I did not know exactly how to make my learning more significant, now I realize that I employed plans to remember and apply my new learning and solve some difficulties and today I confirm that I unconsciously used Language Learning Strategies. The experience, since I started this paper, has been very significant as student and a teacher because now I have clear ideas about how to make learning easier and meaningful. At the same time, it is a help to improve lessons and support language learners to face difficulties when learning a second language. It is also important to say that after all I have mentioned before, and all the experiences I have lived along this process, my perception about investigation and writing a thesis is different. It is really clear, now I realize the importance of knowing how to do research.

5.6 Limitations of the Research

The limitations found during the process of this project were the following. First of all, the number of participants. That is, even though 4 participants are highly valuable, more participants would have been better. One disadvantage was the fact that not all the foreign students who came to the University, in this case Japanese, took courses of Spanish for Foreigners. In second place, although the participants were in intermediate level, they just talked with certain people, or the people they have met since they started their academic exchange. For this reason, by the moment to interview them, it turned a little complicated. And in third place, the participants mentioned difficulties (for example, word order, direct object and greetings or ways to say hello) which cannot be included in this research because there was not enough information, or they did not mention a specific learning

strategy. Therefore, more data would be needed to improve this research. Now, suggestions for further research are mentioned in the next section.

5.7 Suggestion for Further Research

The main suggestion for further research is to look for more participants and try to get more information to obtain specific answers. Another suggestion is to explore during more time the impact in their learning. That is to say, working with them for a longer period of time and notice their progress implementing learning strategies in the classroom and in their daily life. As mentioned above, learning Spanish has become an interest in the Japanese context; therefore, it would be significant to include cultural difficulties or matters in further research.

List of References

Ayuni Putri, L. (2013). Communication Strategies in English as a Second Language (ESL) Context. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies, 4*(1), 129-133. Retrieved from http://www.journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/alls/article/view/75/71

Chamot, A., Barnhardt, S., Beard El-Dinary, P., & Robbins, J. (1999). *The learning strategies handbook*. White Plains, N.Y: Longman.

Council of Europe (2001). Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching and Assessment. Strasbourg.

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. CA: Sage.

Crystal, D. (2008). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (6th Ed.). Blackwell Publishing.

Feng, Y., & Iriarte, F. (2018). Estrategias de aprendizaje que utilizan los estudiantes chinos que aprenden español como lengua extranjera. *Marco ELE. Revista De Didáctica ELE, ISSN 1885-2211*(27), 1-14.

Gass, S. M., & Selinker, L. (2008). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course* (3rd Ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

González Freire, J. *Ser profesor de español en México: Oportunidades y retos*. Centro Virtual Cervantes. Retrieved from https://cvc.cervantes.es/ensenanza/biblioteca_ele/asele/pdf/19/19_0517.pdf

Guzmán, A., Albela, E., Nieto, D., Ferrer, J., & Santos, R. (2006). English language learning difficulty of Korean students in a Philippine Multidisciplinary University. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 7*(2), 152-161. Doi: 10.1007/bf03031539

Johnson, K., & Johnson, H. (1998). *Encyclopedic dictionary of applied linguistics: A handbook for language teaching*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Kasper, G., & Kellerman, E. (Eds.). (1997). *Communication Strategies. Psycholinguistic and Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

Kocaman, O. (2017). Factors impeding the learning of a second language in Spanish school system: Valladolid University Sample. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 13(2), 578-592.

Lafford, B. (2000). Spanish Applied Linguistics in the Twentieth Century: A Retrospective and Bibliography (1900-99). *Hispania*, *83*(4), 711-732. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/346443

Macaro, E. (2001). *Learning Strategies in Foreign and Second Language Classrooms*. London: Continuum International Pub. Group.

Nunan, D. (1992). *Research Methods in Language Learning*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

O'Malley, J., & Uhl Chamot, A. (1990). *Learning Strategies in Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies. What Every Teacher Should Know.* Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Quintero Corzo, J., & Mejía Delgado, N. (2010). El español junto a otras culturas, otros colores y otras lenguas.*Universitas Humanística,* (70), 57-75.

Richards, J. C & Platt, J. & Platt, H. (1992). *Dictionary of language teaching and applied linguistics.* (2nd. Edition). London: Longman.

Rojas Saavedra, J. (2014). Enseñanza-aprendizaje del español en Venezuela, Estados Unidos, Canadá y Brasil.*Educere, 18* (61), 495-516.

Saville-Troike, M. (2006). *Introducing Second Language Acquisition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shaw Findlay, M. (1998). *Language and Communication a Cross-Cultural encyclopedia* (p. P.33). California: ABC-Clio.

Appendix A

Instrument

Entrevista para estudiantes de español como lengua extranjera

El propósito de esta entrevista es descubrir cuáles son las principales dificultades que los estudiantes de español como lengua extranjera enfrentan durante el proceso de aprendizaje y qué estrategias de aprendizaje implementan para resolver dichas dificultades. Antes de iniciar con las preguntas principales, es necesario saber un poco sobre su información personal.

Información personal

¿Cuántos años tienes?

¿De dónde vienes?

¿Qué estudias?

¿Cuándo fue la primera vez que tuviste contacto con el idioma?

Preguntas principales

¿Por qué es importante aprender español como lengua extranjera?

¿Has tenido dificultades al aprender español como lengua extranjera?

¿Consideras que existen dificultades lingüísticas y culturales cuando se aprende español? Menciona un ejemplo.

En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades culturales has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades lingüísticas has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

Appendix B

Interviews

Interview 1

Tomoko Yamashita

Japón

21 años

Sociolingüística del español

¿Cuándo fue la primera vez que tuviste contacto con el idioma?

Cuando era estudiante de prepa, tenía un amigo mexicano por línea y hablaba pero no sabía, yo no sabía español, por eso hablaba en inglés, hace como 4 o 5 años.

1.- ¿Por qué es importante aprender español como lengua extranjera?

En mi opinión el español es un idioma que en muchos países se habla, español es muy útil para mí porque antes hablaba inglés pero ahora hablo español y ahora puedo decir que el idioma extranjero que yo hablo es español y no inglés.

2.- ¿Has tenido dificultades al aprender español como lengua extranjera?

Sí, gramaticalmente y cuando hablo con los nativos me hablan muy rápido y a veces me cuesta trabajo entenderlo.

3.- ¿Consideras que existen dificultades lingüísticas y culturales cuando se aprende español? Menciona un ejemplo.

Sí, por ejemplo en Japón mucha gente se pone *"mask"*, cubre la boca, cubre bocas pero en Japón es muy normal pero aquí en México no es normal, es raro.

La pronunciación de *L y R*, por ejemplo 'loro'. La conjugación del verbo, los artículos *'el, la, los, las'* porque en japonés no los tenemos, sabía inglés y español tiene algunos vocabularios comunes con inglés por eso no me cuesta tanto trabajo. Las expresiones coloquiales no son familiares para mí por ejemplo 'qué onda' porque no los aprendemos en contexto.

4.- En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades lingüísticas has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

Los artículos y a veces no sé cuál es la palabra, es femenino y masculino y también singular y plural porque en japonés no existe. Cuando escucho una palabra que no conozco, no puedo escribir.

5.- ¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

Aun no puedo distinguir cuando escucho, pero cuando pronuncio yo doy énfasis L o R. cuando encuentro las palabras que no conozco siempre tomo nota.

Cuando vivía en Japón no tenía tantas oportunidades de hablar con los nativos y cuando hablamos los japoneses en español hablamos muy lento por eso empecé a escuchar radio en español para que me acostumbre en la velocidad.

Cuando aprendía inglés y cuando encontraba unas dificultades no hacía nada y empecé a entender mal y eso no quiero en español, por eso cuando encuentro las palabras que no conozco siempre pregunto a los nativos si es femenino o masculino, singular plural y cómo se usa en oración.

Cuando escucho la música en español es muy rápido y recojo algunas palabras pero no todo, sobre todo preposición por eso cuando escucho la música veo letras y escucho, leo y escucho. Hablar con los nativos, mi estancia es solo de un año por eso quiero aprovechar.

6.- En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades culturales has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

Los japoneses no nos tocamos cuando saludamos y no nos besamos, en Japón es muy importante mantener la distancia aunque somos muy buenos amigos, pero aquí así no es. **(¿Y en la comunicación?)** En español hay una forma de usted y tú que son diferentes, en japonés también hay pero es diferente. **(¿Algún otro ejemplo?)** No, porque antes de venir a México, tomaba un curso para acostumbrarme en México, por ejemplo, ahí me enseñaban cómo saludar y cómo piensan los mexicanos, por eso cuando llegué a México ya sabía que los mexicanos se saludan así, por eso no me sorprendí. El español que aprendemos en Japón es de España y cuando fui a la facultad por primera vez, dije *'gracias'* y me dijeron *'no hay de qué'* y no entendí, porque solo sabía '*de nada'* y me explicaron.

Mi amigo mexicano me dijo que los japoneses no decimos la verdad pero si yo tengo un problema no lo voy a decir, solo si somos muy buenas amigas, porque no se ve bien que yo diga que tengo un problema muy personal, por eso yo digo *'todo bien'*, pero a él, a mi amigo le parece muy extraño.

7.- ¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

Siempre pregunto, cuando hablo con mis amigos no me cuesta trabajo y me hablan lentamente y claramente. Ahorita vivo con una familia mexicana y entiendo lo que dice mi amiga pero me cuesta mucho trabajo entender lo que mamá me dice, tal vez es porque es mayor y mi amiga tiene misma edad que yo y mamá usa palabras diferentes y me cuesta mucho trabajo, por eso siempre pregunto *'¿eso qué es?'*

Interview 2

Yuri Sakaguchi

Japón

21 años

Español/ Español y enseñanza del inglés

¿Cuándo fue la primera vez que tuviste contacto con el idioma?

Cuando entré a la universidad, cuando tenía 19 años.

1.- ¿Por qué es importante aprender español como lengua extranjera?

A mí me gusta estudiar lengua extranjera y en secundaria y prepa ya aprendí inglés, por eso quería estudiar otro idioma y si puedo hablar español puedo viajar a España y casi todos los países de Latinoamérica, por eso para mí, español es un idioma muy útil, por eso lo elegí, en mi universidad hay 5 carreras, inglés, chino, francés, alemán, y español y para mi español es el más atractivo.

2.- ¿Has tenido dificultades al aprender español como lengua extranjera?

Sí, hay muchas dificultades para mí, por ejemplo sobre la pronunciación no puedo distinguir *R y L*, para mí suena igual. Además en español hay muchísimas conjugaciones; *'yo, tú, él, nosotros'* y además cuando estaba en Japón estudiaba español de España y había *'vosotros'* y memorizar las conjugaciones es difícil.

3.- ¿Consideras que existen dificultades lingüísticas y culturales cuando se aprende español? Menciona un ejemplo.

Hay muchas dificultades lingüísticas como ya te dije, pero sobre cultura para mí no me cuesta. Pero lingüística, el español está usado en muchos países por eso hay muchas variedades de español y yo estudiaba español de España en Japón por eso cuando llegué a México no pude entender bien el español de México, también cuando fui a Cuba, el español de Cuba es totalmente diferente, en gramática es igual pero en pronunciación y entonación es diferente.

4.- En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades lingüísticas has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

Desde que estaba en Japón no pude distinguir la pronuncia entre L y R, ahora tampoco puedo distinguir aunque a estoy acá más de medio año.

Cuando estudiaba español en Japón, los maestros hispanohablantes creo que nos hablaba un poco despacio pero ahora meto algunas clases con los mexicanos, y los alumnos y los maestros hablan muy rápido por eso me cuesta seguir lo que ellos dicen. Salen muchísimos vocabularios que yo no entiendo y cada vez busco en diccionario pero mientras busco en diccionario sale otra palabra que no entiendo y a veces no puedo distinguir cómo escribir en alfabeto, si '*R, o L, C, S, o Z'*. **(¿Algún otro ejemplo?)** Casi las palabras españolas que terminan con 'O' es masculino y si termina con 'A' femenina, estudiaba en Japón así, pero hay algunas palabras que no terminan con 'A' como *'la foto'* y es femenino y termina con 'O', eso lo sé porque lo estudié en Japón pero si hay otras no puedo imaginar cada vez que tengo que buscar en diccionario.

Y cuando traducimos de una lengua a otra lengua, si traducimos muy directo suena muy raro, por eso cuando quiero decir algo, primero pienso en Japonés y traduzco a español, pero a veces a los mexicanos, a los hispanohablantes, suena muy raro y no me entienden, en español hay otra manera mejor para expresar mi emoción pero yo no la sé, por eso tardo mucho tiempo para explicar, si mis amigos me entienden, me explican y puedo entender.

5.- ¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

A veces pregunto a mis amigos mexicanos y ellos me explican y puedo entender, pero a veces no puedo entender y si están mis amigos japoneses yo pido ayuda a ellos y me explican en japonés.

Sobre género es fácil, porque solo busco en diccionario pero el tiempo verbal es más difícil y mi amiga japonesa le gusta estudiar gramática y cuando tengo un problema sobre gramática o lingüística normalmente pregunto a ella y ella me contesta y soluciono, pero también tengo un amigo mexicano que enseña español a los japoneses en UDLAP y él también entiende los problemas que yo tengo, por eso él me explica muy bien y puedo entender porque estudiaba japonés en Japón y ya sabe la diferencia entre japonés y español.

La manera que uso más, es hablar con mis amigos pero también veo las películas con subtitulo en español, a veces veo película en español y con subtitulo en español, pero a veces veo película japonesa con subtitulo en español por eso puedo entender una frase japonesa como se traduce a español y puedo entender. Vivo con una japonesa, cuando estoy con ella, siempre hablamos en japonés por eso para mejorar nuestra español vemos película en español.

6.- En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades culturales has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

Para mí, la diferencia de cultura es interesante pero normalmente se dice que los japoneses son puntuales, cuando estoy en Japón de hecho no soy puntual mucho pero creo que los mexicanos son más impuntual que los japoneses, eso creo que es diferencia de cultura por eso ni modo pero yo tuve que acostumbrar. Español de México hay un montón de groserías, en japonés no hay mucha grosería por eso para mí suena muy fuerte, por eso ya puedo entender mis amigos está bromeando, pero cuando llegué a México me asusté, pensé que es demasiado ofensivo.

Cuando hablamos con mis amigos o los alumnos casi misma edad, usamos *'tú'* pero en Japón la edad es muy importante por eso a veces tengo que decir *usted* pero más formal que usted aunque mi amigo o mi amiga es solo un año mayor que yo siempre me confundo si es tú o usted.

7.- ¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

Ya estoy acá más de medio año por eso sé si mis amigos dicen (groserías) puede entender ellos son amigos real.

Tengo que memorizar, me cuesta las palabras tienen diferentes significados por contexto, aunque es misma palabra tiene diferente significado y tengo que memorizar todo.

Había muchas palabras que no pude entender en la primera vez español mexicano, como *'qué onda' 'chido'*, no pude entender pero una vez escucho el significado y ya puedo entender, por eso no era tan difícil y yo estudio español y me gusta español, por eso para mí es muy interesante la variedad de español. Si no puedo entender pregunto a mis amigos japoneses.

Interview 3

Taiki

Japón

20 años

Español

¿Cuándo fue la primera vez que tuviste contacto con el idioma?

Desde entrar a la universidad, hace dos años

1.- ¿Por qué es importante aprender español como lengua extranjera?

A mí me gusta hablar con muchas personas, para mi es importante conectar con muchas personas aunque son de otro país y en Japón ahorita se necesita.

2.- ¿Has tenido dificultades para aprender español como lengua extranjera?

Todos los días, sobre todo en México yo he tenido mala experiencia, a veces me dijeron *"no te entiendo"* y me hizo sufrir. Para mí lo más difícil de aprender español es la cantidad de palabras y entender lo que dicen, por ejemplo yo puedo entender cara a cara pero cuando hablo con más de dos mexicanos no puedo entender porque los mexicanos hablan muy rápido para mí. Por eso entender y memorizar las palabras. (Es lo más difícil).

3.- ¿Consideras que existen dificultades lingüísticas y culturales cuando se aprende español? Menciona un ejemplo.

Lingüísticas, culturales no porque yo estudiaba sobre México. Lingüísticas como eso en japonés gramaticalmente, primero sujeto y siguiente objeto, último verbo, pero en español no, primero sujeto, verbo, objeto; para mí un poco difícil así, solo eso y en serio la cantidad de palabras.

4.- En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades lingüísticas has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

Conjugación, en México significado de algunas frases. Yo estaba estudiando español de España, por eso para mí, a mí me gusta sin *"vosotros"*. Y también los mexicanos gustan groserías y hacer combinación de muchas palabras. Y objeto indirecto, sobre escribir es muy fácil pero hablar no.

5.- ¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

Sobre conjugación, necesito memorizar, solo lo que puedo hacer es memorizar. Tomar notas y solo investigar en diccionario.

6.- En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades culturales has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

Casi no pero para mí, groserías, pero también en mi universidad había unos mexicanos y siempre yo hablaba con mexicanos.

Aún no puedo detectar cómo hablar con la gente cuando tiene más edad. También cuando fui al médico, no entendía. Ah, y cuando llegué a México en aeropuerto de Ciudad de

México un guardia me preguntó algo como *"propina"* y no entendía, por último me dijo como *"págame algo"* por eso entendí. Y llamar con mexicanos no me gusta, en serio no, cuando llamo a Uber a veces no entiendo, con ella (su novia) sí, porque sé qué palabras ocupa pero otros, no sé.

7.- ¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

Después de que yo regrese a mi casa, lo que yo puedo hacer es investigar significado, y siempre intento preguntar, pido que otra vez lo digan. Lo que necesito hacer más es memorizar muchas palabras, solo eso. Venir a Facultad de Lenguas es también un tipo de mejorar español, tal vez.

Interview 4

Kana Teda

Japón

21 años

Economía

¿Cuándo fue la primera vez que tuviste contacto con el idioma?

Hace tres años más o menos, cuando entré a la universidad japonesa.

1.- ¿Por qué es importante aprender español como lengua extranjera?

Para mí porque a mí me interesa mucho aprender otras idiomas, inglés español, y otras más y español es muy importante porque ahora en México hay muchas empresas japonesas, especialmente empresas de autos, por eso pensé que sería muy útil cuando trabajo aquí en México o en Japón también.

2.- ¿Has tenido dificultades al aprender español como lengua extranjera?

Sí, pues hay muchas dificultades, por ejemplo en Japón en la universidad japonesa yo aprendía español de España… castellano, por eso cuando decidí estudiar aquí en México y llegué aquí, no entendí lo que decían los mexicanos, porque español de México y castellano son muy distintos.

3.- **¿Consideras que existen dificultades lingüísticas y culturales cuando se aprende español? Menciona un ejemplo.**

Sí, porque español tiene muchas variedades y to cuando fui a Perú y Cuba no entendí, por eso el problema es que japonés y otras idiomas no tiene tantas variedades como español. Y también las palabras españolas son muy parecidas a las de inglés, por eso a veces confundí inglés y español.

Cultural, por ejemplo, en la clase nosotros japoneses solamente escuchamos lo que dice el profe pero aquí los compañeros hablan mucho por eso me sorprendí al principio.

4.- En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades lingüísticas has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

Por ejemplo, al principio me costó mucho la gramática, la estructura de español porque en japonés la oración empieza: sustantivo, objetivo y verbo; pero en español: sustantivo, verbo y objeto; por eso me costó mucho, todavía me cuesta y al escuchar siento que ustedes los mexicanos hablan muy rápido, y también los jóvenes utilizan muchas groserías, por eso a veces no entiendo. **(¿Algún otro ejemplo?)** Conjugación es muy difícil, porque hay tantas conjugaciones, por eso cuando hablo con los mayores tengo que utilizar verbo de usted… conjugación de usted, y cuando estoy con muchas personas tengo utilizar conjugación de ustedes pero lo bueno es que en México no existe *'vosotros'.*

Y también, por ejemplo cuando estaba en Japón utilizaba la palabra *ordenador* pero aquí ustedes usan computadora, y también muchas palabras que tienen mismo significado *'auto, coche, carro'.*

Y siento que ustedes los mexicanos hablan como cantar, por eso todavía me hace fácil entender mucho más que los cubanos, los argentinos y los españoles, pero yo vivía con un chico del norte de México y él tenía acento muy fuerte, depende de la zona de México, la entonación y acento cambia ¿verdad? Ya me acostumbré escuchar lo que dicen los poblanos pero las personas del norte no tanto.

5.- ¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

A través de acostumbrar… acostumbrarse, porque cuando vivía con el chico del norte, al principio no entendí nada pero vivía con él, por eso tenía que entender lo que decía por eso muchas veces preguntaba*: ¿Qué significa eso? ¿De qué hablas?* Y poco a poco. Y también yo tengo un diccionario… una aplicación de diccionario en mi celular, por eso cuando no entiendo, cuando me dicen unas palabras que no entiendo, yo anoto y cuando regreso a casa reviso todos los días, todavía hay muchas palabras que no entiendo pero poco a poco.

6.- En tu experiencia, ¿qué dificultades culturales has enfrentado como estudiante de español?

Yo estudiaba en la facultad de lenguas el semestre pasado y en esa facultad hay muchos estudiantes que interesa conocer la cultura japonesa, pero ahora estudio en la facultad de economía y no hay tantas personas como allá, y yo cuando estudiaba en la facultad de lenguas no tenía que hacer nada, solamente ellos se acercan a mí y me hablan, pero en la economía no pasó lo mismo por eso tuve que intentar hablar con los compañeros y eso me costó mucho. Creo que esa es la dificultad, y las palabras típicas de México *'no manches, qué onda'*, etc.

Mmm, *'ahorita',* pensé que ahorita significaba "ahora mismo", por eso cuando yo pregunto a un chico '' ¿cuándo vas a regresar a casa?" y él me contestó '*ahorita',* entonces yo pensé que ahora mismo pero todavía se quedaba. Entonces él me contestó; -"No, *ahorita*, en México significa, después de unos minutos". Pero todavía no entiendo el concepto de "ahorita".

También la primera vez que escuché *"qué onda"* no entendí nada, no entendí lo que mencionó, por eso pregunté a mis amigos *¿qué significa?* Y significa '*hola, que tal',* entonces ellos también me dijeron puedes usar esa frase también a los profesores, y yo el otro día cuando me encontré con mi profe dije *"hola profe, qué onda",* pero no es una frase

muy buena cuando estás con los mayores y los profesores y yo no lo sabía, por eso es difícil español.

Y también, en Japón no es común hablar viendo a sus ojos pero aquí sí, por eso a veces me dieron pena. Y saludar, nosotros solo decimos 'hola' pero ustedes besan, por eso también me costó porque ¿a quién puedo besar cuando saludo y a quién no? Todavía no. Por ejemplo, yo vivía en Camino Real y cerca de mi casa había una farmacia y en frente de farmacia un señor siempre cocinaba tacos o alguna comida mexicana, y yo conocí a él y saludaba cuando encontraba con él, pero mi amigo del norte un día me dijo que no es bueno saludar con la persona que conoces apenas. Pero todavía no entiendo a quién puedo y a quién no.

7.- ¿Cómo has solucionado esas dificultades?

Cuando escucho las frases coloquiales la primera vez, también yo anoto esas frases con significado y creo que a través estas frases entiendo más, por eso intentaba decir *'qué onda'* a mis amigos.

Yo tengo un televisor en mi cuarto, por eso cuando estoy libre veo unas películas en español sin subtítulo, al principio con subtitulo, pero ahora ya no. Cuando estaba en Japón, estudiaba pero no tanto, solamente hacía las tareas y hablaba en la clase, aquí en México tengo que hablar para comunicar, saber la cultura, por eso hablo solamente. Y también ahora que estudio en la economía pero en Japón no, por eso todavía me cuesta mucho porque en la facultad de lenguas tomaba la carrera de inglés, por eso ya sé las palabras que dicen los profesores, pero allá en la economía los profesores usan más las palabras específicas a economía, por eso yo busco pero no sale en el diccionario, entonces tenía que preguntar a mis compañeros y a través de eso creo que mejoré mi español.

Appendix C

Translation of interviews

Interview 1

Tomoko Yamashita

Japan

21 years old

Spanish sociolinguistics

When was the first time you were in touch with the language?

When I was in high school, I had a Mexican friend online and I talked but I did not know Spanish, that's why I talked in English, it was like 4 o 5 years ago.

1. - Why is it important learning Spanish as a foreign language?

In my opinion, Spanish is a language that is spoken in many countries, and for me, it is useful because before to learn Spanish, I learnt and I spoke English but now I speak Spanish, and I can say that the foreign language I speak is Spanish and it is not English.

2. - Have you had difficulties while learning Spanish as a foreign language?

Yes, grammatically and when I talk to natives, they speak very fast and it is complicated to understand.

3. - Do you consider that there are cultural and linguistic difficulties when learning Spanish? If so, can you give an example?

Yes, for example in Japan many people use "mask", and cover their mouth with a mask, but in Japan it is normal, here in Mexico is unusual.

The pronunciation of *L* and *R,* the conjugation of verbs, the articles, because in Japan we do not have them, I already knew English, and Spanish has some vocabulary in common with English, for this reason it is not so complicated for me. Colloquial expressions are not familiar to me, for example *'¡qué onda! /what's up!'* because we do not learn it in context.

4. - In your experience, what linguistics difficulties have you faced as a Spanish learner?

The articles, and sometimes I do not know the kind of word; if it is feminine or masculine or if it is singular or plural, because in Japan it does not exist. And when I listen to a word which I do not know, I cannot write it.

5. - Can you tell me how you solve these difficulties?

When listening, I still cannot distinguish (the words) but when I pronounce, I emphasize L or R. When I find the words which I do not know, I always take notes.

When I lived in Japan I did not have many opportunities to talk to native speakers of Spanish, and when we Japanese speak in Spanish, we speak very slowly, for this reason I started to listen to the radio in Spanish to get used to the speed.

When I was learning English and I found difficulties, I did not do anything and I started to misunderstand (the language), and I do not want the same while I'm learning Spanish, that's why when I find the words which I do not know, I always ask to native speakers, if it is masculine or feminine, plural or singular and how it is used in a sentence.

When I listen to music in Spanish it is very fast and I recognize some words, but not everything, especially preposition, for this reason, when I listen to music, at the same time I read the lyrics. And talking to native speakers, my stay is only for one year and I want to take advantage of it.

6. - In your experience, what cultural difficulties have you faced as a Spanish learner?

We Japanese do not touch to each other when greeting and we also do not kiss to each other, in Japan it is very important to keep distance even though if we are good friends. **(And in communication?)** In Spanish there is a way to refer to "you" (formal and informal) and there exists also in Japan but it is different. **(Another example?)** No, because before coming to Mexico I took a course to get used in Mexico, for example, there taught me how Mexicans say hello, and how Mexicans think, that's why when I arrived in Mexico I already knew how Mexicans greet to each other, and I did not get surprised. Spanish we learn in Japan is from Spain and when I went to the faculty of languages for the first time, I said *"gracias/ thank you"* and they told me *"no hay de que"* and I did not understand because I only knew *"de nada / you're welcome"* then they explained it to me.

My Mexican friend told me that we Japanese do not tell the truth, but if I have a problem I will not to say it, I will tell it only if we are very good friends, because it is not good to say that I have a personal problem, so I say that everything is ok, but it seems weird to my friend.

7. - Can you tell me how you solve these difficulties?

I always ask, when I talk to my friends it is not complicated and they talk to me slowly and clearly. I'm living with a Mexican family and I understand what my friend says, but it is complicated to understand what her mom says, maybe because she is older and my friend is the same age as I, and her mom uses different words, that's why I always ask 'what is that?'.

Interview 2

Yuri Sakaguchi

Japan

21 years old

Spanish and teaching English

When was the first time you were in touch with the language?

When I started university, I was 19 years old.

1. - Why is it important learning Spanish as a foreign language?

I like to study foreign language and in high school I learnt English, I wanted to study another language, and if I can speak Spanish I can travel to Spain and almost all countries of Latin America, that's why for me, Spanish is a very useful language, for this reason I choose it. My university has 5 majors, English, Chinese, French, German and Spanish, and for me, Spanish is the most attractive.

2. - Have you had difficulties while learning Spanish as a foreign language?

Yes, there are many difficulties for me, for example about pronunciation I cannot distinguish between R and L, and then, for me it is the same sound. Also, in Spanish there are plenty of conjugations; and when I was in Japan, I studied Spanish from Spain and there exits *"vosotros"...* and also memorizing conjugations is difficult.

3. - Do you consider that there are cultural and linguistic difficulties when learning Spanish? If so, can you give an example?

As I said before, there are many linguistic difficulties; about culture it is not difficult for me. Spanish is used in many countries and there are many varieties of Spanish and in Japan I studied Spanish from Spain, hence when I arrived in Mexico I could not understand Mexican Spanish, also when I went to Cuba, Spanish was totally different, about grammar is the same but about pronunciation and intonation is different.

4. - In your experience, what linguistics difficulties have you faced as a Spanish learner?

Since I was in Japan I could not distinguish the pronunciation between L and R, nowadays I still cannot distinguish even though I'm here from more than a half year.

When I studied in Japan, the Spanish-speakers teachers spoke to us slowly but now I take some classes with Mexicans, and students and teachers speak very fast, for this reason it is complicated follow (understand) what they say. There is vocabulary which I do not understand; and every time I search in the dictionary, there appears another word which I do not understand, and sometimes I cannot distinguish how to write in alphabet, if it is '*R, o L, C, S, o Z'*. **(Another example?)** I learnt in Japan that the Spanish words which end with 'O' are masculine, but there are some words which end with 'A' like (in spanish "la foto") and it is feminine and ends with 'O', I know it because I studied (learnt) that form in Japan, but if there are other words, I cannot imagine that every time I have to look for in the dictionary.

And when we translate from one language to another, it sounds weird if we translate literally, for this reason, when I want to say something I think in Japanese and then I translate to Spanish, but sometimes to Mexicans and Spanish-speakers it sounds weird and they do not understand me. In Spanish there is a better way to express my emotions but I do not know it, that's why it takes me a long time to explain, if my friends understand me, they explain to me and then I can understand.

5. - Can you tell me how you solve these difficulties?

Sometimes I ask to my Mexicans friends and they explain to me and I can understand, but sometimes I cannot understand and if there are my Japanese friends, I ask for help to them and they explain to me in Japanese.

About gender it is easy because I just search in the dictionary, but verb tense is more difficult; my Japanese friend likes to study grammar and when I have a problem about grammar or linguistics, I usually ask to her and I solve my problems, but I also have a Mexican friend who teaches Spanish to Japanese students at the UDLAP, and he also knows the problems that I could face, hence, he explains to me very well and I can understand.

6. - In your experience, what cultural difficulties have you faced as a Spanish learner?

The cultural difference is interesting, people say that Japanese are punctual, but when I'm in Japan I'm not punctual, I think Mexicans are more unpunctual than Japanese, it is the cultural difference. In Mexican Spanish, there are plenty of bad words, in Japanese there are not so much bad words, for this reason it sounds strong for me, that's why I can understand if my friends are joking but when I came to Mexico I got scared I thought it was very offensive.

When we talk with friends or students of the same age we use *'tú'* but in Japan, the age is very important and sometimes I have to say '*usted'* but is more formal, even though my friend is just one year older than me, I always get confused if it is *tú o usted*.

7. - Can you tell me how you solve these difficulties?

I'm here from more than a half year and I know if my friends say bad words they are real friends.

I have to memorize, for me, it is difficult the words which have different meanings in context; although it is the same word, it has different meanings and I have to memorize everything.

There were many words that I could not understand, like *'qué onda' 'chido'*, and now, once I listen to the meaning of a word I can understand. I study Spanish and I like Spanish, and for me, it is very interesting the variety that Spanish language has, if I cannot understand, I ask to my Japanese friends.

Interview 3

Taiki

Japan

20 years old

Spanish

When was the first time you were in touch with the language?

Two years ago, since I started university.

1. - Why is it important learning Spanish as a foreign language?

I like to talk to many people, for me it is important to connect with many people even if they are from another country; and in Japan it is needed nowadays.

2. - Have you had difficulties while learning Spanish as a foreign language?

Every day, especially in Mexico I have had a bad experience, sometimes people told me "I don't understand you" and it made me suffer. For me, the most difficult thing of learning Spanish is the amount of words and understanding what people say, for example, I can understand face to face but when I speak with more than two Mexicans I cannot understand because Mexicans speak very fast. Understand and memorize words. (It is the most difficult).

3. - Do you consider that there are cultural and linguistic difficulties when learning Spanish? If so, can you give an example?

Linguistic, cultural not, because I studied about Mexico. Linguistic, like Japanese grammar: first noun, next object and then verb; but in Spanish not (it is not the same form), first noun, verb and object, it is a little difficult for me, just that, and seriously the amount of words.

4. - In your experience, what linguistics difficulties have you faced as a Spanish learner?

Conjugation. The meaning of some phrases in Mexico. I was studying Spanish from Spain, and I like without *"vosotros".* And also Mexicans like bad words and make combinations of words. And indirect object… about writing is very easy but speaking is not easy.

5. - Can you tell me how you solve these difficulties?

About conjugation I need to memorize… just what I can do is memorizing. Take notes and search in the dictionary.

6. - In your experience, what cultural difficulties have you faced as a Spanish learner?

For me, bad words. In my university there were some Mexicans and I always talked to them.

I still cannot distinguish how to talk to people when they are older. Also when I went to the doctor, I did not understand. And when I arrived in Mexico, at the airport in Mexico City, a

security guard ask me for something like a “tip” and I did not understand, at the end he said something like “pay me” then I understand. And calling by phone with Mexicans, I do not like it, seriously not, and when I call to Uber sometimes I do not understand, with her (his girlfriend), yes, because I know the words she uses, but others I do not know.

7. - Can you tell me how you solve these difficulties?

When I return to my house, what I can do is investigate meanings, and I always try to ask, I demand to people to say what they are saying again. What I need to do more is to memorize a lot of words, just that. Coming to the Faculty of Languages is also a way to improve Spanish, maybe.

Interview 4

Kana Teda

Japan

21 years old

Economy

When was the first time you were in touch with the language?

More or less three years ago. When I started university.

1. - Why is it important learning Spanish as a foreign language?

Because I’m interested in learning other languages, English, Spanish and other languages; and Spanish is very important because in Mexico there are many Japanese companies, especially car companies, so I thought it would be very useful when working here in Mexico or in Japan.

2. - Have you had difficulties while learning Spanish as a foreign language?

Yes, there are many difficulties, for example in Japan I learnt Spanish from Spain, hence when I decided to study in Mexico and I arrived here, I did not understand what Mexicans said, because Mexican Spanish is very different.

3. - Do you consider that there are cultural and linguistic difficulties when learning Spanish? If so, can you give an example?

Yes, because Spanish has a lot of varieties and when I went to Peru and Cuba I did not understand, so the problem is that Japanese and other languages do not have a lot of varieties as Spanish. And also the Spanish words are very similar to words in English, for this reason I got confused with English and Spanish.

Cultural, for example, in class we Japanese just listen to what the teacher is saying, but here the classmates talk a lot, so at the beginning I was surprised.

4. - In your experience, what linguistics difficulties have you faced as a Spanish learner?

For example, at the beginning, grammar was difficult, the structure of Spanish, because in Japanese the sentence starts: noun, object and verb; but in Spanish: noun, verb and object; that's why it was difficult, and it is still difficult.

When listening I think that you Mexicans speak very fast, and also young people utilize a lot of bad words, for this reason sometimes I do not understand. **(Another example?)** Conjugation is very difficult, because there are plenty of conjugations, but the good thing is that in Mexico there is no *"vosotros".*

And also, for example, when I was in Japan, I used the word (in Spanish) "*ordenador*" but here you use *"computadora"*; and the words which have the same meaning *"auto, coche, carro".*

And I think that you Mexicans speak like singing, so for me it is easy to understand better than Cubans and Argentines, but I lived with a boy from the north of Mexico and he had a strong accent; it depends on the area of Mexico, intonation and accent change, right? I already got used to listen to what people from Puebla say, but what people from the north say, not at all.

5. - Can you tell me how you solve these difficulties?

Getting used to, because when I lived with the person from the north, at the beginning I did not understand nothing but I was living with him, so I had to understand what he was saying (there was no option), then I often asked: *What does it mean? What are you talking about?* And also I have a dictionary… a dictionary application on my cell phone, so when I do not understand, when people told me words which I do not understand, I take notes and when I go back to my house I look for it every day, there are still a lot of words that I do not understand.

6. - In your experience, what cultural difficulties have you faced as a Spanish learner?

Last term I studied at the Faculty of Languages and there are many students interested in knowing about the Japanese culture, but now I study at the Faculty of Economy and there are not people like in the Faculty of Languages, and when I was studying at the Faculty of Languages I had to do nothing, they (students) came up and talked to me, but at Faculty of Economy did not happen the same, and I had to try to talk with the classmates and it was so difficult. I think it is the difficulty, and the typical words of Mexico like: *'no manches, qué onda'*, etc.

Mmm, the word in Spanish *'ahorita',* I thought it means "right now" and when I asked to a boy "when are you going to home?" and he answered me *"ahorita"*, I thought that immediately or in that moment he was going to his home but he still stayed there. Then he told me -"No, in Mexico, *ahorita*, means after a while". But I still do not understand the word *"ahorita"*.

Also, I did not understand anything when I listened to for the first time *"qué onda"*, and I asked to my friends -"What does it mean?" and it means " hi, what's up!", and they told me that I could use that phrase also with my teachers, and one day I met my teacher and I said *"hola profe, qué onda",* but it is not a good phrase when you are with older people than you, and/or teachers, and I did not know it, that's why Spanish is difficult.

And also, in Japan it is not common to see each other eyes when talking, but here yes it is, and sometimes I felt uncomfortable. And greeting, we just say 'hello' but you kiss to each other, it is also difficult because who can I kiss and who I cannot kiss when greeting? for example, I lived in *'Camino Real'* and near my home there was a drugstore and in front of it there was a man who cooked *tacos* or Mexican food, and I greeted him every time I see him, but my friend said to me that it is not good to say hello to a person you barely know, but I still do not know to whom and to whom not.

7. - Can you tell me how you solve these difficulties?

When I hear colloquial phrases for the first time, I take notes of those phrases and their meaning and I think that through those sentences I understand more, so I try to say *'qué onda'* to my friends.

I have a TV in my room, so when I'm free I watch movies in Spanish without subtitles, at the beginning with subtitles but now not any more. When I was in Japan, I studied but not so much, I just did my homework and talked (practice) in class; here in Mexico I have to talk to communicate, to know about culture, that's why I only speak. And also, now that I'm studying economy, and in Japan I did not studied that, for this reason it is hard to me, because at the Faculty of Languages I took English classes and I already know the words that teachers say, but at the Faculty of Economy, teachers use more specific words related to economics, so I took a look in my dictionary but I did not find anything, then I had to ask to my classmates and through it, I think I improved my Spanish.