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# Motivation and Lack Thereof: Effects of Students' Motivation on Their Second/Foreign Language Learning Process

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## *Abstract*

In language learning, motivation is one of the key elements to which students have to pay special attention as it plays a major role in their acquisition. This paper will expose a case study regarding motivation and the negative counterparts that affect it. It will also discuss several motivation theories and the learning process students from the University of Guanajuato have struggled with whenever having trouble with keeping their motivation. This study made use of interviews to collect data that shows the direct relationship between the level of motivation and the level of success in language acquisition.

**Keywords:** second language, foreign language, motivation, acquisition, learning, theory, learner, effect.

## 1. Introduction

Motivation is an important determinant of the students' success in ability performance and competence regarding Second Language Acquisition (Gardner, 1968). It is equally related to Foreign Language Acquisition as well. This motivation can be the result of the studying/learning process or the cause for it to happen. This paper will review several motivation theories and how relevant they are in relation to SLA and FLA. It will discuss how motivation changes over time and the positive or negative effects upon the learning process. The paper will also reflect upon how anxiety and impostor syndrome can be directly related to the acquisition and performance of a language other than the native language of the learner.

The paper will be divided in sections for a better understanding: literature review, which will discuss the topics related to the case study; the methodology which will include the research questions used for the development of the research; the third section will describe the methodology used for this paper and lastly the inquiry tools and the questions utilized for the data collection.

## 2. Literature review

The main concepts applied in this paper are motivation, anxiety, and impostor syndrome regarding second language acquisition and foreign language acquisition.

### 2.1 *Motivation*

Motivation is defined by Gardner (1968) as the attempt of achieving a goal as well as the desire towards it. According to Gardner, motivation can influence to what extent a learner acquires skills for communication purposes. It is important to discuss how the motivation each learner has will affect their relationship with the language and its use (Carrió-Pastor & Mestre, 2014). Firstly, it is needed to discuss the different types of motivation, their source, and their results. The root of motivation can vary according to the background of the learner. Their initial profile, which consists of the place of their upbringing, their native language and what were the circumstances of their relationship with the target language. Motivation can be divided into four types: intrinsic, extrinsic, instrumentalist, and integrative.

Intrinsic motivation happens when a learner starts learning a language for internal reasons such as personal interest of learning, personal growth, or the desire for a feeling of self-fulfillment. This type of motivation comes from within the learner and their individual characteristics, such as self-determination and effort, which affect the way the learner acts to achieve the goal of learning a language. Learners who have this motivation in language learning work without pressure, seeing it as a challenging but enjoyable process. Intrinsic motivation is the most variable type since it is directly related to the internal state of the learner, thus making it unpredictable. However, intrinsic motivation pushes the individual towards the learning process seeing it as a goal in itself (Reiss, 2012).

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation depends on other factors that are not directly related to the learner (Junko, 2005). This type of motivation relies upon the search for external rewards such as better grades in subjects at school or academic recognition. This type of motivation appears at the moment the learner identifies an external gain. The interest the learner has in getting this benefit is what drives their actions and puts pressure onto achieving the established goal. Extrinsic motivation is often steady, and it is less likely to change over time (Chiew & Poh, 2015). However, once the goal is reached, the extrinsic motivation decreases, and the learner stops making an effort. This type of motivation can be altered by the teacher by offering the students rewards that interest them. Extrinsic motivation has a downside, since the learner has no interest outside of the reward, the content learned during this process is neither relevant nor a priority.

Instrumentalist motivation can be identified when a learner has a specific goal to achieve, and the target language is a medium for achieving it (Wee, 2003). This type of motivation can be related to the extrinsic since they are both connected to external factors of recognition. The most common goals regarding instrumentalist motivation are getting promoted at a job or getting a job where one of the qualifications needed is the ability to speak a target language. Since this type of motivation is definite and specific it does not tend to change over time, and it is a reliable source of motivation (Alizadeh, 2016).

Lastly, integrative motivation has to do with the learner and the target language's culture (Strong, 1984). The main objective for acquiring the language is becoming familiar with the culture and integrating the learner in it (Gardner, 2001). Integrative motivation is a long-term interest for the learner, which becomes a reliable and steady source of motivation.

## *2.2 Anxiety*

Another concept related to motivation is anxiety, which interferes with the relationship the learner has with the language (MacIntyre, 2002). Anxiety in language acquisition is often experienced when the learner starts applying the knowledge to communicate with others, making them self-conscious and self-aware, hindering any advances. This anxiety can be manifested through the interaction with other learners or native speakers of the language, or stay within the learner (Zheng, 2008).

## *2.3 Impostor syndrome*

Impostor syndrome affects the learner as well, it consists of the inhibition of the speaker to perform any communication because of the feeling of unauthenticity and impostorhood. This syndrome happens only to learners when they are producing a language, since they feel fake or like they do not know enough about the language (Bernat, 2008). This syndrome affects heavily the communication performance of the learners, as it hinders a fluent production and makes them uncomfortable producing the language.

## *3. Methodology*

According to Woody (1924) research has to include the definition of a problem as well as formulating a hypothesis, collecting, and analyzing data to determine if the hypothesis is applicable. This study's purpose is to identify how motivation affects second language learners.

### *3.1 Subjects of the study*

The subjects of the study are students of Universidad de Guanajuato between the ages of 18 to 35 of any gender. The subjects are learners of three languages: French, German, and English. These languages are being learned as foreign languages, with the exception of the subject who is learning English as a second language.

### *3.2 Research questions*

What kind of motivations are there regarding language learning? Do they change over time?

How does the learner's type of motivation affect their SLA process and their behavior in a classroom and social setting?

### *3.3 Qualitative approach*

Qualitative approach in research allows one to have a wider view in a subject that cannot be categorized with numbers and statistical data. The approach applied to this case study is of a phenomenological nature. The experience of the subjects will relate their SLA to their motivation in order to investigate if existing theories regarding motivation are applicable and provable (Pathak et al., 2013).

### 3.4 Inquiry tool: Interview

In research, an interview allows the researcher to gather data for further analysis in relation to the topic selected (Nigel et al., 2000). The interview designed for this paper contains several questions that will allow the relationship between motivation and language-learning issue to be explored in depth. It includes open-ended questions that will be related to motivation theories.

#### 4. Analysis and discussion of results

The third question of the interview is about if the subjects feel motivated in their learning process. The subject that is learning German answered that they do feel motivated and what makes them feel motivated is their ability to learn any language. This type of motivation can be identified as intrinsic, where the learner sees the learning process as the goal itself (Junko, 2005).

The subject who is learning English answered that what motivates them to learn the language is the necessity they have of expanding their knowledge in order to have more knowledge about the topics they are interested in. This motivation is instrumentalist, the goal is to be able to use the language as a tool for learning about other topics (Wee, 2003).

In the question '*Do you feel the same motivation as when you first started?*' the English-learning subject answered that they did not feel motivated at the beginning because they did not want to learn the language for a personal reason, so they saw the learning process as a negative thing. In the same question, the subject explains that with the time they overcame this view and enjoyed it more with time. However, they kept on learning the language. This shows that instrumentalist motivation is a steady source of motivation for the learner.

The question '*What do you do to keep motivated?*' the French learner answered that they use educative apps that congratulate their progress. Though the reason for their learning process is personal satisfaction, the extrinsic factor of praise helps them with motivation.

In the section of the interview where the subjects were asked the obstacles they have faced, all subjects coincided in insecurity when speaking their target language and lack of individual motivation at times. This can be related to the anxiety and impostor syndrome, the learners struggle with language production because of fear of public exposure of not being accurate.

In conclusion, motivation is perhaps the biggest factor learners have to deal with during their learning process. It is important for students to identify their motivation source to help them carry on learning. Thus, language instructors must have knowledge in techniques and strategies to help students. It is a fundamental part in the formation of language teachers.

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# The Role of Intrinsic Motivation in German Language Learning

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## *Abstract*

The purpose of learning any language derives from the necessities and what is wanted of the language. Self-Determination Theory has been a discussed topic to address the learning purpose. The motivational orientation that German learners can take to direct their learning is vital to identify if intrinsic motivation takes place on it. This project is directed as a case study. The mediation of the case study is through an inquiry tool. A written interview is applied in an online modality to collect and discuss the results. In this study is found that the effects that two German learners had during their language learning process were significant to the main reason why they started studying the language. Furthermore, the findings suggest that the different types of intrinsic motivation with the presence of different motivational orientations lead learners to achieve a similar positive effect in their learning that helped learners to maintain it.

*Keywords:* intrinsic motivation, self-determination theory, motivational orientations.

## 1. Introduction

Motivation is one of the complex parts that involve language learning processes. In motivation, there are several factors that can modify the way of perceiving motivation (Rahman, 2017). However, this paper will be addressing the factor of motivational orientation that German learners chose for learning this language and what were the effects that these motivations and determinations produce on them. First, I will provide a brief discussion of what intrinsic motivation is within language learning and its types. In addition, I will explain the driven theory of motivations called Self-Determination (SDT). Furthermore, motivational orientation and its types will be defined. Second, I will provide the methodology that this case study carried out.

## 2. Literature review

The following section will address the theoretical framework for this project. The addressed information will have a crucial role in relating it to the case study.

### 2.1 *Intrinsic motivation*

Intrinsic motivation is the self-agreement of motivation where the learner is free to choose activities to achieve a goal because for her/him it seems interesting (O'Reilly, 2014). Furthermore, intrinsic motivation is described as the enjoyment while doing a task, in this case, learning languages (Spinath & Steinmayr, 2012).

Within intrinsic motivation exists three types of it: knowledge, accomplishment, and stimulation motivation (Vallerand et al., 1992). Knowledge is related to variables such as curiosity, exploration, and learning goals. Learners with this type of motivation are learning the language because they want to learn and know something new. This type of motivation produces pleasure for acquire new knowledge and new ideas (Junko, 2005). Accomplishment motivation is when the learner is engaged with the task because they like the feeling of accomplishing and creating. This type of motivation takes care of the feeling that learners have when they realize they are masters in knowledge, actions, and ideas (Junko, 2005). Finally, stimulation is perceived when the learner does a task due to the emotions and stimulus that he or she feels. This type of motivation takes care of the sensory stimulus that produces the activity in the learners (Junko, 2005). This information has a critique in distinction to the opposite type of intrinsic motivation: extrinsic. Exists a perspective where one of the types of extrinsic motivation called integrated regulation is defined as the wanting to learn the language. The line between these perceptions of motivation is difficult to identify in learners with intrinsic motivation (Oakes & Howard, 2022).

### 2.2 *Self-determination theory*

Self-Determination theory was proposed by Deci and Ryan (2002). This theory works on the understanding of the individual's progress in doing an activity with purpose. They stated that the learner has three needs in the determination of doing the task: the feeling of competency, the feeling of relatedness, and perceived autonomy support. If the monitor identifies the three needs, it can recognize the level and the orientation of motivation that the learner has (O'Reilly, 2014).

Self-Determination theory (SDT) is stated as “*the main idea underlying this theory is the distinction between (1) motivated and intentional behavior and (2) the two types of intentional behavior (self-determined and controlled)*” (Kreishan & Al-Dhaimat., 2013). This information refers to the differences that exist between the purposes that each learner has in learning a language. Exists a difference when a learner is learning a language because it is their own decision and own reasons for studying the language, such as the satisfaction of learning something new. On the other hand, exists a difference when a learner is learning the language because is controlled by external factors, such as belonging to a community. This last idea leads to a concept called “integrative orientation” that will be defined in the next section. However, the idea of belonging in a community starts when a self-determinant is considered. This study will take place on the self-determinants that each participant adopted in their language learning.

Another important idea that Self-Determination theory addresses is that this theory is crucial to the lives of all humans. It is exposed that humans since we were born are curious and developers of creativity with new things. This behavior comes from an own decision that converts to intrinsic behavior (Muñoz & Ramirez, 2015).

### 2.3 *Motivational orientation*

Motivational orientations are the objectives, goals, and competencies that learners want to achieve with the language, and how they achieve those objectives (Kreishan & Al-Dhaimat, 2013). Orientations are the deepest reasons why the learner is learning the language (Khalid,

2016). In addition, exists two types of orientations: integrative and instrumental. The former is related to learning the target language to achieve most parts of the communication system to belong to a community (Khalid, 2016). Furthermore, according to Bakar et al (2010), integrative orientation focuses on the positive attitudes that the learner has toward the social and cultural society that he or she wants to belong to. In addition, Noels et al. (2003) stated that this type of motivation has the purpose of learning a target language to achieve a goal that will be practical. The latter has the purpose to learn the language for essential uses such as job opportunities (Khalid, 2016). However, there is a problem stated by Bakar (2010) where any of the two orientations is enough to prove that learners need only one type of orientation to achieve learning a language. There are several reasons why learners decide to learn a language.

It is important to consider motivational orientations as an advantage to perceive intrinsic motivation in learners because they are the ones that select what knowledge with what activities are selected to learn the language (Bakar, 2010). Another advantage proposed by the same author is the selection of strategies to achieve the goal of learning a language.

### 3. Methodology

In this study, I explored the effects that intrinsic motivation produces in two German learners. In this section, I provided the research questions that conducted the study. Then, I explained the qualitative approach that this study carried. Also, I presented the case study that I explored. Finally, I justify the selection of the tool that I used to explain the study. The type of data that I recollected was qualitative.

#### 3.1 *Research question*

I based my aim of the study on the following question:

1. What effects does Intrinsic motivation have on a pair of German learners in central Mexico?

#### 3.2 *Qualitative approach*

According to Hollstein (2011), the qualitative approach is based on the meaning and understanding of a specific action. The author explained that the qualitative approach provides actions and based on these actions the meaning, interpretation, and understanding are inferred. That is why is considered qualitative data. In my study, I designed a question where I could observe written utterances that provided me with meaning. I looked for the effects of those actions that the participants provided me. According to Choy (2014), a qualitative approach focused on the collection of data with open-ended, semi-structured interviews. The author also stated that the open-ended questions allow the participant expresses what cares for them. In this study, I designed an open-ended interview because I wanted to reflect on the participants' experiences. Also, the open-ended interview leads to new information to interpret that is not within the purpose of the study. This can be observed in the different responses that I could collect with the experiences of the learners.

#### 3.3 *Case study*

Zonabend (1992) stated that case studies aim to focus attention on actions such as observation and the analysis of a special case. Not only seeing what happens in the case but also providing and analyzing the perspective of the participants involved in the case (as cited in Tellis,

1997). Furthermore, Gerring (2004) expressed that a case study is an intensive study that focuses only on one issue, and the issue is understood with other related issues. The study that I addressed was considered a case study due that the focus on collecting data was on the participant-interview method. Also, this study explored one single issue which was found to “effects” intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, to consider the overview of the participant, they were required to answer questions about where feelings and emotions were able to recognize and how the participants were able to deal with and solve these emotions. Finally, the study implemented recollection of evidence that completed the perspective and the development of the learning in the issue of effects on intrinsic motivation.

### *3.4 Context and participants*

The participants that were selected for the study are two women 25 and 28 years. The similar characteristics that the two participants have are they are Mexican; They live in Guanajuato city; they learn English as their second language; they started learning German as their third language; they learned German in the same language course in Mexico; they coursed the classes with the same teacher for one semester, and they learned German because their personal interests. They were required to answer five questions in an online interview. Furthermore, they were asked to share evidence such as photos and documents that could prove the answers of the interview and to link both participants’ experiences.

### *3.5 Inquiry tools (interviews)*

According to Fontana and Frey in 2005, an interview is an event where two or more individuals share data from their own perspectives. The interview is done by an interviewer who is the driver of the questions and points to talk about. The interviewee is the one who responds to the required information. I addressed the study with an online/written interview and with the collection of evidence to relate the theoretical information to the case. I designed the interview to obtain the information that my research questions addressed. I used interviews because the information that I wanted to reflect on was based on the experiences of German students. The procedure that was used to apply the interview was the following: I contacted the participants on WhatsApp. I explained that the interview should be answered with experiences, feelings, and thoughts; there is no limit to words. Then, I sent the interview in a Word Document in the order they can answer the interview there. When they finished the interview, they sent me again the document. The interviews were directed in Spanish. However, for the purpose of this study and the language setting on this, I translated the complete interview into English.

For the second collection, I asked the participants to send me evidence such as photos, screenshots, and chats via WhatsApp. The design of the interview was developed in a way that I related the answers to the evidence to identify what effects have on Intrinsic motivation in them. Also, as it was the same process of learning (activities, exams, tasks) it helped to link both experiences of language activities in the study.

## *4. Analysis and discussion of results*

In the following section, it will be presented the data that was collected by one interview for both participants. This section contains a detailed discussion of the data analysis results. The discussion will take place according to the heading topics: Intrinsic motivation, Self-Determination theory, and Motivational orientations.

#### 4.1 Intrinsic motivation discussion

The findings of this study showed that both participants had intrinsic motivation in their language learning. The question that directed this section is number one. The participant was required to express the reasons why they decided to study German. It can be observed in question number one where participant 1 expressed *“I decided to study German because I like being in constant learning, and languages are part of it. I was influenced by history and music, so, I decided to enroll in and study the language”*<sup>1</sup>. In the first question, it is observed that participant 1 decided to learn German because of her own interests. She likes learning languages. However, one of the main aspects that influenced her to study this specific language was the music and the history. With this response, it is inferred that participant 1 has intrinsic motivation in this learning process. In the case participant 2, she expressed *“I had a planned trip in August, and I wanted to be able to communicate in a basic way”*. This reason for learning the language allows me to link the definition of intrinsic motivation in learning the language. Also, she responded with two specific goals such as to belong to a concrete area in the place she works and to be able to communicate on a trip in August. In addition to this discussion, the type of intrinsic motivation called “knowledge” can be observed in the answer to question one in participant 1 (Junko, 2005). Also, as it was discussed in the Self-Determination theory section, the idea of belonging in a community is an essential aspect that SDT takes into consideration when a learner set a practical determinant (Kreishan & Al-Dhaimat, 2013). She stated, *“I like being in constant learning”* and clearly it identified the learning goals, curiosity, and exploration of the language. Furthermore, the accomplishment motivation is perceived in question one in participant 2 where she declared *“I wanted to be able to communicate in a basic way”*. This answer allows observing the mastery of knowledge that she wanted to achieve (Junko, 2005). In conclusion with the intrinsic motivation section, it may be observed in fragments of the interview where each participant had a different reason why to study the language. However, on these reasons can be interpreted from a perspective where personal goals are set with a specific purpose.

#### 4.2 Self-determination discussion

This discussion takes place on the heading topic of Self-Determination theory. The finding where the needs of the theory were identified is in question number one in participant 2 where she exposed *“The company where I work is from Germany. The fact that I study the language will make that I get an interchange between areas”*. The feeling of competency is identified in this participant due to her context. It is interpreted that the company where she works is looking for these kinds of opportunities where the workers belong to this community provoking their competency feeling on them. The next feeling called relatedness is identified in participant 1 in question one where she expressed *“I was influenced by history and music, so, I decided to enroll in and study the language”*. This feeling of belonging is due to external and personal factors that provoke motivation in the language. The feeling of relatedness also can be localized inside the classroom activities where in question two, both participants agree that writing activities that involve topics such as family and friends help them to learn and develop the language closer to their own context. *“I realized that I was learning more about performing the writing activities about family or friends”* (Participant 1). While participant 2 exposed *“With the writing activities, I refer to the descriptions that we made of things or situations.”* These answers are considered in the part where the Self-Determination Theory looks for the idea of belonging to communities. Even if the context of family or friends is already set in the learner, was necessary to link the language learning goals to their personal lives (Kreishan & Al-Dhaimat, 2013). The next need of Self-Determination theory is called Autonomy which is supported by participant 1 in question

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<sup>1</sup> The original interview was conducted in Spanish. For this study, the translation of the complete interview was done by the author.

number three. She expressed *“I always studied on my own.”* Question number three was designed to observe the autonomous learning that the learner had outside the classroom. This answer belongs to the assignments that she had to study externally to the class, however, question number four can be identified as a similar answer to solving the problems that she has with the language system. *“I think that pronunciation in some words was kind of hard on me. To move on, I was studying, listening, and repeating the words or phrases,”* this answer constructs the idea of autonomy learning. Furthermore, autonomy support can be localized when she stated, *“I took any opportunity to repass the notes or the book that was bought at that moment.”* The idea of using extra material makes a more complete learning process and makes a more meaningful practice of the language. The same point is identified in participant 2 where she stated, *“The way that I study for the exams repassing all the topics that I have been seen during the course, I did again the exercises and I studied as much necessary time as I need”* and *“The way to carry on this situation was by studying the files that the teacher provided us.”*. These answers show that she developed autonomy in learning outside the classroom. Also, the support that she considered was the material that was provided in class, making use of it in an autonomous way (O’Reilly, 2014).

#### 4.3 Motivational orientations

The finding for third section is found mostly in participant 2. As it has been observed, question one involves the identification of intrinsic motivation in both participants. In this case, motivational orientation stated the two main orientations that any learner can adopt to learn the language. The first orientation is called Integrative, and it can be found in participant 2 question one *“I had a planned trip in August, and I wanted to be able to communicate in a basic way.”* The sense of community is presented in this answer. Participant 1 focused her learning with the specific goal of learning the language to be able to communicate. Feeling part, and understanding the context was crucial for her. The other type of orientation is called Instrumental, it is viewed by the same participant when she has the opportunity that she had with the company where she works. Being part of a community but with the job’s perspective is crucial for the professional environment that each learner has (Khalid, 2016).

This study implies what effects intrinsic motivation has on German learners. It notes that the effects are the following considering both experiences and relating them: First if the learner considers intrinsic motivation based on contexts such as belonging to a community, being able to communicate, or identifying with the culture is notable that writing tasks helped them to learn and practice the language. Furthermore, the writing work about topics such as friends, family, or places had a useful purpose for each participant to locate themselves in the language activity. A second effect considering intrinsic motivation in learning German is that participants were able to carry on an autonomous way of learning when required to achieve a passing grade. They were able to make use of material provided in class such as the writing previously discussed. Also, some topics such as grammar and vocabulary pronunciation were the most challenging for them, and to solve this they made use of the book and their own notes to achieve proficiency and unconscious autonomy learning. Finally, an effective effect was localized in each participant in the last question of the interview. The last question addressed the dealing of errors for part of the participants. However, the question also focused on the purpose to remember the reason they were studying the language. Participant 1 expressed *“Currently, because of time, I could not assist to German classes. I am still learning on my own, it is not the same, but it helps to not forget my knowledge.”* It can be observed that the situation of participant 1 does not affect her objective of the language. While participant 2 expressed *“I arrived at the conclusion that I should be relaxed because studying German was a choice and my own merit. The outcomes did not define me.”* She stated that even if something turned difficult, she was studying the language because it was a merit and a personal decision. It can be inferred that Participant 2 took the errors as an opportunity to improve and recognize that learning German is not a requirement that she had to do in order to



define a “good” or “bad” learner. The effects that intrinsic motivation had on both participants were positive. Their motivational orientations helped them to hold the motivation during and after the language learning process.

## 5. Conclusions

It may be concluded that this study exposes the positive effects that two German participants emitted. They were able to identify their own orientations and purposes for learning German. And it was proved that these determinants helped to support their own learning. Furthermore, it can be concluded that intrinsic motivation leads to a series of internal processes of the learner such as their own reflection and actions that allow more positive results of their learning. It was found that intrinsic motivation provokes feelings of acceptance, improvement, determination, autonomy, and responsibility. And the participants were able to make these feelings and situations within the language learning process as skills.

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## Polygraph Examinations as Preventative Measure of Corruptive Behavior – A Case Study

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### *Abstract*

The following publication presents brief case study of corruptive behavior of an employee of a private company for supplier of electricity. Interview and polygraph examination also was used. It also presents a short analysis of the corruption behavior problem as a psychological category. Methods for integrity assessment and the polygraph method are presented as instruments which have high validity and reliability. Besides the focus on psychodiagnosis of corruptive behavior, this publication pays attention to the need of incorporating preventive measures.

*Keywords:* polygraph, corruption, corruptive behavior, loyalty testing, psychodiagnosis.

### 1. Introduction

The problem of corruption and corrupt behavior attracts the attention of citizens, journalists, psychologists, politicians, economists, legislators and various social institutions (Pinto et al., 2008; Heywood, 2017;). Almost every daily press issue presents readers with information about supposed corrupt behavior by public or private figures (Caiden & Caiden, 1977). The scientific discussion of the topic of corruption finds expression most often through the prism of its legal, economic or sociological aspects (Gould, 2019; Prasad et al., 2019). The genesis, structure and manifestations of corruption in the system of public services are studied primarily through sociological analysis, with the help of public opinion surveys, or in the context of the problems with legal regulations (Hall, 2012; Rose & Peiffer, 2018). At the same time, psychological categories such as goals, motives, values, attitudes, emotions and behavior of civil servants are beyond the scope of scientific analysis, which does not give an opportunity to obtain a comprehensive view of corruption as an ongoing phenomenon.

Providing a comprehensive definition of corruption is considered an extremely difficult task (Rose, 2018). According to Robert Brooks (1910/1970, p. 58), corruption is “the intentional misperformance or neglect of a recognized duty, or the unwarranted excise of power, with the motive of gaining some advantage more or less personal.” Klitgaard (1988: 24) pointed that “corruption occurs when an agent betrays a principal’s interests in pursuit of her own.” According to Marriam-Webster Dictionary (2022) corruption is:

- dishonest or illegal behavior especially by powerful people (such as government officials or police officers): depravity;

- inducement to wrong by improper or unlawful means (such as bribery);
- a departure from the original or from what is pure or correct;
- decay, decomposition.

The term “corruption” comes from the Latin (*corrumpere*) and in literal translation means “corruption”, “waste”, “damage” (Cresswell, 2010; Reshetnikov, 2008). It was first mentioned in Roman law defining activities, aimed at disrupting the normal course of the judicial process or the order of government (Velkova, 2015). By its nature, crimes of corruption are part of self-interest crimes and part of organized crimes (Kulger et al., 2005). It is considered a common type of crime, especially in countries where the economy is poorly developed and it is recognized as crime against humanity (Antonyan, 2004; Bantekas, 2006; Sebake, 2020 Schaefer et al., 2014).

There should be no dispute that the psyche is unified, whole, and indivisible. For this reason, the definition of corruption from the point of view of psychology finds expression in the understanding that it is directly related to behavior. In this sense, corruption in itself does not exist without being manifested through corrupt behavior. For example, Carl J. Friedrich (1997) explains corruption as behavior deviating from the norm in the political sphere and conditioned by a motivation to obtain personal benefit at the expense of society. D. R. Simon (2018) defines corrupt behavior as a dysfunction (deviation) of the ruling elite. Corruption should be seen as the deviant (deviant) behavior of public officials, which is contrary to the interests of society and others. It manifests itself in unregulated use of the existing powers granted by achieved status, in connection with the extraction of benefit for personal, narrow group and/or corporate purposes (Antonyan, 2004; Friedrich, 201; Hall, 2012).

Behavior can be seen as the result of complex socio-cognitive and emotional processing. Its analysis, especially in complex situations such as those related to corruption, can be carried out on the basis of the social learning model predicting behavior proposed in the theory of Julian Rotter (Rotter, 1982). According to him, four main components should be considered:

*Behavior potential* – it is expressed in the probability of performing a certain behavior in a specific situation. In this case, the term “behavior” refers to all types of human activity in response to a stimulating situation that can be measured – motor, emotional, verbal, and non-verbal reactions are included (Krastev & Yordanova, 2017).

*Expectancy* – a subjective perception of the likelihood that a given behavior will lead to a certain outcome or reinforcement. Rotter believes that expectancy is based on the individual's past experience in an identical or similar situation, i.e., the more the reinforcement has been present in the past, the more likely it is to be repeated (Rotter, 1982).

*Reinforcement value* – By “reinforcement,” Rotter (1982) refers to the outcome of the behavior, and its “value” refers to the achievement of desired outcomes. The more desirable the outcome of the behavior, the higher the value of the reinforcement. As with expectancy, the value of reinforcement is subjective and is associated with the expectation that the same behavior will lead to the same desired outcome.

*Psychological situation* – represents the subjective perception and interpretation of the specific situation by the specific person. It is on this interpretation that the expectation and value of the reinforcement depend. Rotter believes that it is always important to keep in mind that different people interpret the same situation differently, and this in turn determines their behavior.

Thus, according to Julian Rotter's (1982) theory, the predictive formula of behavior is a combination between the Behavior Potential (BP), Expectancy (E) and Reinforcement Value (RV):

$$BP = f(E \& RV)$$

Necessities can also be seen as a factor for corrupt behavior. The concept of “need” is generally interpreted as a force that impels a person to action (Lewin, 1935). Until they are satisfied, needs motivate the individual to take action to satisfy them (Maslow, 2019). In this sense, corrupt behavior can be a mechanism for satisfying needs for power, security, money, etc. Motives for corrupt behavior can be broadly divided into internal and external (Petrovsky, 1987). Extrinsic motives can be any external influences. In relation to corruption, these can be social example, approval (especially by a person who is considered an authority figure), avoiding problems or speeding up a given procedure, etc. Intrinsic motives refer to the inner characteristics of the personality. These can be needs for power, money and self-affirmation, a sense of impunity, career ambition and many others.

Antonyan (2004) believes that the causes of corruption crime have a complex nature, on the one hand, because they are a complex of phenomena of different nature, and on the other hand, because they have existed for a very long time and have become traditional and a way of life. As the most important causes of corruption crime, he points to the economic, political, organizational, and psychological ones (Antonyan, 2004). On the other hand, Kamneva and Annenkova (2013) accept that there are a number of manifestations of corruption: bribery, favoritism, protectionism, lobbying, nepotism, provision of soft loans, procurement, illegal appropriation of resources for public purposes, unauthorized distribution and redistribution of public resources and funds, illegal support and financing of political structures, illegitimate privatization, use of personal connections in order to access public resources – services, goods, sources of income, privileges, the provision of various services to relatives, friends, acquaintances, etc.

Corruption can rightly be considered as one of the acute socio-psychological problems of modern Bulgarian society. The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which measures the perception of the prevalence of corruption in the public sector of various countries around the world, shows that in 2018 Bulgaria ranks 77<sup>th</sup> among 180 countries worldwide. This trend is a signal that corrupt behavior should not be the subject of consideration only by law and economics, but also by psychology, which seeks the reasons, factors and personality characteristics that determine such behavior. On this basis, psychodiagnostic tools are the main means of detecting both tendencies for corrupt behavior and realized ones.

Corruption behavior is considered as a special type of criminal activity of officials and its research, in order to limit its manifestation, is highly necessary. The development of theoretical-methodological approaches for the study of corrupt behavior includes the use of conceptual approaches for systematic psychological analysis. “A well-constructed psychodiagnostic procedure is a guarantee of objectivity and reliability of the obtained results” (Mancheva, 2017: 6). On this basis, we will consider the following psychodiagnostic methods, which can be used both as independent methods and as a complex approach to the study and detection of corrupt behavior.

### *1.1 Integrity test*

Integrity can be thought of as a code of ethics according to which people act regardless of circumstances, consequences, external pressures, and personal gain. It is one of the most important, but also one of the most underrated, qualities sought in employees. The goal of every company is to form the best team composed of people who are honest, loyal and do not take corrupt actions. Poor selection can lead to turnover, leaked company information, corruption, sabotage, theft, etc. (Integrity check, 2022).

A widely used method for evaluating loyalty is the Integrity Check test. This test is an objective integrity check tool and it measures personal attitudes towards compliance with social, moral and organizational norms and rules with the main goal – the prevention of theft, abuse, fraud and other types of counterproductive and corrupt behavior in the workplace. It is used in:

- the process of selection of candidates for work in risky professions;
- planning programs and systems to increase loyalty;
- screening and prevention of corrupt behavior, theft and abuse in the workplace.

Integrity check is the first integrity check tool published in Bulgarian.

### *1.2 Polygraph method*

Corruption practices are traditionally associated with countries of low economic status, but corruption and dishonesty have existed for centuries, and will continue to exist to one degree or another in all societies. In an effort to reduce and control corruption levels, scientists have developed a variety of scientific methods. Some of them are related to self-administered integrity tests, others are scientific experiments aimed at establishing the presence of corrupt behavior. Both types of tools are used by employers, and both face the same criticism. To date, no one has invented a method to predict future behavior. There is a highly reliable procedure for detecting past acts of corruption called the polygraph examination that has been used effectively by the public and private sectors for over 60 years (Kurke, 1991).

Polygraph testing, like any type of scientific test, can take the form of a diagnostic or screening test (Nelson, 2015). The purpose of diagnostic tests is to reach a conclusion on the basis of which decisions can be made to take specific actions regarding the case at hand. These actions may affect the rights, freedoms or health of the examinee. For this reason, it is extremely important that the degree of validity of the test which is applied is high. Diagnostic tests achieve a high degree of validity because of the choice of one specific problem on which the test focuses. On the other hand, the purpose of screening examinations is to provide information for decision-makers about the presence of risky practices without a known or established problem (corrupt behavior). This is achieved by asking questions about specific disloyal and/or corrupt practices. The absence of an identified problem (criminal action) is a key feature of screening tests (Wilson & Jungner, 1968). When properly conducted, the polygraph examination can reach up to 95% validity of the result. That is, in establishing the presence of a particular unwanted behavior, we can be 95 percent certain of the result that that particular examinee committed that particular act (Nelson, 2015).

## 2. Case presentation

In order to ensure compliance with ethnic standards and not to damage the reputation of the company, electricity supplier and its employees, it will be named “X”. The employee will tentatively be named “John Smith”. The experts who conducted the polygraph examination have the necessary competencies, according to the APA (American Polygraph Association) and PEAK C.A.T.C. specialized psychological support of the examined person was provided, as an additional ethical consideration.

A private company “X”, a supplier of electricity to citizens, receives a complaint from a customer, containing an accusation that an employee of the company “X” asked him for money in order not to write him a fine in connection with a violation that the citizen have committed and suggested that the citizen pay him a fee to repair the damage as a private contractor.

Company “X” decided to have an interview with their employee, John Smith, to understand how he feels about this and what he has to say about the complaint. He denied asking the citizen for money to cover up his violation and said he hasn’t asked him for money to fix his electrical problem as a private contractor.

After this conversation, John Smith’s manager decided to seek the services of a consulting company and subject John Smith to a polygraph test in order to check the veracity of his statements. John Smith agreed.

### *2.1 Demographics and personality*

At the time of the study, John Smith was 38 years old, married with one child – 9 years of age. He is visibly calm and communicative, with lively facial expressions. Makes good visual and verbal contact and has a good appearance. The family lives with John Smith’s parents in a town with a population between 50,000 and 100,000. One year before the crime in question, he took a bank loan to buy an independent house in the same town.

The psychological assessment was carried out through a battery of psychological inventories and methods, including Bulgarian adaptation of MMPI-2 (Butcher et al., 2001) and IST-2000 – R (Amthauer et al., 2001). The results showed that John Smith has an extroverted orientation and a choleric temperament. His IQ is 98. In a calm environment, he is sociable and positive, under-controlled, manipulative. In extreme or different from the typical environment, he is impulsive, excitable, and sensitive. He demonstrates high levels of self-confidence as compensation for his inner self-doubt, missed life chances, and unsatisfied need for support and recognition. He shows apparent restraint and self-control but does not know how to process failures rationally and accumulates internal tension and hidden aggressiveness. Because of this, he tends to lash out on trivial occasions that do not correspond to the actual cause of his irritation. Self-centered and narcissistically vulnerable. Hypochondria, depression and paranoia are not considered. Interests are similar to those of most men. Excessive drinking is not considered neither. Typically, does not experience disabling anxiety but does feel sometimes nervous.

### *2.2 Pre-test interview*

During the pre-test interview John Smith shared information regarding his work, his duties and the usual steps all employees take when they go to a client who needs to be fined because of fraudulent behavior. He said he works for the company for five years and has been awarded employee of the year two times. Also, added he took a bank credit one year ago because he bought a house for his family and has been having some financial problems since then. John Smith denied ever taking money from citizens, clients of the company mainly because he was afraid, they could tell his bosses. He claimed he never did anything disloyal to his employer.

After John Smith was informed about the procedure, the questions he will be asked during the exam, he signed a declaration for informed consent. He agreed to take the polygraph in order to check the veracity of his statements in regards to the signal against his which the client sent to company “X”.

### *2.3 Instrumental part*

During the instrumental part of the examination, an Acquaintance test was performed in order for the examinee to get used to the procedure and for the examiner to make sure Smith can follow the instructions given. Then the exam regarding the main topic was performed using an LX5000, manufactured by Lafayette Instrument, USA. A 10-channel polygraph with all

sensors, including a seat sensor which monitors movements on part of the examinee during the test. AFMGQT v2 2 RQs validated polygraph technique was used. Two diagnostic tests were performed in order to check if Smith has taken money from the particular citizen who is a client of company “X” and if he has ordered him to provide services and private contractor.

#### *2.4 Data assessment*

After conducting the instrumental part of the test, the analysis of the collected data (evaluation of the charts) starts. The assessment is carried out using the ESS – a validated three-level scoring system. Accordingly, in zone analysis, scores are given for each of the relevant questions in each of the individual charts. Each channel is evaluated independently of the others in the charts. The breathing channel has a cumulative score of -1/0/+1 depending on the subject’s reactivity; the electrodermal activity channel is scored with -2/0/+2; the heart activity channel: -1/0/+1. After summing all scores from all channels in all charts, the score for each relevant question falls into one of the following categories: Deception Indicated, Inconclusive, No Deception Indicated.

The reached conclusion on both tested topics was: “Deception Indicated”, meaning the examinee failed both exams.

#### *2.5 Post-test interview*

After a polygraph examination, during which he was asked whether he asked for money from subscribers of the company in order not to give them fines and whether he offered private services for a fee, it became clear that Smith was not telling the truth. After a post-test interview, Smith admitted that he had indeed committed the acts of which he was accused. He said he's sorry for what he did but excused himself by saying that “all electricians do that.”

As a result of the work done and the analysis that followed, the company “X” decided to implement the polygraph examination in its methods of controlling employees and preventing disloyal and corrupt practices.

In this way, Company “X” improved its quality of work, employee satisfaction, and enhanced its image as a company which is responsible to its employees and customers.

### *3. Conclusion*

The primary purpose of polygraph examinations used in the public and private sectors is prevention. Specifically, prevention of disloyal practices, corrupt behavior, theft and other crimes. On the one hand, screening tests can be conducted as part of recruitment procedures in order to hire employees who are reliable and loyal. On the other hand, employees may be subjected periodically, every 3 or 6 months, to a polygraph examination, in order to establish the presence of contraindications for holding the position, or in other words – in order to establish corrupt or disloyal practices on their part. These practices may include abuse of position and access in exchange for favors or money, improper giving or receiving of money, disclosure of confidential information, etc.

Preventing corruption is both an organizational and an individual ethical responsibility. Although it depends on the individual, it can be unwittingly encouraged or protected by certain management structures. Many corrupt practices can be prevented with quality control exercised by top management. The adoption of effective prevention of corrupt



practices is a responsibility of the managers and high authorities, which is achieved by creating systems for supervision and control.

The presented approaches guarantee a high percentage of reliability of the results. This allows for additional study of the personality of persons with established corrupt behavior through the application of personality inventories. Knowledge of the personality characteristics of the perpetrators of corruption allows the development of a psychological portrait of the corruption offenders and their characteristics. On this basis, effective programs can be established to prevent and quickly identify areas where corruption is likely to occur.

In an organizational context, the above-mentioned methods become methods of control and prevention of corrupt behavior. In this way, the management could carry out monitoring and could be warned about corruption indicators, which leads to their rapid limitation and prevention.

Raising awareness about the principles of corrupt behavior can lead to a wider use of the presented methods for psychodiagnosis of corrupt behavior, which turns them into effective plans for preventing corrupt practices.

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# Learning Strategies Used by Japanese Native Students to Learn Spanish

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## *Abstract*

Language learning strategies are used for a better organization of information and acquisition of a language. Spanish has become one of the most spoken languages nowadays thanks to globalization. As well, the relationship between Japan and Mexico has grown over the years thanks to the development of Japanese companies located in Mexico. Therefore, it is of interest how two languages so different from each other can be learned. This research seeks to find the most used learning strategies to reduce the complications of studying Spanish as a native Japanese learner.

*Keywords:* second language acquisition, language learning strategies, language interference.

## 1. Introduction

Learning a second language can be a tough procedure. Nowadays, acquiring a new language is a necessary ability because of our interconnected world. Having the possibility to communicate with people around the world is helpful to reach different objectives; for example, better job opportunities in the business field can be achieved, having cross-cultural relationships, getting to know people from other parts of the world, visiting other countries while getting involved with the culture, having access to more information and more.

Facilities to learn a second language have been investigated for many years, coming up with new different problems and solutions. As Mendoza (2019) states, learning another language besides our L1 can come with some difficulties, especially because of linguistic and cultural differences. To overcome the barriers of the learning process, learning strategies have been introduced with the purpose of understanding and retrieving new information effortlessly in the education field. Learning strategies are how an individual plans, organizes, and executes specific skills to learn content or perform other tasks effectively and easily in academic and non-academic settings (Clark et al., as cited in Schumaker & Deshler, 1992).

These strategies have the purpose to affect positively in the learning process of the learners, allowing them to implement a procedure that is more favorable and suitable to comprehend information. Consequently, this case study will discuss the barriers between the Japanese and Spanish language and the usage of learning strategies according to Japanese native speakers learning Spanish as a second language at the University of Guanajuato.

It seeks to know which the most used strategy is to reflect on the most useful way to introduce the language to students and what can be helpful in the future. As well as to raise awareness in the use of learning strategies, since it is believed that the lack of knowledge of these, limits the student's ability to know their skills in depth and put them into practice to facilitate the acquisition of a second language.

## 2. Literature review

In this section, concepts related to the explanation of the investigation will be discussed: Second Language Acquisition, differences, and similarities between Japanese and Spanish, Language Interference, Language Learning Strategies, and the SILL questionnaire.

### 2.1 *Second language acquisition*

For several years, research on the acquisition of a second language has been carried out to provide a clear theory mentioning the paradigms involved in studying a new language. As Brown (1980) states, the discipline of second language acquisition emerged its own part in the 1980s. SLA is a process which differs from the previous experiences of learning a first language. As is stated by Klein (2001)

The ways which lead this innate language faculty to the knowledge of a particular linguistic system vary, depending on factors such as age, nature of input and whether this task is undertaken for the first time ("first language acquisition," FLA) or not ("second language acquisition," SLA) (p. 13768).

However, even if there are differences between the two procedures, learning an L1 and an L2 share that in both cases plenty of interaction is needed to start producing any language. Krashen (1981) states that acquiring a language requires natural communication and meaningful interaction.

When the target language is acquired, it is recognized as bilingualism, which is defined as "the ability of an individual or the members of a community to use two languages effectively" (Nordquist, 2020).

### 2.2 *Principal differences and similarities between Japanese and Spanish*

Spanish and Japanese have many differences, assimilating both languages can cause a bit of conflict if the person has not had contact with the opposite language before. It is known that Spanish and English have a similar grammatical structure which follows the order "subject + verb + object"; however, there is a big difference in the construction of Japanese sentences, which follow "subject + object + verb" and can become even more complex.

In addition, Japanese has 3 writing systems, one which uses Chinese characters and the other 2 that are syllabaries named hiragana and katakana, which can be defined as graphic symbols that represent a morpheme, each morpheme being represented by a specifically shaped character (Paradis et al., 1985). Spanish has only one writing system that does not manage characters that aren't part of the alphabet.

However, one of the most significant differences are the very few verbal conjugations in Japanese since the tense of the sentence is known mostly depending on the context, while Spanish has about 17 verbal tenses.

Finally, Japanese is a very neutral language, not having gender or plurals unlike Spanish can cause confusion. Since changing the number and gender it is not necessary in Japanese, a language barrier is created subsequently because of the nonexistence of some grammatical rules that differs from the target language and generates difficulties when learning it.

On the other hand, one of the most important similarities that Japanese students are believed to mention is the alike pronunciation of both languages. Phonetically, they are remarkably similar: Both Spanish and Japanese have the same consonants: A, I, U, E, O.

By identifying some of the major differences and similarities between these two languages, it can be investigated what can be done to facilitate both languages and what other characteristics can be given a little less importance since there exist a facility. This will be helpful for the respective students of either of the two languages with the usage of learning strategies.

### *2.3 Language interference*

Due to these barriers in both languages, interference from the first language can be found during the production of the target language. Language interference refers to the influence of the mother tongue over students' production and development in the second language (Hashim, 1999).

It is often believed that the interference of the native language is problematic, but this is not true in all cases. The first language can also make it easier to learn a target language, this is called positive transfer. Positive transfer refers to "the facilitation, in learning or performance, of a new task based on what has been learned during a previous one" (Druckman, 1994: 26). An example considering Spanish and Japanese, is the similar sounds in terms of vowels, as well as some words that are used in both languages. As well, both use formal language, there would be no cultural erasure of formal language in how both communities in the case of addressing their elders, as it is in the case of learning English.

On the other hand, there is the existence of the negative transfer as well, which is defined as "any decline in learning or performance of a second task due to learning a previous one" (Druckman, 1994: 26). In this case, Japanese by not having plurals, there is usually a difficulty in everyday speech to change all the words' number.

### *2.4 Language learning strategies*

As previously mentioned, to start this new process of acquisition, learning strategies are used to improve the competence and performance of the student. In the educational field, learning strategies have been sought to facilitate the development of the classroom. Learning strategies can be defined as "procedures or techniques that learners can use to facilitate a learning task" (Chamot, Barnhardt, Beard & Robbins, 1999: 12).

There is no specific time for when learning strategies began to emerge, as McCombs (2017) mentions that it is believed they began in 1960, deriving from the study on "study skills and memory strategies."

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).

As Hismanoglu (2000) states, is important for language teachers to present a wide range of learning strategies for the needs of the students to be met since due to the different environment and ability of each student, they handle different learning styles that are not contemplated in a single strategy, as well as of expectations, interests, motivation, strategy preference, etc.

In the same way, the teacher must be able to explain how to use the strategy, in what context or moment it is most useful and how to transfer it to other situations (Ehrman, Leaver & Oxford, 2003). It is not quite common to see this type of exercises in class since due importance is not given into teaching this type of tools.

### *2.5 Strategy inventory for language learning*

To learn more about the student's learning strategies, many tools and studies have been carried out. One of the principal tools for this subject, is the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL), which is an 80-item tool devised by Oxford created in 1990 with the function to "evaluate specific language learning tasks within the learning context" (Rusell, 2010: 1). The Strategy Inventory for Language Learning can be used to assess specific language strategies which is divided in 6 subscales: (A) Remembering more effectively, (B) Using your mental processes, (C) Compensating for missing knowledge, (D) Organizing and evaluating your learning, (E) Managing your emotions, and (F) Learning with others. With this tool, it is sought that by recognizing the strengths of the students, changes can be made in the class modality to create a better educational environment.

## 3. Methodology

In this section, the methodology for the analysis is reviewed. First, the background of the participants will be explained. Secondly, the purpose and the main questions for the investigation will be presented. Thirdly, the discussion and analysis of the results will be stated. Finally, the investigation will be concluded.

### *3.1 Context and participants*

This research was developed at the University of Guanajuato directed to Japanese native students who are Spanish learners and came to the university as part of an academic exchange. These students take classes at the University Language Center where the data was collected. The participants are two men and one woman between the ages of 24 to 27 years old. All the participants were born and raised in Japan and came to Mexico to learn the language because they look forward working and living in Mexico in the future. It is not required that exchange students have plenty of knowledge in English, so there was a language barrier in communication between the interviewer and the participants. Each participant was assigned a number to mention specific examples they mentioned.

### *3.2 Procedure*

The process of how the experiment was conducted was the same for each of the participants. Before the interview and data collection, the participant was shown the confidentiality letter and the reasons for carrying out this research were explained.

Interviews were used to have a better control on what is needed for the research and add questions if it's necessary. Also, to analyze from the different perspectives of the interviewees



their own experiences and see if there is a common factor in the difficulties when learning Spanish. It was sought that the interview could be carried out face to face to be closer to the interviewee and to achieve an interview as complete and sincere as possible. Much consideration was given to the opinion of the participant to inquire into what could be the solution of learning difficulties by recognizing the various language strategies that are used by the participants.

Finally, the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning was applied to each participant to compare the discussion in the interview with the results in the test. The test was sent to them electronically so that they could answer it calmly and sincerely. At the end they were sent their test results.

### *3.3 Research questions*

The main purpose of this study is to become aware of the main difficulties Japanese speakers that learn Spanish go through and which strategies they implement to surpass the language barriers. With the help of this research, teachers, and students interested in teaching Spanish to foreign learners, or learners which find the mentioned strategies useful can adapt their way of teaching or studying knowing the most used strategies. At the same time, it is a topic that awakes my curiosity since I am a Spanish native speaker which is currently learning Japanese, so I want to analyze the other point of view. The questions that guided this study are the following:

1. Which learning strategies are used by Japanese students to learn Spanish taking into consideration the absence of gender, plurals, and conjugations in their language?
2. What factors in the Japanese language are the hardest to overcome when learning Spanish?
3. Does coming to México and being involved in the language has a beneficial impact in the language learning journey?

### *4. Analysis of results*

A notable aspect among all the participants was that they shared the same reasons why they came to Mexico, which was work situation and because Spanish is a language that has become popular lately. As Green (2018) states, Spanish is the most widely spoken Romance language. There are approximately 470 million native speakers and 90 million second-language users, scattered through all continents.

The barriers that were stated before the investigation have been correct since the most mentioned problems were the conjugation of the verbs, gender, and plurals.

The participants mentioned that sometimes there was not a significant problem in the case of gender, but when changing the word to its plural or when adding a definite or indefinite article was the most complex part. The participant 3 mentioned that she still did not understand when definite or indefinite articles needed to be used since this does not exist in the Japanese language either. As well, she mentioned that in Spanish there are words that do not have a plural, she explained that the word “cilantro” was confusing, since it is not necessary to change the word to “cilantros” to mention a bigger quantity and there are more examples like this.

A broad comparison was made about the difference in their learning of English and Spanish, in which was mentioned that Spanish was easier due to the pronunciation. Participant 2 mentioned that he had no problems pronouncing Spanish words because of how similar the vocals are pronounced in both languages. At the same time, participant 3 mentioned that Spanish was

more understandable when listening and pronouncing than English since the words seemed more “clear” and easier to understand.

#### *4.1 Cooperative learning*

During the interview, the participants were asked about their preference to study the language individually (individual learning) or in groups (cooperative learning). This question was made to have a broader idea of their learning strategies. Cooperative learning can be defined as instruction that involves students who work together in teams to accomplish a common goal, under conditions that include the following elements (Johnson et al., 2002). However, in the case of individual learning, the students may follow the teacher’s instruction or their own to practice and learn the target language.

The response from all the participants was that they are used to learn in groups but if they have the opportunity they also study separately. One of the students mentioned that keeping in touch with his classmates helped him improve, since he could learn new expressions or check if what he was learning was correct.

Within cooperative learning there is a type of knowledge compensation since the participants in the group are in a constant interaction with their peers, learn from their strengths and individually continue to acquire information. “Cooperative learning leads to greater learning and superior development of communication and teamwork skills (e.g., leadership, project management, and conflict resolution skills) (Felder & Brent, 2007: 51).

#### *4.2 Language immersion*

As Bostwick and Gakuen (2004) states, Language immersion is an approach to foreign language instruction in which the usual curricular activities are conducted in a foreign language. Immersion helps the student gradually begin to internalize the language by having to make an effort to produce it properly.

Participants were asked if there was a change in their learning due to their stay in Mexico, since they had a greater opportunity to put their Spanish into practice. All the participants mentioned that it was very helpful since they were in constant contact with Spanish speakers, likewise, participant 1 was interested in the cultural field. The participants had acquired expressions typical of Mexico due to this interaction and enjoyed the immersion in the culture.

In the same way, participant 1 mentioned that something that is very helpful for him to study Spanish is to imitate the speakers. If someone tells him an interesting expression, he repeats it again to remember it continuously.

Participant 2 mentioned that people should not be embarrassed when practicing a language and that he was able to practice it with kind people and that it has been helpful to have a good teacher.

#### *4.3 Strategy inventory for language learning questionnaire*

None of the students were aware that of what was specifically a learning strategy, which confirms the lack of information on a topic that is so useful in our daily lives. By giving them examples of what a learning strategy requires, they were able to formulate their own criteria and showed a general idea of what they consider what a learning strategy is, but not as a topic that they had been taught before with specific characteristics.

After the interview, now that there was a general idea of how the students managed their learning, it was preferred to have more specific answers by carrying out a test that has previous studies on its authenticity. As already mentioned, there are 6 strategy subscales, which are arranged in the following table with the respective results of each participant.

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3
Remembering more effectively	3.1	4.3	3.3
Using all your mental processes	3.9	4.3	3.4
Compensating for missing knowledge	4.5	4	3.6
Organizing and evaluating your learning	3.2	3.7	3.7
Managing your emotions	2.3	3.8	2.3
Learning with others	5	4.6	3.9
Overall average	3.6	4.1	3.6

As can be seen, the three participants have their highest result on the subscale “Learning with others”. It is surprisingly true that in all three cases, the students presented the highest qualification in this aspect. Noticing all the information that had already been previously acquired, it can be noted in certain aspects that establishing conversations with people was of the utmost importance in their learning.

Section E of the Strategy Inventory for Language Learning Questionnaire. The statements that answered with the highest score were the following:

45. If I do not understand something in Spanish, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46. I ask Spanish speakers to correct me when I talk.
47. I practice Spanish with other students.
48. I ask for help from Spanish speakers.
49. I ask questions in Spanish.
50. I try to learn about the culture of Spanish speakers.

It is very noticeable the usage of these strategies since to overcome the main difficulties of gender, conjugations and plurals, the participants put a lot of effort and attention in other people speech and thanks to the constant repetition of words from other people, they could integrate them into their daily vocabulary.

It is perceptible how their environment also influences their learning strategies since, as mentioned before, they practice the language daily inside and outside the classroom.

## 5. Conclusion

Through the research, it was surprising to find that most of the interviewees did not have a common idea about what a language learning strategy was. Even though they used day to day strategies for their learning, they are not capable of noticing them.

The lack of awareness that prevails. It is worrisome as students miss more adaptable ways to learn, which can make their learning faster and more fun. As future teachers, it is especially important that we show these concepts to students to help them create their own way of studying with which they can feel more confident.

The operation of learning strategies has been studied for several years and has solid information that validates its practice, so it can help the student a big amount. If the student is aware of what helps him the most or what types of skills they have, they will know if they are on the right track.

The objective of knowing which was the most used strategy by the students was fulfilled. All the research questions were answered, and it was possible to analyze the need for these different strategies and how interaction is essential for a natural acquisition of the language.

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